

# Minors, Medical Care Consent (Chapter 652) Summary of the Law

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## What's in the New Law?

Beginning on January 1, 2012, a new California law (known as AB 499 or Chapter 652, Statutes of 2011) expands the legal authority of minors 12 years and older to consent to confidential medical services for the **prevention** of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) without their parents' consent.

Little in the law is actually new. For the past 50 years, California Family Code Section 6926 has allowed minors 12 years and older to consent to *diagnosis and treatment* of STD services, such as the treatment of gonorrhea or syphilis. Because of advances in STD prevention, the law has been updated.

STD prevention strategies include, but aren't limited to:

- [Hepatitis B](#) vaccination
- [Human papillomavirus](#) (HPV) vaccination
- Medications to prevent [HIV](#) infection, before or after exposure
- Additional STD prevention services that may become available in the future

## What's Not in the New Law?

The law does not

- Require minors to seek or receive HPV vaccination, hepatitis B vaccination, or any other preventive services
- Provide additional funding or resources for the vaccinations and other STD prevention services. Moreover, the law explicitly states that the parents or guardians of the minor are not liable for the costs of such services.

## Confidentiality Concerns

In many cases, health care providers are not permitted to share information or records regarding a minor's STD prevention services with a parent or legal guardian without the minor's written authorization. Health care providers should be aware that

- There is no law that requires providers to record a vaccination in the California Immunization Registry (CAIR).
- Insurance companies may share claims information about STD prevention services with primary policy holders, such as parents.
- Immunization data about minors in CAIR and other record systems may be accessible to parents.

## Help for Those in Need

CDPH encourages parents to talk with their preteens and teens about how to grow up healthy, including how to prevent STDs. Most parents are involved in their children's health care decisions. However, some teenagers live in unstable or abusive homes and cannot safely discuss health issues with their parents.

California's new law is designed to help protect the health of these teenagers, just as current laws allow youth to receive confidential care for reproductive health care, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment. In addition to protecting an adolescent from disease, this law will reduce the risk of spreading infections to others.