

Redundant Teen Consent Procedures

[HB 81](#) Rep. Anderson (R-131) Springfield

This bill creates additional administrative barriers through a duplicative parental notification process that could delay or decrease access to abortion.

This bill adds unnecessary steps to an already comprehensive consent process. Current state law already dictates a strict informed consent process that must be completed in person and 72 hours before any abortion services are provided, regardless of age. Current law also mandates teens under 18 have the consent of one parent before accessing abortion in Missouri. This bill would require the Department of Health and Senior Services to create separate, duplicative, informed consent processes for teens and consenting parents.

Consent procedures should support informed decision-making, not shame or coerce. A woman should have accurate information about all of her options. Information should support a woman, help her make a decision for herself, and enable her to take care of her health and well-being. It should not be provided with the intent of shaming, coercing, or making a woman change her mind. HB 81 clearly singles out teens and requires physicians to provide the teen with information intended to coerce and shame her into changing her mind.

Unfortunately, not all teens come from homes where good family communication is possible. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives, and the good news is the majority of teens do go to their parents when faced with an unintended pregnancy. Yet, some teens live with violent or abusive parents and do not feel safe talking to their parents about serious issues such as unintended pregnancy. In the real world, no law can mandate family communication. Instead, this requirement could cause a scared teen to put her safety at risk or do something desperate that would endanger her health.

Major medical organizations oppose forced parental involvement laws. Parental consent and notification laws are opposed by major medical groups including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association because research has shown they do not increase parental involvement, do not foster healthy communication, and in fact can be very detrimental to the health and safety of young women.

Measures like HB 81 can come between a young woman and the health care she needs. This requirement could cause medical care to be delayed, threatening a young woman's health. That's why it is essential that we keep teens safe by opposing this bill.

We ask that the Missouri legislature get to the root of the problem and focus on reducing unintended pregnancy. The proven way to prevent unplanned pregnancies and reduce the need for abortion is through comprehensive sex education and affordable access to birth control. Improving access to preventive health care and supporting healthy families should be a shared goal in Missouri.