

## Teen Access to Health Care

Teens are currently able to seek gynecological exams, birth control and testing and treatment for STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) without mandated parental involvement. Although it is best when teens communicate with their parents about health care decisions, these services must remain confidential in order to help all teens prevent pregnancy and the spread of disease.

- Anything that makes it harder for teenagers to avoid unintended pregnancy is bad public policy.
- Requiring parental notification for family planning services causes many teens who fear abuse, punishment or parental disappointment, to delay or avoid the needed care.
- Research shows that many teens will not seek help if their health care services are not confidential, putting their health, and even their lives, in jeopardy.<sup>1</sup>

### In Virginia

- In 2003, the Virginia General Assembly passed a law requiring parental consent for abortion.
- In recent years, extremist legislators have introduced legislation to require parental consent, parental notification and mandatory delays for preventive health care as well.

### Recent Developments

During the 2006 General Assembly Session, there were two bills introduced to limit teen access to health care.

- HB 173 would require state and local government employees to notify a parent or guardian within 2 business days of providing a minor with confidential services relating to STDs, EC, pregnancy, illegal drug use or contemplation of suicide. It was defeated in the House Health, Welfare and Institutions Committee.
- HB 868 would require a physician or nurse practitioner to obtain parental consent prior to prescribing Plan B or any other form of emergency contraception (regular birth control pills) and a delay of at least four hours. It was continued on to the 2007 session in the House Court of Justice Committee.

To see how your legislator voted on HB 868, check out our 2005-2006 Reproductive Rights Report (hyperlink to page with legislator finder and RRR).

For more information on this Fact Sheet or other Planned Parenthood issues go to [www.ppav.org](http://www.ppav.org) or contact [ppav@ppfa.org](mailto:ppav@ppfa.org).

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<sup>1</sup> D. Hollander, "Some Teenagers Say They Might Not Seek Health Care If they Could Not Be Assured of Confidentiality," *Family Planning Perspectives*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July/Aug. 1993): 187 citing T.L. Cheng et al., "Confidentiality in Health Care: A Survey of Knowledge, Perceptions, and Attitudes Among High School Students," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 269 (1993): 1404-1407.