

**ARIZONA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION FORM**

Date Submitted: 8/5/05

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Date Revised:

Title of Resolution: **Adolescent Access to Comprehensive, Confidential Reproductive Health Care**

Adapted and revised from APHA Resolution 9001, 01/01/90

Noting that adolescents tend not to seek contraception or reproductive health care until after they have initiated sexual intercourse;¹ and

Noting that sexually active and/or pregnant adolescents need informed, professional counseling and health care regardless of whether they wish to prevent a pregnancy; and

Understanding that while parental involvement in minors' decisions may be very helpful, it can also be punitive, coercive and/or abusive;² and

Noting that physicians and other health care professionals have the obligation to provide care that is in the best interest of that patient; and

Emphasizing that the threat of compelled parental notification is a strong disincentive to an adolescent's seeking professional reproductive health care or advice;^{3,4} and

Noting that parental involvement laws, whether notification or consent, for adolescent reproductive health care do not appreciably discourage adolescent sexual activity;^{3,4} and

Further noting that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to misinformation, scare tactics, and other propaganda; therefore the Arizona Public Health Association

1. Urges that public policies and laws concerning adolescent access to reproductive health care, be designed for the primary purposes of preventing unintended pregnancy and providing sensitive, competent, professional health care to all adolescents;
2. Urges that such policies reflect the reality of adolescent sexual activity and take into consideration the demonstrably negative effect of compelled parental involvement on some adolescents' contraceptive behavior;

3. Urges that services for adolescents include access to affordable, confidential contraceptive services;
4. Urges that a national and state policy on reproductive health care for adolescents include:
 - a. Confidential health services tailored to the needs of adolescents, including sexually active adolescents and those adolescents considering sexual intercourse;
 - b. Public policies that encourage sexually active adolescents to seek professional health care. These policies can encourage mature adult involvement (including parental involvement) but should in no way dictate or compel the specific involvement of parents or guardians in adolescent decisions regarding their reproductive health; and
5. Supports comprehensive, age appropriate and medically accurate health and sexuality education, including abstinence, in schools.

References:

- 1 Zabin LS, Clark SD: Institutional factors affecting teenagers' choice and reasons for delay in attending a family planning clinic. *Fam Plann Perspect* 1983;15:25-29.
- 2 Donovan P: Judging teenagers: How minors fare when they seek court-authorized abortions. *Fam Plann Perspect* 1983;42:79-83.
- 3 Cartoof VG, Klerman LV: Parental consent for abortion: Impact of the Massachusetts law. *Am J Public Health* 1986;75:397-400.
- 4 Torres A, Forrest J, Eisman S: Telling parents: Clinic policies and adolescents' use of family planning and abortion services. *Fam Plann Perspect* 1980;12:284-292.