Background Sheet

AB 499 (Atkins)

STD PREVENTION ACCESS FOR MINORS

SUMMARY

Under state law, minors are able to consent to confidential medical services. While physicians encourage patients to involve parents, the Legislature has recognized by enacting minor consent laws that involvement is not always practical and what is paramount is that teens receive timely, necessary medical care.

However, there is a gap in the law relative to *prevention* of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Existing law only specifies the ability to consent to *diagnosis and treatment*. This omission creates a barrier to time-critical preventive services. At the time the law was passed, the preventive options we have today did not exist.

BACKGROUND

All states allow minors to consent for diagnosis and treatment of STDs; some include prevention.

Preventive care for sexually transmitted diseases currently includes **vaccinations** for hepatitis B and the human papilloma virus (HPV) as well prophylactic **post-exposure HIV medications**. These infections have no cure so timely preventive care is essential, and many of these diseases can cause lifelong reproductive impairment and even lead to death. However, preventive measures have been proven to be highly effective and safe.

The incidence for new HIV infections is increasing for certain teen populations. Prophylactic post-exposure medications can significantly reduce the risk of acquiring a lifelong, serious disease. Post-exposure medications should be given within 72 hours after exposure.

HPV infection is the most common sexually transmitted disease. The prevalence of HPV has also made **cervical cancer** the world's second leading cause of cancer deaths among women. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommend routine vaccinations for 11-12 year old girls and catch-up vaccinations for females ages 13-26. Certain HPV vaccines have also been approved for males.

As these services are considered *preventive* medical care, teens presenting for their other confidential medical services may consent to receive all care *except for STD prevention services*.

The requirement to obtain parental consent for STD prevention services has resulted-in missed and denied opportunities for minors to receive vital, time-sensitive medical care. It has also limited the success of vaccination programs outside the medical home – especially in school-based vaccination programs. The need to provide prevention services to this population is essential.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

Allows minors (age 12+) to consent to medical care related to the *prevention* of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

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SPONSOR:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSTION:

Status: Introduced – 31st Day in Print: 3/18/2011

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