



## AB 499 – Minors consent for medical care and disease prevention

### Background and Information

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Assembly Bill No. 499 (Atkins) was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on October 9, 2011. This law allows minors to consent to confidential medical services for the **prevention** of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The law extends existing code that already allows minors age 12-17 to consent to **diagnosis and treatment** services for sexually transmitted diseases. This has been law for almost 50 years, long before the STD prevention services we have today ever existed.

Under the newly signed law, preventive services that minors, 12 and older, may consent to include:

- Hepatitis B (Hep B) vaccination
- Human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination
- HIV prophylactic, pre and post exposure HIV medications

In addition to protecting the individual from disease, this law will also help lessen the risk of those individuals from knowingly or unknowingly spreading infections to others.

Vaccination against diseases such as Hepatitis B and HPV is recommended to be given **before** exposure to the disease and prophylactic HIV medication must be given within 72 hours post-exposure.

#### Parental Rights

Most parents want to be involved in their teenager's health care and most are – that's the good news. However, for some teens, good family communication is not possible or discussing these issues may actually be dangerous. Regrettably, some teenagers live in unstable or abusive homes and cannot safely discuss sexual health issues with their parents.

That is why California allows teens to access confidential care for contraception, pregnancy and STD medical services, mental health care, and drug abuse treatment. This law is designed to protect those teenagers who cannot or will not involve their parents in a discussion about STD prevention for a variety of reasons.

This legislation does not establish a mandate for HPV vaccination, Hepatitis B vaccination, or other preventive services. It gives minors age 12-17 the right to consent to services, including vaccinations, which can **prevent** sexually transmitted diseases. And, while minors can consent to these procedures, the law explicitly states that the parents or guardians of the minor are not liable for the costs of such services.

#### Bill Sponsors

AB 499 was sponsored by the California STD Controllers Association, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists – District IX California, and the Health Officers Association of California. This bill was endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the California Medical Association and the California Immunization Coalition among many others.

The claim that this legislation was sponsored by pharmaceutical companies is completely false.



## Safety and Efficacy of Vaccines

### Hepatitis B Vaccine

Since the vaccine became available in 1982, more than 100 million people have received Hepatitis B vaccine in the United States with only extremely rare serious side effects reported such as an allergic reaction.

All children should get their first dose of Hepatitis B vaccine at birth and complete the vaccine series by 6–18 months of age. Any adult who is at risk for Hepatitis B virus infection or who wants to be vaccinated should talk to a health professional about getting the vaccine series.

### HPV Vaccine

*Since the [HPV] vaccine has been introduced, more than 35 million doses have been administered, and it has an excellent safety record.*

*The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians all recommend that girls receive HPV vaccine around age 11 or 12. [Boys may also receive the vaccine to protect themselves.] That's because this is the age at which the vaccine produces the best immune response in the body, and because it's important to protect girls well before the onset of sexual activity. In the U.S., about 6 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year, and 4,000 women die from cervical cancer. This is a life-saving vaccine that can protect girls from cervical cancer.*

(Excerpted from statement on HPV vaccination from the American Academy of Pediatrics, September 2011)

## Cost of Services

Most health insurance plans cover recommended vaccines for children and adolescents. Through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, VFC providers receive vaccines at no cost and may administer the vaccines to eligible children and adolescents younger than 19 years of age. Eligibility includes those who are either Medi-Cal eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native or uninsured. Underinsured patients receiving services in a Federally Qualified Health Clinic (FQHC) or Rural Health Center are also eligible. This includes boys as well as girls. A small administrative fee may apply but the vaccine itself is provided at no charge.

### For more information:

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

#### California Department of Public Health Immunization Program

[www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo)

#### Immunization Action Coalition – Ask the Experts

[www.immunize.org/askexperts](http://www.immunize.org/askexperts)

View personal stories of people affected by HPV and Hepatitis B at [www.ShotbyShot.org](http://www.ShotbyShot.org)