

# Policy Position:

*Adopted by the MOASH Board of Directors, May 2017*



michigan organization on  
adolescent sexual health

## Adolescent Access to Abortion Care and Services



### What we stand for:

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) supports unrestricted access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion services for adolescents in accordance with federal law. It is the right of all people, including young people, to have the tools necessary to control their reproductive health. In addition to the restrictive abortion laws all people face, youth must overcome significant challenges in order to obtain this legal medical procedure. Specifically, minors' access to abortion is often obstructed by the legal mandate for parental consent or a court-provided waiver of parental consent, obtained only via judicial bypass process. We support the removal of the parental consent mandate in Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Parental Rights Restoration Act, 1990 PA 211, MCL §§ 722.901 – 722.909. Retrieved from [https://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(fpdnav3ncd1pzfbtga2jq0yb\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectName=mcl-Act-211-of-1990](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(fpdnav3ncd1pzfbtga2jq0yb))/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectName=mcl-Act-211-of-1990)

## Why we stand for this:

- Abortion is a safe and legal medical procedure.<sup>2</sup> Young people should be supported in their choice to access abortion services, just as they would be supported in their choice to access any other safe and legal healthcare service.
- When educated on all their options after becoming pregnant, young people are able to make well-informed decisions about their bodies and if and when to become a parent.
- Young people face barriers in seeking abortion and abortion care in Michigan. These barriers (e.g., 24-hour mandatory waiting period, cost and lack of insurance coverage, transportation) are particularly burdensome to adolescents.<sup>3</sup>
- For minors (under 18 years) who want an abortion, parental consent is not always available. These minors are oftentimes the young people who face additional barriers (e.g., homelessness, pregnancy as a result of incest, abusive or violent family home).<sup>4</sup>
- The judicial bypass process to attain a parental consent waiver is not youth-friendly (e.g., subjective rulings, unclear court procedures, legal jargon on documents, delay in obtaining procedure which could necessitate a more expensive and invasive procedure).<sup>5</sup>
- Expert organizations in the field of adolescent sexual health oppose the parental consent mandate and judicial bypass process, including the American Medical Association, Society for Adolescent Medicine, American Public Health Association, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, and American Academy of Pediatrics.

## Data and statistics:

- In 2015, the majority of Michigan residents receiving induced abortions (43.1%) were under 25 years of age, while 9.9% were less than 20 years old. There were a total of 2,568 reported induced abortions for women under 20 and 8,634 reported induced abortions for women ages 20-24.<sup>6</sup>
- Studies show that great availability of contraceptives reduces rates of unintended pregnancy and abortions. Young people in Michigan have limited and/or inconsistent access to contraceptive options that prevent unintended pregnancy. Policies or legislation can improve contraceptive access, such as mandated coverage of birth control under insurance policies, repealing the state law prohibiting condom/contraceptive distribution in schools, etc.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Guttmacher Institute (2017, Jan). *Induced Abortion in the United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>

<sup>3</sup> Guttmacher Institute (2017, Jan). *State Facts About Abortion: Michigan*. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-michigan>

<sup>4</sup> Advocates for Youth (2014). *Abortion and Parental Involvement Laws: A Threat to Young Women's Health and Safety* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/abortion%20and%20parental%20involvement%20laws.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Marr, Abbey (2015, June). *Judicial Bypass Procedures: Undue Burdens for Young People Seeking Safe Abortion Care* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/Factsheets/judicial%20bypass%20procedures.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (2016). *Number of Reported Induced Abortions by Age of Woman, Michigan Residents, 1983-2015* [Data set]. Retrieved from [http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/abortion/Tab\\_d.asp](http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/abortion/Tab_d.asp)

<sup>7</sup> The Contraceptive CHOICE Project (2015). *Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.choiceproject.wustl.edu/en/ePUB>