

# SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT AUTONOMY AND ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE AND SERVICES

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) urges community leaders, decision-makers, and legislators to support unrestricted, safe, and affordable abortion access for adolescents. Likewise, we urge you to advocate for the removal of the parental consent mandate for minors to obtain abortions in MI. At MOASH, we believe that young people should have power and control over their bodies, including if and when they are pregnant. No young person should have to continue a pregnancy or be coerced into having an abortion.

This document provides guidance on how to combat abortion misinformation and stigma, safeguard abortion access, and improve youth access to services in your own community and across the state.

## Understand the facts about abortion.

- > Abortion is safe.<sup>2</sup> Abortion has a safety rating of 99%, a higher safety rating than carrying a pregnancy to term.<sup>3</sup>
- > People support abortion access. The majority of all Americans (roughly 4 out of 5) and the majority of adult Americans (roughly 3 out of 5) believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.<sup>4</sup> This is true regardless of their political affiliation or race and ethnicity.
- > Abortion is currently legal in Michigan up until fetal viability, which typically falls around 24 weeks of pregnancy.

1 MOASH uses the terms 'adolescents' 'young people' and 'youth' interchangeably; namely, they refer to people between the ages of 13 and 24. 'Minors' refers to young people under the age of 18.

2 Guttmacher Institute (2021). Induced Abortion in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>

3 Raymond EG, Grimes DA. The comparative safety of legal induced abortion and childbirth in the United States. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2012 Feb;119(2 Pt 1):215-9. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0b013e31823fe923. PMID: 22270271.

4 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1576/abortion.aspx>; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/05/06/about-six-in-ten-americans-say-abortion-should-be-legal-in-all-or-most-cases/>

## Support young peoples' access to comprehensive sex education, which includes unbiased and medically accurate information on contraception and pregnancy options.

- When educated on all their options, young people make well-informed decisions about their bodies, including if and when to continue a pregnancy and/or become parents. Countless stories and research show that adolescents stand by their decisions if and when to have an abortion when they feel supported and trusted to make the decision that is right for them.<sup>5</sup>

## Oppose, and urge decision-makers to repeal, medically unnecessary restrictions and other undue burdens placed on young people's access to abortion care.

- Restrictive abortion laws harm the safety, health, and dignity of all people, especially young people who must overcome additional challenges to abortion access. Restrictive laws also disproportionately harm young people of color, young people from lower income backgrounds, young people experiencing violence, Disabled young people, people who already have children, immigrant youth, youth who live in rural areas, and transgender and gender-expansive youth.<sup>6</sup>
- In Michigan, there are a number of [medically unnecessary restrictions on abortions](#), such as state-mandated counseling and a 24-hour wait period prior to having an abortion.<sup>7</sup>
- Abortions pose a financial burden for youth, as most private and public health insurance plans only cover abortion in cases of endangerment.<sup>8</sup>
- Young people face transportation issues in seeking abortion care, either because they cannot legally drive or because they do not have enough money to afford transportation.
- In 2017, around 9 out of 10 Michigan counties did not have any clinics that provided abortions, in part due to restrictive abortion laws.<sup>9</sup>

5 COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE; Paula K. Braverman, MD; William P. Adelman, MD; Elizabeth M. Alderman, MD; Cora C. Breuner, MD; David A. Levine, MD; Arik V. Marcell, MD; Rebecca O'Brien, MD

6 Cahill, Erica P.; Doyle, Alexis Trauma-informed abortion care, Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology: December 2021 - Volume 33 - Issue 6 - p 453-457 doi: 10.1097/GCO.0000000000000749

7 Guttmacher Institute (2021). State Facts About Abortion: Michigan. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-michigan>

8 Id.

9 Id.

# Advocate for the removal of the parental consent mandate to ensure young people can make healthy reproductive choices for themselves.

- > One of the most burdensome barriers to abortion care for minors is the requirement for parental consent. In Michigan, a young person under the age of 18 must seek written consent from one parent or guardian before getting an abortion, unless they are emancipated.
- > While most pregnant minors already involve their parent/guardian in their reproductive decisions and efforts to access abortion services, some cannot due to the risk of physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or financial abuse.<sup>10</sup>
- > Due to Michigan's parental consent mandate, many minors do not seek medical care, get information and resources, and receive the care and support they need.
- > When minors seeking abortion services are unable to get parental consent, they are forced to get the consent of a judge through what is known as the [judicial bypass process](#). This flawed process is difficult to navigate,<sup>11</sup> subjective, poses risks to minor confidentiality, and can cause delays in seeking an abortion, necessitating a more expensive and invasive medical procedure at a later stage of pregnancy.<sup>12</sup>
- > Many professional healthcare associations, including the American Medical Association, Society for Adolescent Medicine, American Public Health Association, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, and American Academy of Pediatrics, oppose the parental consent mandate and judicial bypass process.

**MOASH remains committed to striving for abortion access as one crucial step toward reproductive justice. As our capacity and funding increase, we will improve our efforts to support and uplift youth decision-making and access to care. We urge you to do the same.**

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

11. MOASH (2015). *Michigan Youth Rights: The Assessment A look into the judicial bypass process in Michigan* (pp. 1–43).

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