

# MyClinic Standards of care for comprehensive adolescent sexual health care

## Guiding Principles

**The Standards of Care and Best Practices for Adolescent Sexual Health are based on the following set of guiding principles that reflect the values and beliefs of the MyClinic project.**

1. Adolescence is a time of rapid growth and change that presents unique health care needs, challenges, and opportunities.
2. Adolescents should be seen as competent, capable partners in their health care decisions.
3. Adolescents have the right to confidential health care related to their sexual and reproductive health, alcohol and other drug use, and certain mental health issues.
4. Adolescents need safe and trusted adults as partners in their health and development, including parents and other caregivers, health care providers, counselors, teachers, etc.
5. Optimal adolescent health includes a young person's physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth and development.
6. Both personal and environmental factors contribute to the health and well-being of young people. All clinical services delivered to young people should be reflective of trauma-informed practices.
7. Young people deserve a full range of information and options related to their reproductive and sexual health so they can make healthy decisions now and that will carry into adulthood.

## Standard 1

**Guarantee confidentiality and adolescents' rights to consent to sexual and reproductive health care**

- A. Every visit includes a confidential conversation between adolescent client and clinician that respects cultural backgrounds and belief systems.
- B. Sexual health care records, including clinic notes, patient portal access, medication lists, lab results, and record transfers are set up to protect minor's ability to maintain confidentiality, and allows adolescent clients to control who has access to them.
- C. Billing procedures ensure client confidentiality and processes are explained to facilitate client understanding.
- D. Staff is routinely trained on and follow Minnesota minor's consent and confidentiality law.
- E. Confidential contact information for adolescent clients is routinely collected and updated.
- F. Adolescent clients are encouraged to involve trusted adults in their care.

- G. Clinic has a process for obtaining informed consent at each visit regarding services covered by Minnesota minor's consent and confidentiality law (pregnancy, contraception, STI's, substance use and crisis mental health).
- H. Information about minors' rights to confidential health care is prominently displayed.

## Standard 2

### **Make services accessible and facilities welcoming to adolescents**

- A. After-school and/or weekend hours are offered; same day appointments are available.
- B. Scheduling protocols support absence of no-show or late rules that create barriers to care.
- C. Clinic offers sliding fee scale, MFPP, Medical Assistance or other financial assistance options. Staff member is available at time of visit to inform adolescents about all financial assistance options. Adolescent clients are not referred to collections.
- D. Though identification may be requested, clinic protocols allow young people to be seen without proof of identification if a best faith effort is made to verify client's identity.
- E. Environment and tone of office is welcoming, comfortable and safe space for adolescents and their diverse identities.
- F. Clinic staff, including front desk, phone, education, and providers, is comfortable with and enthusiastic about working with adolescents and reflect the diversity of the population served.
- G. Communication technologies used are consistent with adolescents' preferred modes of communication (e.g., texting, social media, online scheduling, etc.).

## Standard 3

### **Deliver patient-centered care that is sensitive to each adolescent's culture, ethnicity, ability, community values, religion, language, educational level, sex, gender, and sexual orientation**

- A. Clinicians and health educators provide scientifically sound, non-judgmental education and counseling on sexual development and reproductive health.
- B. Clinic offers reproductive and sexual health services to youth of all genders.
- C. Staff tailors visit to the developmental, learning needs and abilities of adolescent clients.
- D. Staff tailors visit to the unique needs of each person's culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and abilities of adolescent clients served.
- E. Client scheduling and charting is inclusive of client identified pronouns, names, and name changes.
- F. Clinic staff is prepared to support young people as they explore gender identity, which includes meeting the unique needs of transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive clients.
- G. Interpretive services are offered to all clients as needed and provided at no cost.
- H. Health education materials are provided through a medium used by young people, uses simple language, and are in languages that reflect the communities utilizing services.
- I. Adolescent client feedback is regularly collected, and service improvements are addressed.

## Standard 4

### **Screen all adolescents for sexual and reproductive health issues, including substance use, and mental health concerns, and provide appropriate education, counseling, care, or referral**

- A. Clinicians see every visit as an opportunity to address HIV, STI and pregnancy prevention with all adolescent clients.
- B. Clinicians use a standardized health assessment tool with all adolescents that includes a sexual history and screening for alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, healthy relationships, violence, sex trafficking, and other psychosocial issues.
- C. Clinicians and health educators provide counseling on consent and sexual decision making.
- D. Clients are advised to receive sexual health screening at least once a year, or more often if they have a new partner, symptoms and/or suspicion of pregnancy or exposure to an STI or HIV.
- E. Linkages are in place for referrals to care for alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse; mental health concerns; and other social service needs (e.g., education, housing) not offered on site.
- F. Linkages are in place for referrals for clinical care and behavioral and social services specific to LGBTQ youth that are not offered on site.
- G. Linkages are in place for referrals to services related to sexual violence.
- H. Staff assists clients in making connections with referral resources, and has a protocol for follow-up, particularly with the most complex and vulnerable clients.

## Standard 5

### **Provide contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception (EC), to adolescents at risk for unintended pregnancy**

- A. Clinicians and health educators provide counseling on the most current contraceptive methods effective for adolescents, including specific instruction on use of chosen method.
- B. Clinic provides hormonal contraception.
- C. Pelvic exams are not required before provision of hormonal contraceptives, including EC.
- D. Quick-start method is used to initiate contraceptives when appropriate.
- E. Clinic provides the most effective forms of contraception available.
- F. Clinic provides effective emergency contraception on site for clients of all sizes.
- G. Clinicians and health educators confidentially offer condoms and other safer sex supplies to all adolescent clients.

## Standard 6

### **Provide prevention, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections**

- A. Clinic routinely screens all sexually active adolescents for STIs and HIV at least annually and include site specific testing as needed.
- B. Clinic offers counseling and treatment for all adolescents who test positive for an STI.
- C. Clinic has documented protocols for newly diagnosed HIV positive adolescents that include procedures for immediate care as well as referrals for on-going services

- D. Clinic provides expedited partner treatment for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea when appropriate.
- E. Clinicians ensure all adolescent clients are up to date on HPV and HepB vaccinations; clinic administers vaccinations or makes appropriate referral.
- F. Clinicians offer PrEP and PEP referrals as needed or requested by client.

## Standard 7

### **Offer information, assistance, and support for all decisions regarding pregnancy**

- A. Clinic offers pregnancy tests for adolescents and provides pregnancy test results in a confidential setting.
- B. Clinic provides options counseling to all adolescents with a positive pregnancy test, which includes discussing all pregnancy options (parenting, abortion, and adoption), assessing risk of violence and determining sources of support.
- C. Clinic provides contraceptive counseling to all adolescents with a negative pregnancy test.
- D. Clinic provides follow-up and support to all adolescent clients with a positive pregnancy test.
- E. Clinic staff knows MN laws regarding abortion, adoption, and paternity.
- F. Clinic has up-to-date referrals to adoption agencies, abortion providers and prenatal care providers.