

Informed Consent for minor patients

Member Fact Sheet Q&A

Summary of the Kinship Caregiver law

Washington recently passed a law clarifying who may give informed consent [permission] for medical treatment of a minor. Included in this law was the addition of a new category of individuals allowed to give informed consent: relatives who are raising a child in the absence of both parents. These individuals are commonly referred to as “kinship caregivers.” These adults can authorize health care for the minor by signing a declaration form. Once signed, the form is valid for six months.

The declaration form, as well as an “Authorization to Provide Informed Consent for Minor” form, are available in our medical centers as well as online at kp.org/wa.

“Kinship Caregivers” do **not** include relatives assuming temporary childcare responsibilities like babysitting or watching the child while the parents are at work, on vacation, incarcerated, etc. In these situations parents are still able to provide informed consent.

What you should know about informed consent

Whether or not you are a kinship caregiver, we would like to remind you that Kaiser Permanente does now and has always had policies regarding parental consent for care given to minor patients. Following are some facts about Kaiser Permanente’s current policies:

- As mentioned above, relatives who are raising a child (kinship caregivers) in the absence of both parents are required to provide a signed declaration form to us, which is valid for six months.
- When a child presents with a non-parental custodian (i.e., babysitter, grandparent) we require either written or verbal parental consent from a parent (staff often call parents).
- We may also provide care when a child presents with an adult who has one of the following documents: a Power of Attorney signed by a parent, an “Authorization to Provide Informed Consent for Minor”, or a court order proving guardianship status.

What about treatment for which my child is old enough to consent, for example, reproductive health services?

There are health services under Washington state law for which a minor can consent without the additional consent of an adult. In those situations, no parent or guardian consent is required.

What if my child should need emergency treatment, and I am not there?

This process does not affect our ability to provide emergency treatment for minors. No parent or guardian consent is required for emergency services when the patient’s parent, guardian or other decision-maker is not readily available.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Member Services toll-free, at 1-888-901-4636, Monday through Friday, 8a.m. – 5p.m.