



Boys and Girls Clubs Keystone Law

In 2016, the legislature passed and Governor Christie signed into law the Boys and Girls Clubs Keystone Law, which empowers youth 16 and older to consent to certain behavioral health treatment services on their own, without separate authorization from a parent or legal guardian. A copy of the law is available on the [New Jersey Legislature's Website](#). What follows are frequently asked questions about the law.

What services does this law allow minors to consent to?

The law allows minors to consent to temporary, outpatient, behavioral-health-care services for the treatment of mental illness or emotional disorders. The rule does not apply to the administration or use of medications. Services may be received from a physician licensed to practice medicine, an advanced practice nurse, or an individual licensed to provide professional counseling under Title 45 of the Revised Statutes, including, but not limited to, a psychiatrist, licensed practicing psychologist, certified social worker, licensed clinical social worker, licensed social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, certified psychoanalyst, or licensed psychologist, or in an outpatient health care facility licensed pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 26:2H-1 et seq.*

Does this pertain to all minors?

No. The law only permits 16 and 17 year olds to consent to these services.

Will the treatment be confidential?

If treatment is provided based on the consent of the minor, it must be treated as confidential to the same degree it would be for any adult. That means, importantly, that information usually cannot be disclosed without the minor's consent to his or her parents or guardians.

If a provider is uncomfortable providing services without parental consent, can he or she require it?

Yes. If the provider believes that parental involvement or consent is necessary, he or she can require it.

Does this mean an adolescent can refuse treatment?

No. If the treatment provider and the minor's parents believe that treatment is necessary, the law does not allow a minor to overrule that determination.