

Documentation Standards Committee
Adolescent Sensitive Note Content and Documentation

In keeping with the AAP and the other medical societies, CHW providers will encourage and support adolescents to discuss their sexual activity, STI testing, contraceptive management and substance abuse with their parents/guardians, but will support the right to adolescent privacy on these matters as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes, federal law and case law. Information related to sexual abuse or assault of minors is not considered protected because it is a form of child abuse.

- When a patient who is less than 18 years of age presents for care related to sexual activity, STI testing, contraceptive management and ambulatory substance abuse treatment, the adolescent should be informed of their ability to obtain the care confidentially. Details of the conversation should be documented in an Adolescent Sensitive note as outlined below.
- Adolescents may waive their right to confidential care to all or just some of this sensitive information (SI). If an adolescent waives their right to confidential care, providers should document this waiver and the topics open for discussion with their parents/guardians in a standard progress note.
- Providers should inform the adolescent under what circumstances that confidential care cannot be maintained.
- Non –sensitive information should be recorded in a standard progress note including negative responses to screening health questionnaires such as HEADSSS.

Adolescent Sensitive Note:

1. All medical information is considered confidential for adults (≥ 18 years of age) and generally not released without the patient's written consent (except as allowed by law).
2. An Adolescent Sensitive note should be used by all providers to document information that is granted special legal privacy protections (Sensitive Information) to patients less than 18 years of age who do not want this information shared with their parents/guardians. This SI includes:
 - a. sexual activity, STI screening, STI results, contraception, pregnancy and substance abuse appropriate for ambulatory treatment services.
3. The provider should review with the patient the confidentiality/privacy protections and limitations.
 - a. Providers should identify times when confidentiality/privacy protections cannot be maintained:
 - i. If the sensitive information needs to be shared to obtain consent from the parent/guardian for a medically necessary procedure
 - ii. If the patient is at risk of harm to self, others or maltreatment
 - iii. If the patient is being harmed by others while engaging in sexual activity or substance use

- iv. If the patient is being coerced to engage in sexual activity or substance use
 - v. appointment reminders may be sent to the parents
 - vi. If they test positive for a reportable STI, a public health nurse may contact their home
 - b. Other care providers will have access to these notes
 - c. CHW Medical records will not release Adolescent Sensitive notes to parents/guardians.
 - d. Pharmacies may have a different process which may result in the release of information on medications that are filled for minor patients.
 - e. Patients covered by commercial insurance, the explanation of benefits that a parent receives may contain details of testing and services.
- 4. Sensitive Information should never be listed in the problem list, copied from the Adolescent Sensitive note into any other documentation in the EHR. Details of the Adolescent Sensitive note should not be referred to in any other documentation within the EHR.
 - a. Adolescent Sensitive notes are listed in the Notes section of EPIC
 - b. Providers should review these notes when providing care to adolescent patients so they are aware of a patient's sensitive information that may impact the treatment they are providing
 - c. Encounters that include Adolescent Sensitive notes, providers may in their standard progress note refer in their Assessment or Plan to "Adolescent Note" in order to prompt other providers to review PI provided
- 5. If a provider inadvertently includes SI in a regular note, you may open the encounter as an addendum, cut the PI from the regular note and create an Adolescent Sensitive note and paste the PI into this note.
 - a. If a provider is unable to open an encounter that inadvertently includes PI in a regular progress note, the provider should contact Medical Records to review options available for providing the requested privacy .
- 6. Providers may want to establish a method to communicate to patients confidentially by phone
 - a. Document if the patient has access to a confidential phone number, this number should be documented in EPIC adolescent sensitive note.
 - i. Providers should consider having the patient create a Password for phone communication so clinic staff can confirm they are speaking with the patient and not someone posing as the patient.
 - ii. If a password is created, it should be documented in EPIC with the confidential phone number
 - iii. Determine if voice mail messages can be left and the level of detail the message can include
 - b. Patient's confidential phone number and password should be shared with Public Health nurses and others who may need to contact patient regarding their PI.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is not strictly considered SI. However, if a patient is sexually active the gender of partners can be included as SI. For a patient with an alternative sexual orientation who is not sexually active, the provider should have a discussion with the patient about inclusion of this information in the EHR.

My Chart

Patients > age 14 must give permission for parents/guardians to have access to information contained in their My Chart. Patients should be informed they may revoke this access at any time, but will be required every 2 years to review whether they want the parent/guardian to have continued My Chart access.

Sexual Abuse/ Assault:

All health care providers are mandated to report a history of sexual abuse/assault in a patient < age 18, even if disclosed years after the abuse/assault.

Mental Health:

In the state of WI for patients < age 18, all mental health issues can be shared with parents. Patients generally cannot receive confidential mental health care without parent knowledge. At the age of 14 years old, patients must agree (assent) to mental health treatment. Documentation of this information should occur in a standard progress note by non behavioral health providers.

Other options for care

Patients should be informed of the option to obtain confidential care services and medications from other entities such as Planned Parenthood. Patients requesting confidential care should be provided with a resource list for confidential services in SE Wisconsin. The list can be found Q Drive CMG/CMG Clinics/Teen Health/Confidential Card

Summary Table:

Treatment concern	Information Protection Status	Documentation Note Type
Sexual assault /abuse	No protection – Must be reported to authorities	Standard progress note
Tobacco use	Answers to this “Meaningful Use” measures are tracked through documentation in the social history section	Standard progress note
Mental Health	No protection	Standard progress note
Pregnancy	Adolescent may choose to protect as PI	Adolescent Sensitive note
Contraception	Adolescent may choose to protect as PI	Adolescent Sensitive note
STD testing and treatment	Adolescent may choose to protect as PI	Adolescent Sensitive note
Ambulatory Substance abuse: alcohol and drugs	Adolescent may choose to protect as PI	Adolescent Sensitive note
Acute Detox or Inpatient Alcohol or Drug Treatment	No protection	Standard Progress note
Gender of sexual partners	Adolescent may choose to protect as PI	Adolescent Sensitive note