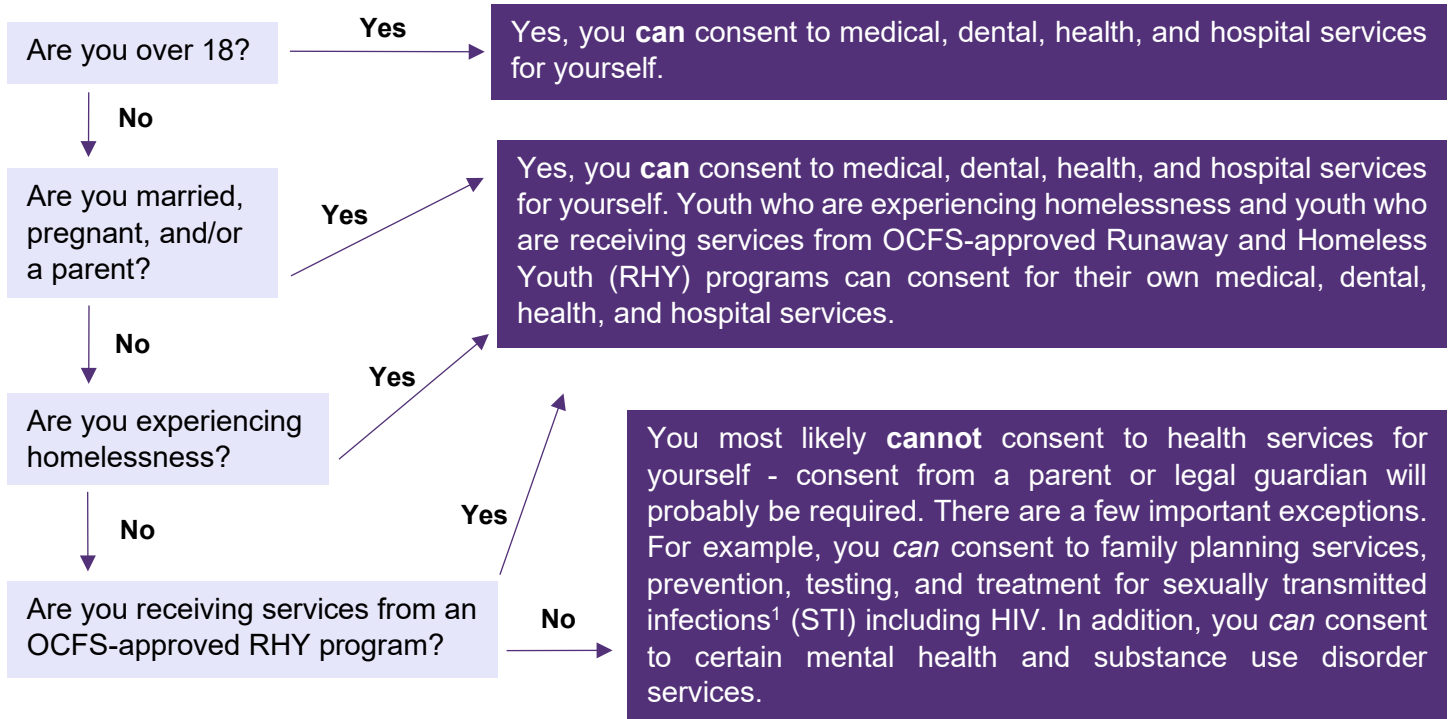




Medical Consent for Youth Under 18 and Experiencing Homelessness

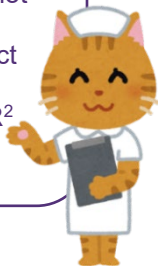
Can I consent to medical, dental, health, and hospital services for myself?



Scan this QR code to access Public Health Law section 2504 so you can share it with your healthcare provider!



Knowing a minor is homeless or receiving RHY services does not always indicate abuse or neglect and may not require an SCR² report.



Consent is *not* the only consideration in whether you can access care.

There are other factors that might impact your ability to access care. For example, a provider:

- must believe that you understand the health concern and the risks and benefits of any treatment, and
- can require payment before offering treatment, unless there is an emergency requiring medical intervention.

¹ Per 10 NYCRR 23.4, minors can consent to prevention, testing and treatment for STIs without parent consent or knowledge. Providers cannot share medical or billing records with the minor's parent or guardians without their consent.

² The Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment takes calls about alleged abuse, neglect, and maltreatment and shares that information with Child Protective Services (CPS).

Do I need to bring any documents to my doctor appointment?

You should **bring your ID and health insurance card** if you have one. If you are currently receiving services from an OCFS-approved Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program, you can ask the program staff to write a letter on your behalf to the healthcare providers. The letter can help remind the doctor about the new law and confirm you are currently experiencing homelessness and/or receiving services from an RHY program. This letter is **not** required to access care, but it might be helpful.

What kind of medical, dental, health, and hospital services can I consent to for myself?

Youth who meet the criteria above can consent to all kinds of healthcare services **including, but not limited to**, physical exams, vision tests and glasses, hearing exams and hearing aids, reproductive and sexual health services, treatments for illness and conditions, vaccines, and gender-affirming care. You may need to pay upfront for any procedures or care that are not medically necessary.

Will my parents or legal guardians be notified that I received medical care?

It depends. If you tell your healthcare provider that you do not consent to information about your care being shared with anyone, your provider must honor your request under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA does not stop insurance providers from notifying their policy holders about services provided. Typically, this information is shared by mail and is referred to as an Explanation of Benefits (EOB). There are some instances where patients can request that an EOB not be mailed. You can reach out to your insurance company to ask how to make this request.

What can I do if a healthcare provider refuses to treat me?

If your provider is not aware of the new law, you can scan the QR code on the front of this flyer to share it with them. If they still refuse to provide you treatment, contact a trusted adult and ask for help finding care. If you want to file a complaint about the provider to the NYS Department of Health (DOH), you can search for DOH-3867 (a complaint form) and follow the instructions. You can also make a complaint to the office manager.

I don't have health insurance, but I need medical care. What can I do?

Essential, emergency care must be provided regardless of your ability to pay. For non-emergency care, you can ask a trusted adult to help you find a community health center or walk-in clinic where you can get free or low-cost services.

The healthcare system is confusing. Who can help me?

The healthcare system is hard to navigate by yourself. RHY program staff can go to appointments with you and help you have conversations with healthcare providers by phone before and after appointments. Residential RHY programs can be found on the OCFS website through the QR code on the right. You can also ask your care provider's office if they have a social worker on staff who can help you understand your options.



RHY Program Directory



Teen's Guide to Healthcare and Law



Public LGBTQ+ Healthcare Resources