

# Fact Sheet Series for the 136th General Assembly

House Bill 172: Prohibit mental health service to minors without consent

Sponsor: Representative Newman



*This material was created by the public policy team at OAESV. Contact [egemar@oaesv.org](mailto:egemar@oaesv.org) with questions.*

## CURRENT LAW

In Ohio, a minor age 14 or older can receive up to six counseling sessions or 30 days of services, whichever comes first, without parental consent for outpatient mental health services, excluding medication (see: [O.R.C. 5122.04](#)).

After the sixth session or 30 days, the mental health professional must either terminate services or, with the minor's consent, notify the parent or guardian to obtain consent for further services.

## IF PASSED, THE BILL WOULD:

- Repeal O.R.C. 5122.04, thereby eliminating the six counseling sessions or 30 days of services for minors age 14 or above without parental consent

## IMPACT & CONSIDERATIONS

### Barriers to seeking help

Victims of sexual abuse may already feel a sense of shame, guilt, or fear about disclosing the abuse. If counseling services require parental consent, many minors might be unwilling or unable to seek help, especially if they fear their parents may not believe them, blame them, or react negatively.



### Inability to escape abusive environments

Some minors live in situations where they cannot safely disclose abuse to their parents, either because of fear of the abuser, lack of trust in their caregivers, or potential lack of emotional support. Without the ability to access confidential counseling, victims will lose an option to receive the help they need to escape an abusive environment or to begin healing.

## TALKING POINTS

Requiring parental consent for counseling sessions could create significant barriers to mental health support for minors who are victims of sexual abuse.

This approach risks silencing those who need help the most, particularly if the parent is the abuser or is unsupportive.

The lack of accessible counseling could delay or prevent healing, exacerbate trauma, and undermine a minor's ability to recover and regain control over their life.

Social stigma around mental health and sexual violence are already factors that deter teens from seeking help. Ohio should explore options to boost availability of supportive services.