



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF MINORS

### DEFINITION OF A MINOR CHILD

Persons under 18 years of age are minors and are considered legally incapacitated until they reach the age of majority (age 18). There is a general presumption that minors are incapable of entering into valid legal contracts or providing valid consent to most types of medical or surgical treatment. Exceptions are situations in which the court has declared a minor emancipated, such as when the minor:

- Has married;
- Has given birth;
- Has entered the United States armed services, or
- Is living apart from parents or guardian, has been emancipated by the court, becoming employed and managing his or her own affairs.

### AUTHORITY OVER THE MINOR CHILD

Prior to reaching the age of majority, a minor is generally under the control and authority of a parent or guardian. A parent is responsible for the care, support, and treatment by others of his or her minor child. An appointed guardian is given similar authority by statute and has the power to consent to medical or other professional care and treatment of the minor's health and welfare. A minor patient who presents for an appointment unaccompanied by the parent may be seen as long as the treatment does not require a specific consent. If consent is required (i.e., for a surgical procedure, immunization, or treatment option), it must be provided by the parent or legal guardian. Persons such as a neighbor, sibling, nanny, or babysitter are unable to give authorization for any treatment.

**In cases of divorce:** We operate under the assumption that divorced parents have joint custody, in lieu of court documentation that states otherwise. If such documentation exists, the custodial parent must provide it to us.

### SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

An unemancipated minor is able to provide consent for treatment and care for conditions relating to pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, substance use and abuse, contraception and/or family planning services. In addition, a parent or legal guardian will not be able to access the minor's medical records or any other forms of information that pertain to these conditions and their treatment, under all circumstances except for emergencies. As a result, we may need to refer the minor patient to another facility for treatment and follow-up for one of these conditions.