

Adolescent Confidentiality Policy



Commonwealth Pediatrics
Boston Children's
Primary Care Alliance

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At Commonwealth Pediatrics, we want to recognize and support our teenage patients' evolving maturity and independence. Adolescence is a time of transition toward adulthood and we believe that we should support this healthy transition in our office. Toward this goal, we want our teens and parents to be aware of the following:

- During our adolescent well visits, we will have part of each visit alone with our teens. We see this as an opportunity for teens to become more comfortable speaking alone with their healthcare provider, as they will need to do independently once they are adults themselves. We also want to give all teens an opportunity to address any and all of their healthcare concerns in a private and confidential manner.
- When teens share something with us that they wish to remain confidential, we will always honor that request, unless it involves potential harm to themselves or someone else. Although we always encourage adolescent patients to be open and honest with their parents, we also want them to have a "safe" place to go with any health concerns and we would like to be that safe place. We hope that parents will trust us to take the best care of our teens in these situations.
- We are also happy to speak privately with parents during the visit, at their request, about any concerns that they may want to share with us about their teen. We will maintain our patient's confidentiality in these discussions, however.
- These confidentiality parameters extend to any telephone calls that we may have with our teen patients about their healthcare, including discussions about appropriate lab/imaging evaluations and results.
- Access to our secure online patient portal called MyChart is designed to adhere to principles of this confidentiality policy. When the patient turns 13 years old, he/she is able to sign up for his/her own unrestricted MyChart account. Parent/guardian accounts, however, automatically become limited at this age. Therefore, we strongly recommend that our teen patients have their own accounts in addition to the parent/guardian account.

Only the following services are available to parents/ legal guardians once the patient turns 13:

- Ability to make appointments
- Ability to communicate with providers via secure messaging regarding health concerns
- Ability to view immunization histories, allergies, some test results and medications, and the health form
- Ability to pay bills

This policy is consistent with Massachusetts state law surrounding adolescent confidentiality, as well as the policies of the Society for Adolescent Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. We consider it a privilege to take care of our teens and we look forward to working together, with this policy in mind, as our teens grow up!