



*"Making A Difference -  
One Student At A Time"*

# Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals

[← Back to list](#)

## IS AGE 14 REALLY THE AGE OF MENTAL HEALTH CONSENT?

Terry Kerr (Administrator) | Tuesday, September 03, 2019 10:12 AM

By Carolyn Welshonce - PASAP Board Director

For years, I have been telling families that there is little they can do for their age 14 plus minor who might be resistant to receiving mental health services. I was always under the impression that once a student reaches the age of 14, the student is then able to make all of their own mental health decisions, leaving their parents with their hands tied. I then received documentation of Act No. 2004-147 (Senate Bill No. 137, Session of 2004) which was issued on June 29, 2018 and defines consent to mental health treatment for minor children.

Act No. 2004-147 addresses minors who are 14 years of age but less than 18 years of age. According to Act No. 2004-147 a parent is not able to deny services to a 14 year old student who is seeking mental health services. This should be a rule that most of us are likely accustomed to; however, also according to Act No. 2004-147, a parent is now able to provide consent to outpatient treatment services without the consent of the minor. I was always aware that parents were not able to deny services to a 14 year old student; however, I was very happy to



see that this Act allows parents to arrange services for their 14 plus year old service-resistant minor.

Here are some more details that you might be interested to learn. A 14 year old plus minor is not able to object to voluntary outpatient services in which the parent has arranged. At the same time, a parent is not able to object to voluntary outpatient services in which the student has arranged. When looking at inpatient services, a student is still able to voluntarily consent to those services without parental consent. A parent is also able to consent to inpatient services for their 14 year old plus minor without needing to initiate the involuntary treatment process. If a 14 year old plus minor objects to an inpatient treatment service that a parent has initiated, he/she would have the ability to petition the court and request withdrawal from the treatment.

There are other components of Act No. 2004-147 that you might find useful as you work with these age 14 plus minors. To read more about Act No. 2004-147 please follow this link: [http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_276794.pdf](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_276794.pdf) or contact the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Bureau of Policy, Planning and Program at 717-772-7900. Thank you for all you do to help support all of our school aged students. Have a wonderful year and remember to take time for your own self-care.

Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals  
PO Box 1254  
State College, Pennsylvania 16804

Email us: [support@pasap.org](mailto:support@pasap.org)