WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §16-2R-5

§16-2R-5. Requirements when an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor.

(a) If an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor under the circumstances set forth in §16-2R-3(a) of this code, the licensed medical professional or his or her agent shall provide notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor within 48 hours after the abortion is performed:

(1) Directly, in person, or by telephone to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor; or

(2) By certified mail addressed to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor at their usual place of residence, return receipt requested. The delivery shall be sent restricted delivery assuring that the letter is delivered only to the addressee. Time of delivery shall be deemed occur at 12:00 p.m. on the next day on which regular mail delivery takes place.

(b) If an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor under the circumstances set forth in §16-2R-3(c) of this code, the licensed medical professional may not perform an abortion until notice of the pending abortion as required by this section is complete.

(1) A licensed medical professional or his or her agent may personally give notice directly, in person, or by telephone to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor. Upon delivery of the notice, 48 hours shall pass until the abortion may be performed.

(2) A licensed medical professional or his or her agent may provide notice by certified mail addressed to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor at their usual place of residence, return receipt requested. The delivery shall be sent restricted delivery assuring that the letter is delivered only to the addressee. Time of delivery shall be deemed to occur at 12:00 p.m. on the next day on which regular mail delivery takes place. Forty-eight hours shall pass from the date and time of presumed delivery until the abortion may be performed.

(3) Notice may be waived if the person entitled to notice certifies in writing that he or she has been notified. Notice is waived if the certified mail is refused.

(4) An unemancipated minor who objects to the notice being given to a parent, guardian, or custodian may petition for a waiver of the notice to the circuit court of the county in which the unemancipated minor resides. The petition shall be filed under seal.

(5) The petition is not required to be in any specific form and shall be sufficient if it fairly sets forth the facts and circumstances of the matter, but at a minimum shall contain the

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following information:

(A) The age and educational level of the unemancipated minor;

(B) The county in which the unemancipated minor resides; and

(C) A brief statement of the unemancipated minor's reason or reasons for the desired waiver of notification of the parent, guardian, or custodian of such unemancipated minor.

(6) A petition may not be dismissed nor may any hearing thereon be refused because of any actual or perceived defect in the form of the petition.

(7) The Supreme Court of Appeals is requested to prepare suggested form petitions and accompanying instructions and shall make the same available to the clerks of the circuit courts. The clerks shall make the form petitions and instructions available in the clerk's office.

(8) The proceedings held pursuant to this subsection shall be confidential and the court shall conduct the proceedings in camera. The court shall inform the unemancipated minor of her right to be represented by counsel. If the unemancipated minor desires the services of an attorney, an attorney shall be appointed to represent her, if the unemancipated minor advises the court under oath or affidavit that she is financially unable to retain counsel.

(9) The court shall conduct a hearing upon the petition forthwith, but may not exceed the next succeeding judicial day. The court shall render its decision immediately and enter its written order not later than 24 hours. All testimony, documents, evidence, petition, orders entered thereon and all records relating to the matter shall be sealed by the clerk and shall not be opened to any person except upon order of the court upon a showing of good cause.

(10) Notice as required by this subsection (b) shall be ordered waived by the court if the court finds either:

(A) That the unemancipated minor is sufficiently mature and informed to make the decision to proceed with the abortion independently and without the notification or involvement of her parent, guardian, or custodian; or

(B) That notification to the person or persons to whom notification would otherwise be required would not be in the best interest of the unemancipated minor.

(11) A confidential appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeals shall be available to any unemancipated minor to whom a court denies a petition under this subsection. An order authorizing an abortion without notification is not appealable.

(12) Filing fees are not required in any proceeding under this subsection.

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