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## CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

### HB 4501

## Unaccompanied Minors Access to Basic Health Care

*Chief House Sponsor Greg Harris*

### **What this bill does**

- ✓ HB 4501 ensures that minors experiencing homelessness or otherwise living independent of a legal guardian are able to access to routine health care.
- ✓ This bill gives health care providers the **discretion** to treat an unaccompanied minor without first being required to obtain consent from a parent or guardian when a minor is living independently.
- ✓ This bill only applies to minors that are living independently and are managing their own affairs.
- ✓ This bill allows a minor to invite a trusted adult such as a social worker to a doctor's appointment to help them make health care decisions.

### **Why this bill is necessary**

This bill is necessary to realize Illinois' goal of reforming its health care system into one that focuses on prevention, health, and access to quality care by removing a significant barrier to accessing health care that an estimated 10,000 unaccompanied minors face in Illinois.

Most minors are required to obtain the consent of a parent or guardian in order to access basic health care services. This can be difficult for minors who left home and have since lost contact with their parent or guardian.

Unaccompanied minors are vulnerable and at risk of developing lifelong illnesses that can lead to homelessness and long-term unemployment. These risks are worsened by the fact that unaccompanied minors cannot currently access preventive wellness check-ups or care for easily treatable conditions like strep throat or asthma.

This bill helps reverse this trend by allowing unaccompanied minors to access services that promote long term health and stability.

### **This bill does NOT...**

- This bill does NOT affect a minor's access to abortion, birth control, or other sexual health services.
- This bill does NOT require a doctor to provide a service when they believe the minor is not mature enough to make an informed decision.
- This bill does NOT allow a minor who lives with parents or guardians to obtain health care services without their involvement.
- This bill does NOT affect a health care provider's duties as a mandated reporter in cases of abuse or neglect.

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