

I am a nurse and work currently in community mental health. I originally brought this issue to Rep. Antonio's attention in 2011 when I called to make her aware of what I felt was a gap in current Ohio law. When working as a registered nurse on a labor and delivery floor in Ohio I witnessed minors going through the labor process unable to consent to their own medical treatment specifically epidurals. I worked in a county hospital at the time and witnessed this affecting specifically vulnerable populations the most, young girls who had experienced trauma and were presenting without a parent or guardian. I worked nights and at times we were unable to get an emergency guardian from DCFS to present to sign consents in time to give the care that the young woman was requesting. Natural labor can be an amazing process but when you are experiencing it alone, with limited knowledge and control it can be extremely traumatizing. As a healthcare provider I feel it is important to empower these young women, these mothers-to-be to make decisions regarding their health and the health of their babies as we expect of them mere hours after we deny them medical assistance.