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Letter: Parents, beware new health survey

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To the editor:

Parents, beware of a dangerous new policy initiated by HealthPartners this past June. The new policy – regarding your children – requires clinicians to administer a 23-question health questionnaire entitled “Adolescent & Teen Visits: Teen Questionnaire (12-18 yrs old)” to be answered only by the adolescent.

After the adolescent fills out the questionnaire, the parent is asked to leave the child alone with the clinician so the clinician can engage the child, one-on-one, about the answers and personal concerns. Two of the questions are as follows:

Question #14: “Do you or anyone you live with have a gun or carry around a gun?”

Question #20: “Are you or do you ever wonder if you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex or asexual (LGBTQIA)?”

Why are they asking children to discuss 23 personal and invasive questions with a total stranger rather than encouraging them to confide in their parents to strengthen the parent/child bond? It absolutely sends a powerful message that the clinician is “safer” and more trustworthy than a child’s own parents!

In addition, parents have not approved nor vetted these “clinicians” for personal and private relationships with our children. They don’t know their social backgrounds, morals, temperaments or values. Yet parents and guardians of minor children are expected to hand them over to virtual strangers to discuss intimate and delicate issues in a young person’s life? Can you spell Dr. Nassar?

And where could the child’s personal answers go? State law allows the Minnesota Department of Health to require providers and health plans to “provide patient health records and claim files” (M.S. 62J.321) for research and other initiatives. HealthPartners also refers adolescents to Planned Parenthood without parental knowledge or consent.

HealthPartners is egregiously overstepping its authority. Instead of being “partners,” they are inserting themselves between parents and their children!

Parents, refuse to have your child fill out the questionnaire – a tool for someone’s undisclosed social agenda.

Forbid any clinic from holding a private meeting with your child and a clinician. This is your right as a parent! And demand that they discontinue the use of this outrageous questionnaire.

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