

March 8, 2023

Statement of Opposition to Legislation Banning Access to Gender-Affirming Health Care in the US

Both the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the US affiliate, the United States Professional Association for Transgender Health (USPATH), vehemently oppose the broad and sweeping legislation being introduced and ratified in states across the country to ban access to gender-affirming health care to transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people. WPATH's long-standing Standards of Care for Transgender and Gender Diverse People, now in its eighth version (SOC8), explain in detail the science- and evidence-based benefits of gender affirming care for TGD people. Any legislation that restricts or prohibits access to this care is against best practice medical standards and is condemned by WPATH and USPATH.

"Anti-transgender health care legislation is not about protections for children but about eliminating transgender persons on a micro and macro scale," said WPATH President, Dr. Marci Bowers. "It is a thinly veiled attempt to enforce the notion of a gender binary."

"Legislation that bans gender-affirming care is frequently based on misinformation and false statements meant to stir unfounded fears resulting in harmful and baseless laws about what happens between a doctor and their patient," said USPATH President and Professor of Family & Community Medicine, University of California - San Francisco, Maddie Deutsch, MD, MPH. "If and when these laws are enacted, they will undoubtedly lead to further harm for transgender and gender diverse people seeking this lifesaving care; these laws offer no protection in any way, shape, or form. All gender-affirming care should be provided in accordance with current professional best practices and standards according to evidence-based recommendations included in SOC8. Medical professionals and experts who research and practice in this field must be able to do their jobs in providing life-saving care for their patients without legislative intervention."

The Standards of Care state that, "the goal of gender-affirming care is to partner with TGD people to holistically address their social, mental, and medical health needs and well-being while respectfully affirming their gender identity. Gender-affirming care supports TGD people across the lifespan—from the very first signs of gender incongruence in childhood through adulthood and into older age." It's important to note that gender-affirming care is not inherently transition-related care, which may include medical gender affirmation via hormone suppression or hormone replacement therapy and/or gender-affirming surgeries. Per SOC-8, transition-

related care is not recommended for every TGD person in every situation, and various chapters explain in detail best-practice care guidelines for TGD people of varying ages. For example, the only gender-affirming care for children recommended in SOC-8 is social support or social transition, in which a transgender or gender diverse child would be able to use a name, pronouns, and gender expression (including haircut or clothing) that aligns with their gender. At no point does SOC-8 recommend transition-related care or medical intervention for children before the age of puberty.

All major medical associations including WPATH have supported the provision of gender-affirming care for TGD people as medically necessary care. Global contributors of SOC-8 participated in rigorous debate and methodology using the Delphi process to ratify science- and evidence-based guidelines for care. Legislation that seeks to inhibit or restrict access to care are in direct contradiction to decades of research and numerous studies touting the overwhelming mental and physical health benefits of gender-affirming care for TGD people.

WPATH and USPATH unequivocally denounce and condemn any previous, current, or proposed legislation that would take medical decision-making away from TGD people and their families. Any current or forthcoming laws are against medical best practices, against science-based recommendations, and are an attack against human rights.

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