January 20, 2023

Regarding House Bill 1301

Dear House Members,

My testimony is in opposition to HB 1254. I ask that you give this bill a **DO NOT PASS.**

The reason for my opposition to this bill includes:

1) As a pediatric endocrinologist, this bill will impact the care of my patients. Prohibiting the appropriate medical care for my patients with gender dysphoria would go against my most important oath. The Hippocratic Oath I swore to includes **DO NO HARM**. Not providing the necessary medical treatment to my patients will put them at risk for self-harm and suicide.

2) There are many medical treatments that patients and parents seek that like hormone treatment for gender dysphoria, have irreversible effects.

    a. Patients born with dwarfism will often undergo permanent limb lengthening surgical treatments that will permanently alter their appearance. This is cosmetic, not medical. It is to alleviate the distress they feel about being short and for a condition that they genetically inherited and is part of their DNA

    b. Patients who are short and are treated with growth hormone therapy to become permanently taller. This treatment also goes against their genetic predisposition based on part of their DNA.

    c. Patients who are born with ambiguous genitalia due to genetic conditions will often undergo genital surgery to repair a genetic condition that they were born with.

All of these conditions are done to alleviate a distress about personal appearance and not for a medical reason other than the psychological effects of their inherited or genetic traits. Yet, somehow patients who are born with the wrong genetic code that does not match their gender identity may be denied the same rights simply because lawmakers and other feels they should not have the right to decide for themselves what is right for them.

Treatment for gender dysphoria includes pubertal hormone blockers, hormone affirmation treatments and surgery is only done in conjunction with their behavioral health team, based on standards of care and with the consent of the patient and parents. **I should not be criminalized for practicing under the scope of my training and when following standards of care.**

In North Dakota, a child or teen can get a permanent and disfiguring tattoo as long as they have the parent's consent. Yet with parental consent, the same adolescent is not given the same rights to alter their physical appearance to conform to their gender identity.

3) Patients with gender dysphoria will seek treatment whether it is in North Dakota or in another state. Banning these treatments will only assure that many families will be displaced and leave North Dakota knowing that the place they called home, rejected them and did not support them. I can tell you that there are many adolescents and young adults with gender dysphoria that are children of physicians, lawyers, business owners, working in our government, in our churches and in many industry in the state of North Dakota. Are you willing to lose this talent and distract other potential talent from coming to the State of North Dakota because of these bigoted laws?

4) As one of only two pediatric endocrinologist in the state, gender affirmation treatment is part of my practice and something that nearly every pediatric endocrinologist in the country treats because it is the right thing to do for these patients. There is a national shortage of pediatric endocrinologist in the country who care for children with diabetes, thyroid disorders, endocrine tumors, growth concerns and other endocrine things. The state of North Dakota cannot afford to lose medical providers who seek to work in states that provide them with the ability to care for their patients in the manner we were trained to do and not how lawmakers feel we should practice.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service to our state.