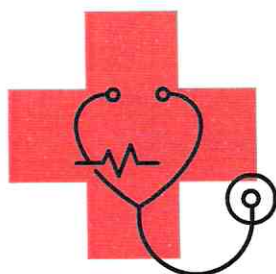




What is gender-affirming care?



Gender-affirming care is **medically necessary health care that helps transgender people be seen, safe, and comfortable in who they are.**¹ Access to this life-saving care allows transgender people to thrive and experience joy living as their authentic selves.²

Supporting transgender youth in their gender identity **improves mental health and overall well-being,** as evidenced in decades of peer-reviewed scientific research studies.^{3,4}



Treatment for transgender youth before puberty never includes medical or surgical interventions.⁵ Instead, **pre-pubescent youth need social support that respects their chosen name, pronouns, and gender identity.**⁶ Social support is recommended by pediatricians and is fully reversible.⁷

Once puberty begins, **expert standards of medical care** recommend puberty delay medication, a safe and temporary pause that allows young people to explore and understand their gender.⁸ Care for transgender youth **always involves their parents, their doctors, and mental health professionals.**⁹



Gender-affirming care is **safe, medically necessary, and supported by every major professional medical association** in the United States.¹⁰⁻¹⁴



WHITMAN-WALKER

References

What is gender-affirming care and what can policy makers do?

¹ Achille, C., Taggart, T., Eaton, N. R., Osipoff, J., Tafuri, K., Lane, A., & Wilson, T. A. (2020). Longitudinal impact of gender-affirming endocrine intervention on the mental health and well-being of transgender youths: preliminary results. *International Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13633-020-00078-2>

- Transgender adolescents and young adults who received gender-affirming medical treatments reported improved mental health and quality of life over time.

² Heylens, G., Verroken, C., De Cock, S., T'Sjoen, G., & De Cuypere, G. (2014). Effects of Different Steps in Gender Reassignment Therapy on Psychopathology: A Prospective Study of Persons with a Gender Identity Disorder. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 11(1). 119-126. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1111/jsm.12363>

- Patients followed for more than three years at a Gender Clinic in Belgium saw significant decreases in psychoneurotic distress (including anxiety and depression) after receiving hormone therapy.
- Patients indicated they had a better mood and increased happiness after receiving gender-affirming treatment.

³ deVries, A. L. C., McGuire, J. K., Steensma, T. D., Wagenaar, E. C. F., Doreleijers, T. A. H., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2014). Young adult psychological outcome after puberty suppression and gender reassignment. *Pediatrics*, 134(4). 696-704. doi: 10.1542/peds.2013-2958

- Transgender youth who received gender-affirming medical care in adolescence had alleviated gender dysphoria and improved psychological functioning in young adulthood.

⁴ Green, A. E., DeChants, J. P., Price, M. N., & Davis, C. K. (2022). Association of Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy With Depression, Thoughts of Suicide, and Attempted Suicide Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 70(4). 643-649. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.10.036>

- Transgender youth who received gender-affirming hormone therapy had lower odds of depression and suicidal thoughts compared to youth who wanted this care but did not receive it.
- For transgender youth under 18, receipt of gender-affirming hormone therapy was associated with 40% lower odds of attempting suicide.

⁵ Hembree, W. C., Cohen-Kettenis, P. T., Gooren, L., Hanemman, S. E., Meyer, W. J., Murad M. H., Rosenthal, S. M., Safer, J. D., Tangpricha, V., & T'Sjoen, G. G., (2017). [Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline](#). *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 102(11). 3869-3903. doi:10.1210/jc.2017-01658

- The Endocrine Society advises that decisions regarding the social transition of prepubertal youths with gender dysphoria/gender incongruence are made with the assistance of a mental health provider or another experienced professional.
- They recommend *against* puberty blocking and gender-affirming hormone treatment in prepubertal children with documented gender dysphoria/gender incongruence.

⁶ Fontanari, A. M. V., Vilanova, F., Schneider, M. A., Chinazzo, I., Soll, B.M., Schwarz, K., Lobato, M.I.R., & Costa, A.B. (2020). [Gender Affirmation Is Associated with Transgender and Gender Nonbinary Youth Mental Health Improvement](#). *LGBT Health*, 7(5). 237-247. <http://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2019.0046>

- Transgender young people (aged 16-25) who were socially affirmed, including having their parents use their chosen name, reported having less anxiety and fewer depressive symptoms compared to trans youth whose parents never used their child's chosen name.

⁷ Rafferty, J., Yogman, M., Baum, R., Gambon, T. B., Lavin, A., Mattson, G., Wissow, L. S., Breuner, C., Alderman, E. M., Grubb, L. K., Powers, M. E., Upadhy, K., Wallace, S. B., Hunt, L., Gearhart, A. T., Harris, C., Lowe, K. M., Rodgers, C. T., & Sherer, I. M. (2018, October 1). *Ensuring comprehensive care and support for transgender and gender-diverse children and adolescents*. American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved December 29, 2022, from <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for>

- Social affirmation is a reversible intervention for children to express their gender identity through their chosen name, pronouns, hairstyle, clothing, etc.

⁸ Coleman, E., Radix, A. E., Bouman, W. P., Brown, G. R., de Vries, A. L. C., Deutsch, M.B., Ettner, R., Fraser, Goodman, L., Green, M. J., Hancock, A. B., Johnson, T. W., Karasic, D. H., Knudson, G. A., Leibowitz, S. F., Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. L., Monstrey, S. J., Motmans, J., Nahata, L.,...Arcelus, J. (2022). [Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8](#). *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 23. S1-S259. DOI: 10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644

- The Standards of Care for transgender youths recognize that youth may have mental health concerns separate and distinct from their gender affirmation and strongly recommends mental and behavioral health assessments and care in advance of prescribing gender-affirming hormone therapies.
- Social gender affirmation means facilitating affirmation of a person's gender identity and expression through their hair, clothing, and name.

- Gender-affirming hormone treatments are not prescribed for prepubescent patients. The standards of care recognize that the onset of puberty can intensify feelings of gender incongruence or, for some youth, resolve feelings of gender incongruence.

⁹ UCSF Gender Affirming Health Program, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of California San Francisco. Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People; 2nd edition. Deutsch MB, ed. June 2016. Available at transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines.

The following statements from the five major medical associations demonstrate a consensus among medical practitioners that the current practice of gender-affirming care is well-within the boundaries of careful, patient-centered medical practice:

¹⁰ American Academy of Pediatrics (March 16, 2021). American Academy of Pediatrics speaks out against bills harming transgender youth. <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/americanacademy-of-pediatrics-speaks-out-against-bills-harming-transgender-youth/>

¹¹ American Medical Association (March 26, 2021). AMA fights to protect health care for transgender patients. <https://www.ama-assn.org/health-care-advocacy/advocacy-update/march-26-2021-state-advocacy-update>

¹² American Psychiatric Association (April 2, 2021). Frontline physicians oppose legislation that interferes in or criminalizes patient care. <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/news-releases/frontline-physicians-opposelegislation-that-interferes-in-or-criminalizes-patient-care>

¹³ The Endocrine Society (April 14, 2021). Endocrine Society condemns efforts to block access to medical care for transgender youth. https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2021-04/tes-esc041421.php

¹⁴ American Psychological Association, Division 54. Position Statement: Support Access to Gender-Affirming Care for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth. <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/division-54-statement-gender-affirmative-care.pdf>

Last updated December 2022

North Dakota Healthcare Providers Stand Up for Trans Youth

As North Dakota Healthcare Providers, we oppose legislation that would forbid healthcare professionals from providing gender-related care to our transgender young people. North Dakota needs to be a state where parents and families are free to pursue the best possible healthcare for our youth. As providers, we recognize the seriousness of Gender Dysphoria. Treating this condition improves functioning and saves lives. To ignore these needs would constitute medical neglect.

We use well-established best practices and ethical guidelines based on decades of scientific research in transgender care. We receive guidance from multiple professional sources including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, the Endocrine Society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the World Professional Association of Transgender Health. This evidenced-based care needs no legislative action.

Healthcare professionals who provide gender care do more than just serve transgender youth. We are diabetes providers, mental health providers, pediatricians, and more. If this ban on transgender youth care goes into effect, providers will consider leaving our state, decreasing access to care for everyone.

When providing this care, we see things like a student going from barely being able to raise their hand in class to competing on the debate team. We see kids finding themselves and thriving. This care, when medically appropriate, helps kids to be safe, happy, and healthy.

Please trust us, as medically trained and licensed healthcare providers. We urge our law-makers to vote "NO" on HB1254.

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