

OPPOSE HB 679 Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors

Dear Chairperson Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison and Members of the House Health Committee:

We strongly OPPOSE House Bill 679 as it is discriminatory and dangerous for transgender and gender nonconforming youth.

We represent the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students which is a community organization in Anne Arundel County that supports LGBTQIA youth through education, policy and advocacy. In our work, we interact with many gender nonconforming youth as well as their parents, educators and medical providers. It is crystal clear that hormone therapy for youth is treatment that is necessary and truly life-saving.

House Bill 679 is one more example of legislators who have biased, extremist views about gender affirming healthcare and transgender individuals that contradict facts and a large body of medical evidence. It is appalling to us that legislators in Maryland would rely on disinformation and prejudice instead of the reports of trans youth, their parents and reputable medical organizations like the American Medical Association (AMA).

Every major medical association recognizes the vital role of gender-affirming care in improving the physical health and mental well-being of transgender individuals. Widely accepted standards of care and clinical guidelines exist. Studies consistently show gender-affirming healthcare, especially hormone therapy, has been shown to dramatically improve mental health outcomes, including lower rates of depression and suicidality ([Green et al., 2022](#)). Receiving gender-affirming care has been linked to dramatically reduced rates of suicide attempts, decreased rates of depression and anxiety, decreased substance use, improved HIV medication adherence and reduced rates of harmful self-prescribed hormone use ([American Medical Association](#)).

For transgender or nonbinary adolescents, teens and young adults, growing up is especially challenging due to social stigma that is exacerbated by discriminatory state laws. Transgender people face a disproportionately high burden of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, and suicidality, which can be tied to gender dysphoria, societal stigma and discrimination. Evidence shows that [transgender or nonbinary youth who experience discrimination](#) have higher rates of serious mental health symptoms. It is important to note that the higher risk of mental health problems is not unavoidably associated with transgender status, but instead is the result of stigma, discrimination and mistreatment. A large body of medical literature demonstrates that with support at home, school and in the community—and with access to gender-affirming care—transgender youth do as well on mental health measures as their non-transgender peers (American Medical Association).

The AMA [strongly opposes](#) these types of discriminatory actions as dangerous government intrusions into the practice of medicine and the doctor/patient relationship. They state that decisions about gender affirming care should be made through shared decision-making between the patient, family, and physicians, without politicians inserting themselves into the medical exam room or second-guessing healthcare decisions. [AMA policy specifies](#) that clinical interventions for gender dysphoria should not be criminalized or otherwise restricted.

“We must reject efforts by politicians and government to insert themselves into clinical decision-making, to force physicians to disregard clinical standards of care, or prevent us from fulfilling our ethical duty to act in the best interest of our patients.” [\(AMA\)](#)

Everyone deserves quality, evidence-based medical care delivered without bias. Gender-affirming hormone treatment should not be banned; it is essential and life-saving healthcare.

WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO OPPOSE HB 679.

The Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students

www.coalition4lgbtqstudents.org

