



Oklahoma Psychiatric Physicians Association

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Opposition Position Statement

Legislation to Criminalize the Referral to/Delivery of Gender Affirming Care

House Bill 1011 and Senate Bill 129 were brought to the attention of the Oklahoma Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA). Due to the harmful, prejudiced nature of these bills and the overwhelming opposition immediately voiced by many of our members, we are compelled to release a Position Statement against these measures.

Our organization, as well as our parent organization the American Psychiatric Association, opposes any laws and regulations that discriminate against transgender and gender-diverse individuals or interfere in the confidential relationship between a patient and their physician. That confidentiality is critical to allow patients to trust physicians to properly counsel, diagnose and treat. Further, we strongly oppose any effort to criminalize or penalize physicians for providing necessary care for their patients. Physicians must be able to practice medicine that is informed by their years of medical education, training, experience, and the available evidence, freely and without threat of punishment. Patients and their physicians, not policy-makers, should be the ones to make decisions together about what care is best for them. We believe this legislation represents a dangerous governmental intrusion into the practice of medicine and will be detrimental to the health of transgender persons across the state. This bill would essentially insert the government into clinical decision-making and force physicians to disregard clinical guidelines for evidence-based treatment.

We believe it is inappropriate and harmful for any state to legislatively dictate that certain transition-related services are never appropriate and limit the range of options physicians and families may consider when making decisions for patients. In addition, evidence has demonstrated that forgoing gender-affirming care can have tragic consequences. Studies suggest that improved body satisfaction and self-esteem following the receipt of gender-affirming care is protective against poorer mental health and supports healthy relationships with parents and peers. Studies also demonstrate dramatic reductions in suicide attempts, as well as decreased rates of depression and anxiety. Other studies show that most patients report improved mental health and function after receipt of gender-affirming care. A recent prospective study following more than 100 transgender and nonbinary youth showed that those who received gender-affirming medications—including puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones—had a 60% lower odds of moderate or severe depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality over those first 12 months, compared with youth who did not receive such medications. We are joined in our opinion by the Oklahoma Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

The OPPOA is joined in this opinion by all major American medical societies including the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

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The Oklahoma Psychiatric Physicians Association, the Oklahoma branch of the American Psychiatric Association, is a non-profit membership organization qualifying under Section 501(c)6 of the Internal Revenue Code.