

May 13, 2021

Dear Senator:

As organizations dedicated to ensuring physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all Americans, we write to voice our support for the *Equality Act* and urge the Senate to pass this critical legislation that will provide affirmative, statutory nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ Americans both in the workplace and in the community.

There is no basis for the denial of equal rights to any human being because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status. The patchwork nature of current laws protecting LGBTQ people leaves many Americans subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their medical care, and their day-to-day lives. LGBTQ people need the explicit, permanent protections under our nation's existing civil rights laws that the Equality Act would provide with regards to access to care, housing, education, federally funded programs and more. Such protections will help to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination that threatens their health and well-being.

Despite some advances in public awareness and legal protections, those who identify as LGBTQ continue to face disparities, including from inequitable laws and policies, societal discrimination, and a lack of access to quality health care, including mental health care. All Americans deserve access to quality evidence-based health care regardless of gender or sexual orientation, yet a substantial body of research indicates that LGBTQ populations across the United States encounter significant barriers to health care.ⁱ Many LGBTQ people have difficulty finding providers who are knowledgeable about their needs, encounter discrimination from insurers or providers, or delay or forego care because of concerns about how they will be treated. The Equality Act is needed to help achieve the goal of health equity for all Americans.

Medical care for transgender youth is evidence-based and has proven effectiveness. Guidelines for appropriate treatment have been carefully developed and endorsed by American Academy of Pediatricsⁱⁱ, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologistsⁱⁱⁱ, the Endocrine Society and Pediatric Endocrine Society^{iv}, the American College of Physicians^v, World Professional Association for Transgender Health^{vi}, and the American Psychological Association.^{vii} The international consensus among health care professionals regarding treatment for gender dysphoria is to assist the patient to live in accordance their gender identity. In a gender-affirmative care model, providers offer developmentally appropriate care that is oriented toward understanding and appreciating a person's gender experience. Treatment may include counseling, social transition, hormone therapy and/or gender confirming surgeries. Before puberty, there is no medical or surgical treatment that is used at all; guidelines emphasize supporting children as they express themselves.

Improving access to gender-affirming care is an important means of improving health outcomes for the transgender population. The treatment for gender dysphoria is highly effective in reducing or eliminating the incongruence and associated distress between a person's gender identity and assigned sex at birth. Receipt of 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.^{viii}

The protections of the *Equality Act* would help to ensure that all Americans, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status are protected from discrimination that threatens their health and well-being. We urge you to take up and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

ACA Consumer Advocacy
Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Clinical Endocrinology
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Association
American Medical Student Association
American Pediatric Society
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Nephrology
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Center for Parental Leave Leadership
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Common Threads
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Endocrine Society
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Health Resources in Action
HIV Medicine Association
League of Women Voters of the United States
MomsRising
NASTAD
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Social Workers
National Consumers League
National Crittenton
National Employment Law Project
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association

National League for Nursing
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Pediatric Endocrine Society
Pediatric Policy Council
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
Trust for America's Health
Union for Reform Judaism
Young Invincibles

State Organizations

PFlag of Jacksonville
South Dakota Chapter of AAP
AAP Colorado
American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3
American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 2
American Academy of Pediatrics, DC Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter
Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
California Academy of Family Physicians
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Consumers for Affordable Health Care
Every Texan
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Florida Health Justice Project
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
Georgia Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Health Care For All
Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Immunize Nevada
Iowa Academy of Family Physicians
Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Chapter of the AAP

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
NC Pediatric Society
Nebraska Chapter AAP
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
New Mexico Pediatric Society
NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3
Office of the Health Care Advocate, Vermont Legal Aid
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Oklahoma Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics
Public Justice Center
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
SC Chapter of the AAP
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
TakeAction Minnesota
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Justice Center
Texas Parent to Parent
Texas Pediatric Society, the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Utah Children
Washington Academy of Family Physicians
Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Women Employed

Healthcare Facilities and Systems

Advocate Aurora Health
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Atlantic Health System
Baptist Health of Northeast Florida
BJC HealthCare
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Children's Hospital Colorado
CrescentCare
DAP Health
Desert AIDS Project d/b/a DAP Health
Family Tree Clinic

Hospital Damas. Inc
Inova Health System
JASMYN
John Muir Health
Managed Access to Child Health, dba, Partnership for Child Health
Mel Leaman Free Clinic
Nemours Children's Health System
NYC Health + Hospitals
Ochsner LSU Health
Oregon Health & Science University
Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness
Saint Francis Memorial Hospital
Sequoia Hospital
Stanford Health Care
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Wolfson Children's Hospital

ⁱ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/23/you-dont-want-second-best/anti-lgbt-discrimination-us-health-care>

ⁱⁱ Rafferty J. Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents. Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Committee on Adolescence and Section on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Health and Wellness. *Pediatrics*. Oct 2018, 142 (4) e20182162; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2162>

ⁱⁱⁱ Health care for transgender and gender diverse individuals. ACOG Committee Opinion No. 823. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2021;137:e75–88.

^{iv} Hembree W, Cohen-Kettenis P, Gooren L, Hannema S, Meyer W, Murad M, Rosenthal S, Safer J, Tangpricha V, T'Sjoen T. Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, Volume 102, Issue 11, 1 November 2017, Pages 3869–3903, <https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2017-01658>

^v Safer J, Tangpricha V. [Care of the Transgender Patient](#). *Annals of Internal Medicine*. July 2, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7326/AITC201907020>

^{vi} Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health. 2011. <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>. Accessed January 9 2021.

^{vii} Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. American Psychological Association. *American Psychologist*, December 2015. Vol. 70, No. 9, 832–864 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039906>

^{viii} <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/advocating-lgbtq-community>