



Promoting the Wellbeing of LGBTQ+ Youth & Their Families

NEWS & RESOURCES

Special Edition: March 2022

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The SOGIE Newsletter is a publication of [The National Center for Youth with Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression](#) at [The Institute for Innovation and Implementation](#), University of Maryland, Baltimore.

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New Federal Guidance on Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth

The National SOGIE Center stands in solidarity with our transgender community and their families, and will continue to work with our partners to challenge recent legislative and regulatory actions being taken by states limiting access to gender-affirming care and support. Research has shown that affirmation from families is a protective factor against attempted suicide, depression, substance misuse, and other negative health outcomes ([Ryan, et al., 2009](#)). Further, any medical decisions about a young person's needs should be made between a youth, their parent and their medical provider. There is growing evidence that puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones can reduce rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and other serious behavioral health conditions ([Tordoff, et al, 2022](#)).



The US Department of Health and Human Services just released an [Information Memorandum](#) to states and territories, advising the following regarding LGBTQI+ youth in child welfare:

Too often, systemic barriers and practices are created to deny such children and youth gender affirming medical care, especially to transgender and gender nonconforming children and youth. The Children's Bureau does not support these barriers and practices, and we are unequivocal that they are counter to children and youth's best interests. As such, each title IV-E agency should be particularly vigilant about placing LGBTQI+ children and youth in homes and child-care institutions where they are supported, safe, and can develop as a whole person. But the agency's responsibility does not stop there: each agency also should provide LGBTQI+ children and youth with opportunities to participate in activities that further support their identity, resilience, and development, including activities related to being LGBTQI+. Additionally, we strongly encourage agencies to take advantage of opportunities to work internally to develop the capacity to identify, understand, and address some of the issues that often confront LGBTQI+ children and youth at different points in the child welfare continuum. An agency also should consider whether its data can inform appropriate services to LGBTQI+ children, youth, and families, including when a family is at risk of a child or youth entering foster care, once a child is in foster care, or after the child has been adopted. The agency must be prepared and competent to address trauma-related issues that have occurred as a result of the child or youth facing rejection, discrimination, or harassment because they are LGBTQI+,

especially in their family of origin. Children’s Bureau also strongly encourages agencies to focus attention on ensuring that each LGBTQI+ child has access to affirming medical care. This includes working with and providing services and training opportunities to parents who are struggling to accept that their child or youth is LGBTQI+ or has a non-conforming gender identity, especially when that is either the cause of the child or youth being removed or a barrier to a safe, healthy reunification.

We encourage you to read the [Information Memorandum](#) referenced above in its entirety and to review the [recent statement released](#) by the Secretary of Health and Human Services on these matters, as well as the numerous statements by our partner organizations.

The [SOGIE Center](#) is available for consultation and technical assistance to support states, tribes and territories in implementing the guidance in this informational memorandum. For consultation or technical assistance, please fill out our [TA Request Form](#).

Statements of Support

We Owe Transgender Children and Youth Affirmation and Respect: A Statement from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



Children and youth need to be affirmed in their identities in order to be healthy and to thrive. This is a statement of fact and not contested opinion; it is backed by research, and it is supported by the [American Medical Association](#) (AMA) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP).

In spite of this, Governor Abbott of Texas is using his power to intentionally harm children and youth by doing the exact opposite of what we all know is best. His actions directly endanger the health and

well-being of the children of Texas and their families, and the health care professionals that support them by falsely stating that gender-affirming health care is equivalent to child abuse. This is patently wrong, politically motivated, and incredibly dangerous. For transgender youth—and all youth—to thrive, the environments where they learn and grow, the various systems with which they interact, and the adults who love, care for, and support them must affirm their identities and senses of self. [Read more](#)

AAP, Texas Pediatric Society Oppose Actions in Texas Threatening Health of Transgender Youth

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Texas Pediatric Society (TPS), the Texas chapter of the AAP, strongly oppose the actions taken this week in Texas that directly threaten the health and well-being of transgender youth. On Feb. 22, Texas

Governor Greg Abbott directed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and other state agencies to investigate certain gender-affirming services as child abuse, following a legal opinion that was issued by the Texas attorney general earlier this week. The AAP has long supported gender-affirming care for transgender youth, which includes the use of puberty-suppressing treatments when appropriate, as outlined in its own policy statement, urging that youth who identify as transgender have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care that is provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space in close consultation with parents. [Read more](#)

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

AACAP Statement Opposing Actions in Texas Threatening the Health,

Mental Health and Well-Being of Transgender & Gender Diverse Youth and Their Families



The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) supports the healthy development of all children, adolescents, and their families, including transgender and gender-diverse youth and families. Recent state attacks on gender-affirming support and care for transgender and gender-diverse youth endanger the welfare of many young people across the country. These attacks undermine the right of

parents and caregivers to access evidence-based and developmentally appropriate treatment. The goal of gender-affirming care is to help children and adolescents understand their gender as one facet of their identity while building resilience and increasing family and social supports. Attempts to criminalize gender-affirming care deprive youth and families of treatment and endanger the physician-patient-caregiver relationship, which is the foundation of pediatric healthcare. The allocation of scarce child protective services to these efforts further endangers youth who actually require those important services. Gender-affirming care is not child abuse. [Read more](#)

Nation's Leading Child Health and Welfare Groups Denounce Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills in State Legislatures

A group of organizations devoted to attending to the medical, educational and developmental needs of children released [an open letter](#) calling on state legislatures around the country to halt the flood of discriminatory, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation being advanced. The 22 groups, which collectively represent more than 7 million youth-serving professionals and hundreds of child welfare organizations, called on lawmakers to reconsider moving forward with policies that will endanger vulnerable, marginalized populations. [Learn more](#)



Articles/Research

Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender & Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care

A new report from the Journal of the American Medical Association examines how receiving gender-affirming care impacts the mental health of transgender and nonbinary adolescents and young adults, who are often at risk of suboptimal mental health outcomes due to discrimination and stigma. The investigators concluded that receiving gender-affirming medical interventions were linked to lowered risks for negative mental health outcomes over the course of 12 months. The results contribute to a growing collection of evidence that indicates that gender-affirming care is linked to overall improved well-being to transgender and nonbinary teenagers and young adults. [Learn more](#)

JAMA Open
Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care

Abstract
IMPORTANCE: Transgender and nonbinary (TNB) youth are disproportionately burdened by poor mental health outcomes, including increased risk of depression and anxiety. Gender-affirming care is associated with decreased risk of depression and anxiety in TNB youth, but the extent of these associations among TNB youth who are not seeking mental health care is unknown.

OBJECTIVE: To investigate changes in mental health over the first year of receiving gender-affirming care and whether receipt of gender-affirming care and gender-affirming medical interventions were associated with changes in depression, anxiety, and suicidality.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS: This prospective cohort study included 100 TNB youth who were included in an open longitudinal study of TNB youth and young adults receiving gender-affirming care from August 2019 to June 2020. Data were reported from August 2020 through November 2021.

EXPOSURES: Transgender affirmation and receipt of TNB care.

MEASUREMENTS AND MAIN RESULTS: Mental health outcomes of interest were assessed via the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) scales, which were administered to the measure of depression and anxiety in TNB youth. The primary outcome was the risk of depression and anxiety in TNB youth who received gender-affirming care compared with TNB youth who did not receive gender-affirming care. The primary outcome was assessed using 12-month risk ratios (RRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Gender-affirming interventions were used to assess change in mental health outcomes over 12 months. The results were stratified by gender-affirming care (PHQ-9 and GAD-7).

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE: Mental health outcomes of interest were assessed via the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) scales, which were administered to the measure of depression and anxiety in TNB youth. The primary outcome was the risk of depression and anxiety in TNB youth who received gender-affirming care compared with TNB youth who did not receive gender-affirming care. The primary outcome was assessed using 12-month risk ratios (RRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Gender-affirming interventions were used to assess change in mental health outcomes over 12 months. The results were stratified by gender-affirming care (PHQ-9 and GAD-7).

KEY POINTS
Question: Gender-affirming care for transgender and nonbinary (TNB) youth is associated with changes in depression, anxiety, and suicidality.
Finding: In this prospective cohort study of TNB youth, receipt of gender-affirming care was associated with decreased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidality over 12 months.
Meaning: This study found that access to gender-affirming care was associated with improved mental health outcomes among TNB youth over 12 months. These findings support the need for gender-affirming care to improve mental health outcomes among TNB youth over a 12-month period.

Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy Can Help Save Lives

ARTICLE IN PRESS
Journal of Adolescent Health 2021, 68(12):1-7

ELSEVIER
JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH
www.elsevier.com/locate/jadhealth

Original article
Association of Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy With Depression, Thoughts of Suicide, and Attempted Suicide Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

Amy E. Green, PhD,¹ Joseph P. Dochans, PhD,¹ Myeshia N. Price, PhD,¹ and Carrie K. Davis, M.S.W.¹
The Trevor Project, New York, NY, USA
Article history: Received July 26, 2021; Accepted October 28, 2021
Keywords: Transgender; Nonbinary; Gender-affirming care; Suicide; Depression; LGBTQ

ABSTRACT

Objective: Youth and their caregivers often experience mental health issues among transgender and nonbinary youth who receive gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT). The purpose of this study is to examine the association between GAHT and depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide among youth aged 13–24 receiving GAHT. **Methods:** Data were collected as part of a 2020 survey of 34,739 trans and nonbinary youth. **Results:** GAHT was associated with lower odds of depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide among youth who reported to receive GAHT. **Conclusion:** Youth who receive GAHT report lower rates of depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide compared to youth who do not receive GAHT. **Keywords:** Transgender; Nonbinary; Gender-affirming care; Suicide; Depression; LGBTQ

The use of gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) is significantly related to lower rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth, according to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health in December. The peer-reviewed study is the first large-scale study to examine GAHT's impact on trans and nonbinary young people. The study examines data collected in a Trevor Project survey of over 34,000 LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24 across the U.S. from October to December 2020. Of the respondents, 12,000 identified as transgender or nonbinary. The study found that young people receiving GAHT reported a lower likelihood of experiencing depression and suicidal ideation compared to young people who wanted the treatment but were not able to access it. Notably, the study

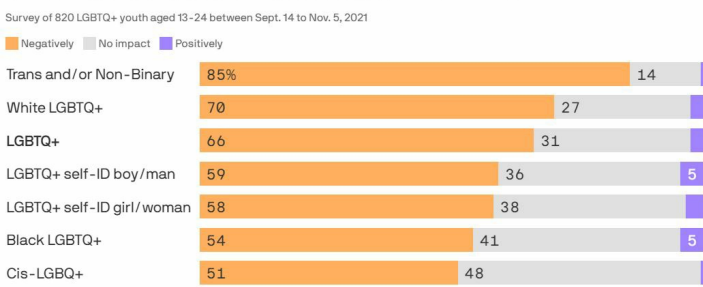
found that among young trans and nonbinary people under 18, receiving GAHT was associated with nearly 40% lower odds of having had a suicide attempt in the past year.

[Learn more](#)

Most LGBTQ+ Kids' Mental Health Impacted by Anti-Trans Legislation

Over two-thirds of LGBTQ+ youth said recent debates over state laws that target transgender people have negatively impacted their mental health, a new [poll](#) released this month by the Trevor Project shows. Seven in 10 LGBTQ+ youth said they regularly follow news related to the issues that impact the trans community, and as a result, 66% of all LGBTQ+ young people polled said their mental health had been negatively affected by recent debates about state laws restricting the rights of transgender people. The impact is even greater among trans and nonbinary youth: 85% of those polled — four in five of this group — said their mental health had been negatively affected. [Read here](#)

How have recent debates about state laws restricting the rights of transgender people impacted your mental health?



Data: [The Trevor Project](#); Chart: Jacques Schrag/Axios

The Medical Implications of Banning Transgender Youth



Regular physical activity is essential for the health and well-being of children, adolescents, and adults. The emotional, social, and physical benefits of exercise and sports participation are indisputable: physical activity during childhood and adolescence has lifelong positive impacts on both physical and mental health. Additionally, transgender and gender-diverse youth (TGD) are particularly vulnerable to mental and physical

comorbidities that are mitigated by physical activity. Thus, the benefits of exercise may be particularly significant for TGD youth. The past year has seen widespread legislative efforts to exclude TGD youth from organized sports, even though organized sports represent one of the most important opportunities for youth to engage in regular physical activity. [Learn more](#)

Policy News

Texas Court Halts Investigation of Parents Over Care for Trans Youth

A state court in Texas on Wednesday temporarily halted the child abuse investigation of a family providing medical treatment for its transgender 16-year-old, but allowed other investigations to continue under a contentious policy initiated last week by Gov. Greg Abbott. The intervention by the court in Austin, the state capital, came in response to a lawsuit filed on Tuesday by the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas and Lambda Legal on behalf of the parents of a transgender child who were being investigated for abuse by the Department of Family and Protective Services. That inquiry immediately followed a directive by Mr. Abbott to conduct child abuse investigations when medically accepted treatments — including hormones or puberty-suppressing drugs, which doctors describe as gender-affirming care — are prescribed to transgender adolescents. [Learn more](#)



The Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills of 2022, Explained



2021 was the worst year in history for the number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills signed into law, a record that was broken not even halfway through the year. Specifically, it was a banner year for anti-trans and anti-intersex bills in America, the bulk of which sought to ban trans youth from school sports and criminalize the healthcare they need. While many of those bills were narrowly defeated, many more weren't: Arkansas passed the most restrictive ban on trans healthcare in history, even after

Republican governor Asa Hutchinson vetoed it for its extremity. (While it's currently blocked thanks to an ACLU lawsuit, the law remains on the books.) Nine states signed sports bans into law by the end of 2021. On January 19, South Dakota became the tenth, officially passing the first anti-LGBTQ+ state law of 2022. What's clear is that the crisis is far from over, with new (eerily identical) anti-trans bills appearing every single day. Here, with help from the ACLU, Freedom for All Americans, and other resources and trackers, we'll explain some of the most widespread types of anti-LGBTQ+ bills, where they're being filed, and what the implications might be for LGBTQ+ rights. [Read here](#)

Biden Calls Out “Onslaught” of Anti-Trans Laws in State of the Union

In President Biden's State of the Union speech Tuesday, he renewed his call for legislative action on LGBTQ+ rights. He urged Congress to pass The Equality Act, which would federally bar discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in employment, housing, schools, health care, and more. The president went on to condemn the wave of anti-trans legislation sweeping across the states, from which the Equality Act could offer urgent federal relief. “The onslaught of state laws targeting transgender



Americans and their families is wrong,” Biden said. “As I said last year, especially to our younger transgender Americans, I will always have your back as your president, so you can be yourself and reach your God-given potential.” [Learn more](#)

Practical Tools

Ask Our Experts: Supporting the Mental Health of Trans & Gender Diverse Youth Amid Anti-Trans Legislation



In June 2021, the Center of Excellence hosted an Ask Our Experts panel on supporting trans and gender diverse youth in the midst of a record-breaking year for anti-trans legislation. Please find the link to the recording below, as well as a list of resources and peer-reviewed articles clinicians can use to better meet the needs young trans people. [Watch here](#)

Accompanying this Ask Our Experts Session, The Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity has a list of resources that provide more information about the research supporting the importance of access to gender-affirming care for transgender youth, as well as the harm caused by anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. [View here](#)



Your Guide to Talking About Attacks on Trans Youth



Misinformation is fueling an attack on trans youth in state legislatures. These attacks overwhelmingly focus on youth and schools. They try to make being trans shameful — but they won't stop youth from being trans. They will only make it harder for kids to grow up at all and make it harder to access the support, education, and community that all young people deserve. While

everyone should be contacting lawmakers and expressing their support for trans youth, we know that these attacks aren't limited to statehouses. The lies about trans youth spread at the dinner table, PTA meetings, and many other places. It takes all of us speaking out and speaking up. Watch ACLU's Ambassador for Trans Justice, Miss Peppermint, and LGBTQ & HIV Project Staff Attorney Taylor Brown tell us the truth about trans youth and then check out these resources, so you know how to respond the next time you hear a lie about trans youth. [Watch here](#)



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