

The Honorable Wayne MacDonald, Chairperson
House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building
33 North State Street, Room 205
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Opposition to non-germane amendment 2359h and HB 619, prohibiting gender transition procedures for minors, relative to sex and gender in public schools, and relative to the definition of conversion therapy

October 31, 2023

Chairperson MacDonald and Members of the House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee:

As New Hampshire pediatricians, pediatric endocrinologist, nurses, and mental health providers, we are writing in strong opposition to non-germane amendment 2359h and HB 619 as introduced.

We work with our New Hampshire gender-diverse, intersex, and DSD (Disorders/Differences of Sex Development) youth, all who would be adversely affected by this proposed amendment and the underlying legislation. "Gender-affirming care" is age-appropriate care that is medically necessary for the well-being of transgender people. This means that all gender-affirming care is safe, age-appropriate, medically necessary, and well-researched. This health care is supported by all major medical organizations, and this care is rendered following consultation with medical and mental health professionals *and* parents/guardians. This also means that for most youth, the primary focus is social affirmation and providing the mental health supports needed to meet the challenges they are facing in a world that is becoming harder and harder to live in. It is important to note that Dartmouth Health is the only healthcare delivery system in New Hampshire has a pediatric endocrinology program that provides gender affirming care to minors, and Dartmouth Health's policies do not include gender-affirming surgeries for transgender minors.

Banning public payor reimbursement to institutions and providers who provide gender-affirming care would exacerbate the divide between those who have means and those who do not. People who are transgender have a more difficult time finding and maintaining employment due to several factors, including discrimination, lower degree of education (often driven out of school due to bullying and harassment), fear of assault, etc. People of color who are transgender have higher rates of all of the above, and a higher risk of poverty. Further, we are gravely concerned that this amendment and bill would interfere with our desire to keep New Hampshire an inclusive and safe state for often marginalized populations.

Our multi-disciplinary program includes pediatricians and APRNs who understand that banning surgical care to gender-diverse individuals is harmful and, according to data, can be life-threatening. NH's medical professionals and clinical care teams need to be able to provide care that is evidence-based, safe and necessary. HB 619 and amendment 2359h would impede our ability to provide treatment to patients, with parental consultation, seeking care.

The undersigned respectfully ask the Committee to vote against the replace-all amendment 2359h and vote Inexpedient to Legislate on HB 619. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.



Respectfully,

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