



Messaging Resource: Minors and Gender Therapy

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Given this is another way to further entrench forced parental involvement and push care out of reach for young people, here are resources to push back in a way that helps to oppose this legislation and to lay the groundwork for long-term efforts to try to expand young people’s access to the full range of care that they need.

General

- Young people should be able to access critical health services to manage and protect their health. That’s why Louisiana law already provides for a young person to consent to certain tests and treatment, but there are still barriers when it comes to obtaining mental health.
- Some people may be uncomfortable with the idea of a young person seeking care without their parent or guardian. I/We get that, but what we need to focus on is ensuring access to care to keep people healthy.
- We should work hard to build strong relationships with our families and to try to create homes where kids feel safe and loved [or safe and supported].
- The fact is that most young people do involve a parent when they are making decisions about health care, but for those who feel they cannot, we have to put their health needs first.
- For young people facing stress or a crisis who come from a tough home situation who want to seek help, encountering the road block of parental consent can make it nearly impossible to get the support that they need.
- Do we really want to create barriers to needed care? We have to ask ourselves what is the benefit of doing this. It does not help young people. It does not build healthier families. But it can make things so much worse.
- We must also consider that there are different family configurations or views that can make consent difficult to obtain.
- There are homeless youth who do not have contact with their parents and are simply unable to obtain consent for treatment or young people in the system who simply do not have that kind of relationship with a guardian who may barely know them or all they have been through.

- There are youth whose parents do not support or want to affirm their gender identity and would refuse to give consent if asked.
- Historically, women of color have faced significant barriers in accessing health services. This is true for young women of color as well, which is a huge factor in negative health outcomes and higher rates of certain conditions. It is imperative that we ensure health professionals are a resource for credible information and support.
- Transgender and gender non-conforming young people need to be able to talk to health professionals about their questions and concerns.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide as their straight peers and nearly half of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives. Given the stigma that many young LGBT people face, they also have a higher rate of substance abuse. By denying access to confidential health care services, we are putting the lives of young people at risk.
- If someone does not feel that they can tell a parent, we can help them to work to forge that connection or find another trusted adult to support them, but they should decide who that is and we should not put up an obstacle that could put their wellbeing at risk.
- We should absolutely try to ensure that parents are able to build strong relationships with their children and that families have strong communications, but that is done through support and community programs – not policies that prevent young people from getting critical services that they need.
- We can help families to build trust and encourage young people to seek out a parent, a family member or a trusted adult in their life when making health decisions. What we should not do is put up roadblocks to young people when they are in need of health care.
- We should ensure that young people are able to access the information and services they need in a timely manner without delay or barriers in order to manage their health and safety.

Professional Associations

- When it comes to regulations around access to and provision of health care, we should rely on the best practices and guidance of health professionals who oppose putting up artificial barriers based on age.
- A survey of pediatricians found that 75% favored confidential treatment for adolescents. In fact, major medical organizations agree on the importance of providing adolescents with access to confidential health services including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Many major medical groups oppose forcing parental involvement in decisions around health care, including the American Public Health Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American Medical Women's Association, the American College of Physicians and American Psychological Association.