



# Do No Harm

**OCTOBER 24, 2022**

To the members of the Florida Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine:

You have a unique opportunity to set a nationwide – and non-ideological – standard for care for minors who have or believe they have gender dysphoria. Do No Harm, an organization of medical professionals devoted to keeping divisive and un-scientific identity politics out of medical practice<sup>1</sup>, hopes you take this chance to do what’s right for these especially vulnerable patients. They are counting on you, and the American people are looking to you for moral and medical leadership.

Few medical issues are more contentious than the question of medical treatments for minors who may or may not have gender dysphoria. Those children deserve the utmost compassion, which starts by treating them as individuals, not as enlistees in a cause. Compassion also requires basing care on rigorous scientific inquiry, not on dubious, agenda-driven studies<sup>2</sup> or the demands of activists. Finally, compassion means proceeding with extraordinary caution when considering treatments that will profoundly and even permanently alter the bodies and psyches of patients who are too young to exercise independent judgment and whose gender identity issues are often transient or part of complex mental health problems.

Sadly, much of the medical establishment has abandoned compassion for ideologically driven demands. With unwarranted certitude, providers and policymakers are broadly promoting an approach they call “gender-affirming care.”<sup>3</sup> Make no mistake: This phrase is a euphemism for encouraging children and adolescents to embrace a gender transition journey from which there is often no return yet much regret.

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1. Do No Harm. About us. <https://donoharmmedicine.org/about/>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  2. Mason J, Sapir L. The American Academy of Pediatrics’ dubious transgender science (August 17, 2022). *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-american-academy-of-pediatrics-dubious-transgender-science-jack-turban-research-social-contagion-gender-dysphoria-puberty-blockers-uk-11660732791>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  3. Boyle P. What is gender-affirming care? Your questions answered (April 12, 2022). *Association of American Medical Colleges*. [What is gender-affirming care? Your questions answered | AAMC](https://www.aamc.org/newsroom/press-releases/2022/04/12/what-is-gender-affirming-care), accessed September 26, 2022.

So-called gender-affirming care typically involves administering puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to children. These treatments can have permanent physical effects, including sterilization and loss of bone density.<sup>4</sup> Countless young people who have been subjected to these treatments say that nobody told them about the risks. And gender surgeries – including cutting off the breasts and genitals of teenagers – are life-altering in the profoundest ways imaginable. These permanent and irreversible treatments are being promoted to children even though gender dysphoria is often temporary and is strongly linked to a child’s social environment and social media use.<sup>5</sup>

Based on its sudden prevalence, you’d think that gender-affirming care had been settled on by our leading medical institutions after substantial study and debate. That is not the case. The “studies” and “social science” that abound in this field are almost entirely activist-driven, politicized, and misleading. One of the main reasons for such uniformity is because bullying and retaliation have made open inquiry professionally risky, if not ruinous.

The inevitable result is the ideological corruption of healthcare’s gatekeepers. Medical organizations are supposed to protect healthcare from activism, politicization, and quackery. They are supposed to ensure that impartial, rigorous standards of research and analysis are upheld. They are supposed to insulate important questions of medical ethics – such as treatments whose side effect is permanent sterilization – from the clamor and pressure of activists. They are supposed to discredit junk studies that are designed to create false choices and compel policy outcomes.

Sadly, major medical organizations haven’t just failed to do these things; they are actively promoting the very things they are supposed to oppose. Three of the most prominent examples include the American Medical Association<sup>6</sup>, the American Academy of Pediatrics,<sup>7</sup> and the American Psychiatric Association.<sup>8</sup> These organizations even condemn state-level policy efforts to create guardrails for gender transition-related drugs, hormones, and surgeries for minors, ignoring evidence and the well-being of minors in pursuit of a blatantly ideological goal.

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4. MacKinnon J. Report: Puberty blockers foisted upon minors proven to have devastating, irreversible effects (September 21, 2022). Blaze Media. <https://www.theblaze.com/news/report-puberty-blockers-minors-proven-devastating-irreversible-effects>, accessed September 26, 2022.

5. Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. Social media’s influence on gender dysphoria. <https://www.ahca.myflorida.com/LetKidsBeKids/page4.shtml>, accessed September 26, 2022.

6. American Medical Association. AMA to states: Stop interfering in health care of transgender children April 26, 2021). <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-states-stop-interfering-health-care-transgender-children>, accessed September 26, 2022.

7. Wyckoff AS. AAP continues to support care of transgender youths as more states push restrictions (January 6, 2022). AAP News. <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/19021/AAP-continues-to-support-care-of-transgender>, accessed September 26, 2022.

8. American Psychological Association. APA president condemns Texas governor’s directive to report parents of transgender minors (February 24, 2022). <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2022/02/report-parents-transgender-children>, accessed September 26, 2022.

The result of this advocacy is a rapidly rising number of gender transitions among children, including many under 10 years old. While prominent medical organizations praise this trend, they simultaneously ignore the rapidly rising number of “de-transitioners”<sup>9</sup> whose bodies and minds have been permanently and profoundly damaged by healthcare providers following the guidance of our major medical institutions.

That guidance has now been embraced by the Biden administration, which recently released an [Executive Order](#) putting the weight of the federal government behind gender-affirming care. By contrast, European countries that previously took this path are quickly reversing course. They are broadly acknowledging the lack evidence supporting gender-affirming care and the substantial evidence of its harms.

Take France, where the National Academy of Medicine recently released guidance advising against puberty blockers, hormones, and surgeries for minors.<sup>10</sup> Sweden’s National Board of Health and Welfare released new guidance this year severely restricting the use of these treatments for minors except in truly exceptional cases.<sup>11</sup> Last year, Australia and New Zealand took significant steps away from gender-affirming care<sup>12</sup>, as has Finland.<sup>13</sup> In the United Kingdom, a government-commissioned independent review has led to the planned closure of the UK’s main clinic for gender-affirming care in part because staff were “under pressure to adopt an unquestioning affirmative approach” that was “at odds with the standard process of clinical assessment and diagnosis.”<sup>14</sup>

But here in America, largely because of the advocacy campaigns of major medical institutions, our health care system is moving full steam ahead with this destructive approach. Florida has a chance to stop this madness before it spreads even further. You’d have the support of the public behind you – an April 2022 national survey found that 60 percent of respondents said minors should not be able to undergo hormone treatment or gender transition surgery until they are adults. Another 25 percent said that it should only be possible with parental consent, and just one in ten said minors should be allowed to undergo hormone treatment or gender surgery without parental consent.<sup>15</sup>

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9. Schlott R. ‘I literally lost organs’: Why detransitioned teens regret changing genders (June 18, 2022). *New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2022/06/18/detransitioned-teens-explain-why-they-regret-changing-genders/>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  10. Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine. National Academy of Medicine in France advises caution in pediatric gender transition (March 3, 2022). <https://segm.org/France-cautions-regarding-puberty-blockers-and-cross-sex-hormones-for-youth>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  11. Tomlinson C. Swedish board of health u-turns on hormone blockers for trans kids (February 25, 2022). *Breitbart News*. <https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2022/02/25/swedish-board-of-health-u-turns-on-hormone-blockers-for-trans-kids/>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  12. Showalter B. Top psychiatrists urge ‘caution’ before giving puberty blockers to kids with gender dysphoria (October 26, 2021). *The Christian Post*. *New Zealand, Australian psychiatrists move away from transgender | World News (christianpost.com)*, accessed September 26, 2022.
  13. Smith WI. Finns turn against puberty blockers for gender dysphoria (July 25, 2021). *National Review*. <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/finns-turn-against-puberty-blockers-for-gender-dysphoria/>, accessed September 26, 2022.
  14. The Cass Review. Independent review of gender identity services for young people: Interim report. <https://cass.independent-review.uk/publications/interim-report/>, accessed September 27, 2022.
  15. Do No Harm. National survey, Q6 (April 2022). *Marist Poll*. [https://donoharmmedicine.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Q6\\_Do-No-Harm-National-Survey-April-2022.pdf](https://donoharmmedicine.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Q6_Do-No-Harm-National-Survey-April-2022.pdf), accessed September 27, 2022.

Florida should follow the example set by a growing number of western countries and stop the use of puberty blockers, hormones, surgeries, and gender-affirming care for minors in all but the most exceptional and closely monitored cases. The public's wishes should also be taken into account – especially those of parents.<sup>16</sup> The overwhelming majority of Americans believe only adults should receive gender transition treatments and that parental involvement and consent should be required for any gender identity care for minors.

The worst thing that could happen would be for the status quo to continue or even accelerate, putting the health and well-being of countless children at risk. Florida has an opportunity – and an obligation – to protect these children and finally bring common sense to this nationwide debate. The medical establishment apparently refuses to sidewith science and compassion for some of the most vulnerable among us, so Florida must.

**Dr. Stanley Goldfarb**

Chairman, Do No Harm

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16. Rufo C, Young M. A parent's guide to radical gender theory. <https://christopherrufo.com/resource/radical-gender-theory/>, accessed September 26, 2022.