



Resolution on the Well-being of Youth Who Identify as Transgender or Gender Diverse (TGD) in the United States

An official statement from the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association)

The Global Alliance is a behavioral health organization that embeds its work in principles of human rights and social justice, including non-discrimination, respect, and dignity. We are deeply concerned that as of April 2021, 33 states have introduced legislation (more than 100 bills) that will negatively impact the well-being of youth who identify as transgender or gender diverse (TGD) and that will violate their human rights. Despite the strong evidence base for gender-affirming care (GAC), much of the proposed legislation aims to limit access to such services and, in some cases, outright bars access.

We know that:

- Youth who identify as TGD experience suicidality at rates double their cisgender peers.
- More than 65% of youth who identify as TGD report symptoms of major depressive disorder, and three-quarters endorse symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder.
- Discrimination and lack of access to affirmative interventions increases risk of adverse mental health outcomes and suicidality.
- GAC has been shown to improve the health and well-being of youth who identify as TGD.



GAC, which involves integrating medical, behavioral, and social services, aims to create a supportive environment for meeting the health and developmental needs of youth who identify as TGD. It has been endorsed by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (2001), the Pediatric Endocrine Society (2020), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (2018). This form of care promotes a positive sense of self and helps youth cope with experiences of stigma and discrimination. GAC can also include medical interventions such as administering GnRH analogues or “puberty blockers” at the onset of puberty to delay development associated with the sex assigned at birth, prior to initiation of hormone affirmation therapy.

Legislation being proposed across the country diverges from known, evidence-based practices and will have serious short- and long-term negative consequences for youth who identify as TGD and their families. As a behavioral health organization guided by principles of human rights, respect, and self-determination, the Global Alliance rejects actions that limit access to GAC for youth who identify as TGD. Such actions limit youths’ rights to live and grow in safe and supportive communities that promote their health and well-being. **The Global Alliance encourages the adoption of evidence-based affirming interventions – including gender-affirming health care – and believes that access to such interventions is a critical component to the broader need to ensure all environments in which youth live, work and play are conducive to the promotion of their health and well-being.**

<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trevor Project (https://www.thetrevorproject.org/) • Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) (https://www.glaad.org/) • Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) (https://pflag.org/) • Human Rights Campaign (https://www.hrc.org/resources/unprecedented-onslaught-of-state-legislation-targeting-transgender-american) • National Center for Transgender Equality (https://transequality.org/) • GLSEN (https://www.glsen.org) • American Psychological Association https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/issues/gender-affirmative-care 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relevant articles from the <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i></p> <p>Hope, D. A., Mocarski, R., Bautista, C. L., & Holt, N. R. (2016). Culturally competent evidence-based behavioral health services for the transgender community: Progress and challenges. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 361–365. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000197</p> <p>Redfern, J. S., Barnes, A., & Chang, J. (2016). Psychosocial, HIV, and health care management issues impacting transgender individuals. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 366–372. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000190</p> <p>Scout, N. F. N. (2016). Transgender health and well-being: Gains and opportunities in policy and law. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 378–383. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000192</p> <p>Tanis, J. (2016). The power of 41%: A glimpse into the life of a statistic. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 373–377. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000200</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">How you can help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join our LGBTQ+ Task Force (https://www.bhjustice.org/lgbtq) • Reach out to state legislators, when applicable, to oppose anti-transgender legislation and/or to encourage protections for youth who identify as TGD (state legislators or U.S. legislators) • Advocate for youth who identify as TGD in your local community • Act as a resource to local schools or educational programs to provide information on fostering affirmative environments 	

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