

Support for Gender Affirming Care Letter to the Editors of the Providence Journal

To The Editors,

We write as individual researchers, faculty, doctors, staff, and students invested in reproductive justice and its values of bodily autonomy, informed choice, accessibility, transparency, and community-centeredness. We are alarmed about the erosion of gender-affirming care for minors and adults in Rhode Island.

Healthcare systems in Rhode Island and across New England have for several years supported trans people by providing gender-affirming care, including pharmacotherapy. Indeed, when the president issued his January 25 executive order “Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation,” Rhode Island’s Attorney General issued a joint statement with other AGs reiterating their support of gender-affirming care as “essential, life-saving medical treatment.”

However, we have been disappointed in the lack of public support from local healthcare leadership. There are serious legal questions regarding the president’s authority to withdraw congressionally allocated funding from health care institutions. Yet we have seen an alarming pattern of obeying in advance: the webpage for Hasbro’s gender clinic was removed and a new, harder-to-find, more vague page created; medical services “paused” and re-opened; and confusing, contradictory messaging given to patients, families, and clinicians. To be clear: full, medically appropriate services for trans and nonbinary patients who need and want them are essential to their health and should not be sacrificed for political reasons. Contradictory, vague messaging and the removal of information reinforce a message of stigma and shame.

We ask that all Rhode Island’s healthcare leadership affirm the importance of full-spectrum gender-affirming care for minors and adults in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

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