

R-16

02/21/2023

RESOLUTION NO. _____, 2023

Introduced by Councilmembers Clancy, Days, Dunaway, and Webb

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, despite widespread support from major medical associations for gender-affirming care as the accepted standard, state legislatures across the country are considering or have already banned physicians and other health care professionals from providing this often lifesaving care to minors; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association (“AMA”), along with all major medical associations in the United States, opposes these types of discriminatory actions as dangerous government intrusions into the practice of medicine; and

WHEREAS, decisions about gender-affirming care are properly made through shared decision-making between the patient, their family, and their physicians – without politicians, once again, inserting themselves into the medical exam room and second-guessing educated and personal healthcare decisions; and

WHEREAS, AMA policy specifies that clinical intervention for gender dysphoria should not be criminalized or otherwise restricted, and the AMA supports everyone’s access to quality evidence-based health care regardless of gender or sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that LGBTQ+ patients are not discriminated against when seeking the medical care they need, nor forced into medically unsound programs, the AMA works diligently at the state and federal levels to expand access to medical services, reduce stigma in treating patients with unique needs, and break down discriminatory barriers to necessary care; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with the efforts of medical experts and the AMA, we must reject and condemn efforts by politicians and the government to insert themselves into clinical decision-making, force physicians to disregard clinical standards of care, or prevent medical providers from fulfilling their ethical duty to act in the best interest of their patients; and

WHEREAS, it is dangerous for any state to limit the range of options that physicians, patients, and families may consider when making collaborative pediatric care decisions; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of 2023, Missourians have been subjected to significant misinformation regarding the gender-affirming and lifesaving care provided at Washington University Transgender Center at St. Louis Children’s Hospital; and

WHEREAS, the St. Louis County Council wishes to share with Countians the following facts about the Washington University Transgender Center at St. Louis Children’s Hospital: (1) the

Center started more than five years ago in August of 2017; (2) since then the Center has treated more than 1,000 patients; (3) the Center has provided and continues to provide education, support, connection to services, and sometimes hormone blocker therapy and cross hormone therapy; and (4) the Center successfully built a research foundation to answer important questions in the area of transgender care; and

WHEREAS, as a result of these efforts, Washington University and St. Louis Children's Hospital have been tremendous assets and have played an overwhelmingly positive role in caring for our transgender community members, neighbors, friends, and family; and

WHEREAS, transgender patients often face discriminatory hurdles in accessing medically necessary health care services that affirm gender or treat gender dysphoria – in Missouri 62% of LGBTQ+ youth who wanted mental health care were unable to access it and over half could not afford said care; and

WHEREAS, as a population, transgender people are less likely to be insured than both the lesbian, gay, bisexual population and general population; and among those that are insured, 25% sought coverage for hormones in the past year and were denied and 55% of adults who sought coverage for gender affirming surgery in the past year were denied; and

WHEREAS, improving access to gender-affirming care is a necessary component of improving health outcomes for the transgender population and receipt of gender-affirming care has been linked to dramatically reduced rates of suicide attempts, decreased rates of depression and anxiety, decreased substance use, improved HIV medication adherence, and reduced rates of harmful self-prescribed hormone use; and

WHEREAS, gender-affirming care seeks to medically aid individuals by minimizing the distress trans individuals experience by providing a supportive, non-judgmental environment that acknowledges the individual's gender identity or their uncertainty about their gender identity; and

WHEREAS, this type of care also offers interventions to reduce the incongruence between gender identity and the individual's sex assigned at birth, and gives patients who struggle with their gender identity the medical care, time, and support needed to treat and resolve that struggle; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of elected officials to ensure all residents have the ability to thrive;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The County Council condemns actions and policy that work against and harm the transgender community and believes families should be able to access the guidance, expertise, and care that they deserve and that allows them to thrive.

SECTION 2. The County Council supports gender-affirming care providers, recipients, and advocates in the St. Louis region and beyond.