



• **SUPPORT** Maine Physicians • **ADVANCE** the quality of medicine in Maine • **PROMOTE** the health of all Maine people

TO: Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Dan Morin, Director, Communications and Government Affairs

DATE: May 12, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – [LD 535](#), "An Act to Increase Access to Necessary Medical Care for Certain Minors"

The Maine Medical Association is Maine's largest and oldest professional physician association representing over 4,300 current and future physicians from all specialties in all practice settings. The MMA is an inclusive community of members, affiliates, partners, and community members from every walk of professional life.

A vast majority of our physician members do not view gender-affirming care as a threat. Approximately 1,200 13- to 17-year-olds in Maine identified as trans in a [federal survey](#) published in 2022 — and this is likely an undercount. Much of the political rhetoric surrounding the issue misrepresents who is receiving such care and what treatments kids typically undergo.

The stigma and discrimination trans people face often contribute to higher rates of stress and mental health problems compared to cisgender people, [several studies have found](#). Transgender youth who take puberty blockers are significantly less likely to experience [lifelong suicidal ideation](#) than those who want the care and don't get it. Transition-related health care is often lifesaving and can be medically necessary for some people.

Major medical associations support transition-related care. They include the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Psychiatric Association (APA), and [American Association of Clinical Endocrinology](#) (AACE) – [endocrinology](#) is the study of hormones and endocrine glands and organs. Hormone-secreting glands and certain organs

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in your body make up your endocrine system.

“Gender-affirming care is medically-necessary, evidence-based care that improves the physical and mental health of transgender and gender-diverse people.” – [AMA](#)

“We strongly oppose legislation that limits access of endocrine patients to established medical therapies recommended for treatment of transgender and gender diverse youth. AACE strongly believes that decisions impacting health care of endocrine patients are best left to the health professional, the patient, and the patient’s families like for all medical care.” – [American Association of Clinical Endocrinology](#)

American Psychiatric Association [Position Statement](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics [Position Statement](#)

Gender-affirming care for transgender patients can cover pediatrics, psychiatry, and endocrinology. Accessing puberty blockers, hormone therapies and other transition-related care is commonly recognized as team-based with coordination among medical providers.

Physicians may offer hormone treatments such as puberty blockers to patients under 18 to address gender dysphoria, which often worsens when bodies develop during adolescence. The “top” and “bottom” surgeries are rarely performed on minors (surgeries such as a phalloplasty, vaginoplasty or mastectomy).

Physicians overwhelmingly follow a care timeline set up by major national and global medical organizations. For example, the Endocrine Society, and other professional medical groups, recommends waiting until a teenager can give informed consent — usually around age 16 — to start hormone therapy. Major medical organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health and the Endocrine Society have published guidelines on age-appropriate timelines for care.

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Resources and References for Committee Members:

United States Endocrine Society

[Gender Dysphoria/Gender Incongruence Guideline Resources](#)

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

[Health Care for Transgender and Nonbinary Teens](#)

Texas Medical Association

[Q&A: A Physician's Approach to Gender-Affirming Care](#)

Thank you for your attention to our comments. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass.