

Karen Jerardi Beck, MD
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Susan Manchester, Chair
Ohio House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona and Ranking Member Denson,

My name is Karen Jerardi Beck and I am a practicing pediatrician. I have over 15 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice in Ohio.

The Ohio General Assembly should leave the practice of medicine to licensed healthcare providers. I am gravely concerned that HB454 sets a dangerous precedent by interfering with medical decision making and parent/caregiver autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider.

As I practice medicine, I perform a thorough evaluation on each patient and make treatment recommendations based on the best available evidence for that individual's situation.

HB454 would place medical professionals in an ethical dilemma: we would have to refrain from providing evidence-based care to patients struggling with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria or lose our medical license. **I cannot imagine another diagnosis where a state law would prohibit us from delivering evidence-based care.**

In a time when the demand for child and adolescent mental health care is at its highest, HB454 makes the demand even higher. I address patients' mental health every day. As a pediatric hospitalist I care for patients who are admitted to the hospital. This includes when children try to injure or kill themselves due to mental health concerns. I can say without a doubt that I see more children with gender dysphoria for these concerns than are in the general population. Often the children who have tried to kill themselves are struggling with this gender dysphoria and how they are viewed in the world. I was trained to treat the whole child; ignoring a child's mental health or a diagnosis like gender dysphoria is simply not responsible care. In fact, without addressing these issues, we risk harming them even more.

I implore you to vote no on HB454. This bill sets a dangerous precedent.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Jerardi, MD, MEd