

Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



House Bill 68

Testimony of Christopher Bolling, MD

House Public Health Policy Committee

June 14th, 2023

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Ohio House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today in opposition to House Bill 68. I am Christopher Bolling, MD, a recently retired pediatrician from Cincinnati. I am here today on behalf of the 2,900 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the largest organization in Ohio dedicated to advocating for pediatricians and the children and families they serve.

In 30 plus years of practice, I had around 25 patients with persistent gender dysphoria. These patients and their loving families, want what we all want: a happy, productive, and meaningful life. Being transgender and having gender dysphoria is a scary proposition for these children and their families. They receive messages consistently that there is something wrong with them and that their unease with their sex at birth is not real. Unfortunately, they also are frequent victims of bullying. Understandably, these patients experience higher rates of anxiety, depression and, most sadly, suicide than children without gender dysphoria.

I have been very grateful for the expert and compassionate care that my patients with gender dysphoria have received at the Children's hospitals in our great state. Ohio is blessed with some of the most recognized and outstanding Children's hospitals in the world. My patients receive care that is based in evidence, that puts mental health first, that respects parental and family desires and values, that respects patient knowledge and understanding and that pursues medical care only with thorough evaluation and consent. And that is true for transgender medical care as well as all other conditions.

Much has been said about the work of Ohio's gender clinics and the standards of care that are recommended for these kids. There is a great deal of misinformation and some egregious allegations have been made. I know you have already heard from the Ohio

Ohio Chapter

94-A Northwoods Blvd, Columbus, OH 43235 • Phone: (614)846-6258 • Fax: (614)846-4025 • chapter@ohioaap.org • www.ohioaap.org

President

Christopher Peltier, MD, FAAP
Email: chris.peltier@cchmc.org

President-Elect

Kelsey Logan, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACP
Email: kelsey.logan@cchmc.org

Chief Executive Officer

Melissa Wervey Arnold
Email: marnold@ohioaap.org

Immediate Past President

Jill Fitch, MD, FAAP
Email: jill.fitch@nationwidechildrens.org

Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Children's Hospital Association, but I did want to share with you the actual recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. I would also note that AAP is the only pediatric academic medical society in the country; this is important since there are other groups representing themselves as authorities on pediatric healthcare.

In 2018 AAP released a policy statement titled, "Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents." This policy was reaffirmed last year and remains the consensus position for pediatricians across the country. A copy was submitted with my testimony. Here are some key recommendations that should be followed by any provider treating transgender children—

- A strong, nonjudgmental partnership with children and families is essential to facilitate the exploration of complicated emotions and gender-diverse expressions;
- Gender affirming care is best facilitated through the integration of medical, mental health, and social services and care should be individualized for each family;
- From a developmental standpoint, it is better for the child to be valued as who they are, not who they will become. 'Watchful waiting' is an outdated form of treatment as it withholds critical support until an arbitrary age;
- While some medical interventions are available, these decisions must be made by parents after careful consideration of risks, benefits, and other factors unique to each patient and family
- There is no prescribed path, sequence or end point for transgender patients; the goal of gender-affirming care is to provide a supportive environment that values the child's sense of identity and self-worth;
- Though not without risks, pubertal suppression has been proven to reduce stress and improve outcomes on patients under age 16;
- Hormone therapy can be beneficial in older children, but this decision should be made in consultation with a pediatric endocrinologist;
- Surgical procedures are not recommended for patients under the age of 18.

I want to stress that parental consent is required for any medical treatment involving children. As you heard in the last hearing, children's hospitals do not perform gender affirming surgeries on minors, nor do they refer those patients to other providers. We have no objection to the legislature banning gender affirming surgeries on minors.

Ohio Chapter

94-A Northwoods Blvd, Columbus, OH 43235 • Phone: (614)846-6258 • Fax: (614)846-4025 • chapter@ohioaap.org • www.ohioaap.org

President

Christopher Peltier, MD, FAAP
Email: chris.peltier@cchmc.org

President-Elect

Kelsey Logan, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACP
Email: kelsey.logan@cchmc.org

Chief Executive Officer

Melissa Wervev Arnold
Email: marnold@ohioaap.org

Immediate Past President

Jill Fitch, MD, FAAP
Email: jill.fitch@nationwidechildrens.org

Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Earlier this year, I was called to testify against Senate Bill 150 in Kentucky which, in a very hurried and politically fraught environment, was rushed through and banned medical care for patients with gender dysphoria. This very vague law has thrown Kentucky healthcare providers into disarray on how to support these families in need without risk of being stripped of medical licenses or facing legal action. As a native Kentuckian, I am pained by the unnecessary adversity thrown at Kentucky families and their medical providers through overreach into a complicated medical area. Ohio, like Kentucky, has large areas that are medically underserved where these impediments to healthcare are acutely felt.

As was the case in this committee, legislators in Kentucky heard from out-of-state witnesses in favor of banning care who have been testifying around the country telling of horror stories of the poor care they received. Honestly, these stories bear no resemblance to the care my patients have received here in Ohio. I urge you to listen to the families and providers who are responsible for the care of these children. Have no doubt, passage of House Bill 68 inserts legislators as the expert in transgender medicine in Ohio in opposition to prevailing medical standards on how to manage gender dysphoria.

In the end, please pay attention to what these Ohio families, your constituents, are asking you to do. They are NOT asking for you to support them, they are not even really asking you to understand them. They ARE asking you to not interfere and insert yourselves into the hardest decisions that they will be facing in their lives. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Ohio Chapter

94-A Northwoods Blvd, Columbus, OH 43235 • Phone: (614)846-6258 • Fax: (614)846-4025 • chapter@ohioaap.org • www.ohioaap.org

President

Christopher Peltier, MD, FAAP
Email: chris.peltier@cchmc.org

President-Elect

Kelsey Logan, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACP
Email: kelsey.logan@cchmc.org

Chief Executive Officer

Melissa Wervev Arnold
Email: marnold@ohioaap.org

Immediate Past President

Jill Fitch, MD, FAAP
Email: jill.fitch@nationwidechildrens.org