



May 28, 2019

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America's Frontline Physicians Urge Trump Administration to Protect Transgender Patients and Women's Reproductive Health

Proposed changes to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act would jeopardize care for patients who need it the most

Washington, DC—Last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a proposed rule that would weaken nondiscrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. The rule also allows for religious exemptions that could restrict women's access to reproductive health care, and weakens requirements that have enabled millions of patients with disabilities and limited English proficiency to access services.

Section 1557 prohibits discrimination in health coverage and care on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability in health programs and activities that receive federal funding. This includes most health care facilities, including hospitals and physicians' offices, and most health insurance companies.

In response, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American Osteopathic Association and American Psychiatric Association, issued the following statement:

“Our organizations, which represent nearly 600,000 physicians and medical students, oppose efforts by the Administration to weaken critical protections for any of our patients, including those who are transgender, those with limited English proficiency, those with disabilities, and those who are seeking access to reproductive health care.

“Rolling back gender discrimination protections as the rule proposes would impede access to care and sanction discrimination against already vulnerable patient populations. Transgender patients often cite stigma and discrimination as the primary barriers in accessing treatment, which leads to higher health care costs and poorer outcomes.

“In addition, permitting health care entities that receive federal funding to refuse care to patients who have had a pregnancy termination will have a dangerous effect on access to care. Allowing religious exemptions as the rule proposes will discriminate against women seeking necessary reproductive health care services. Any such exemption would be contrary to Congressional intent and the express purpose of Section 1557, and has the potential to cause great harm to our patients.

“We oppose any laws and regulations that discriminate against transgender and gender diverse individuals. We oppose any medically unnecessary restrictions placed on women’s access to reproductive health care. Instead, we urge the Administration to eliminate this policy change and work with us to ensure patients have access to the quality care they need.”

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About the American Academy of Family Physicians

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 134,600 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits -- that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit www.aafp.org/media. For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, www.familydoctor.org.

About the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.

About the American College of Physicians

The [American College of Physicians](http://www.acponline.org) is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States with members in more than 145 countries worldwide. ACP membership includes 154,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Follow ACP on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ACP), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ACP), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ACP).

About the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of more than 58,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health

care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion.

About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) represents more than 145,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. To learn more about DOs and the osteopathic philosophy of medicine, visit www.DoctorsThatDO.org.

About the American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with more than 38,500 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information please visit www.psychiatry.org.