



Testimony in Support of the Do No Harm Act

Submitted by Dan Bartkowiak, Chief Strategy Officer, Pennsylvania Family Council

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PA State Senator Dave Argall
Chair, Majority Policy Committee
Pennsylvania Senate

Dear Chair Argall and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this critical issue and for holding a hearing on a matter that profoundly impacts the health and well-being of children across our Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania Family Council is a statewide non-profit organization committed to strengthening families by advocating for foundational values essential to a thriving society.

On September 24, 2024, a coalition of 21 state attorneys general [raised serious concerns](#) about the standards of care for children experiencing gender dysphoria. Their letter highlighted that prevailing medical guidance in the United States was “based more on political pressure and agendas rather than medical efficacy and sound medical judgment.” These concerns were echoed in the independent Cass Review in England, which concluded that the current approach lacked sufficient evidence and led the National Health Service of England to halt the routine prescribing of puberty blockers to children.

More recently, on January 28, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order titled, *Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation*, which states, “It is the policy of the United States that it will not fund, sponsor, promote, assist, or support the so-called “transition” of a child from one sex to another, and it will rigorously enforce all laws that prohibit or limit these destructive and life-altering procedures.”

Pennsylvania must also act to ensure that children are protected from these irreversible and harmful interventions. Medical professionals and institutions in our state should prioritize protecting children over pushing these experimental drugs and procedures. Every child deserves the opportunity to grow up healthy and whole.

There is a growing number of young people who regret undergoing “gender affirmation” procedures at an early age. The Changed Movement points to [thousands](#) who have “experienced dramatic restoration” of their sexuality. Detransitioners, including individuals like Chloe Cole—who was prescribed puberty blockers at thirteen and underwent a double mastectomy at just fifteen—have courageously shared their stories of pain and regret. As Chloe Cole said in an [interview with PA Family Institute](#), “It’s destroyed me. It’s destroyed parts of my body...No child can consent to this.”

Medical institutions in Pennsylvania have been complicit in conducting these harmful procedures. This is why legislation like the **Do No Harm Act** is urgently needed.

For more supportive evidence here in Pennsylvania on why this legislation is needed, may I draw your attention to the following three areas:

Fact #1: Children as young as kindergarten in Pennsylvania are receiving taxpayer-funded so-called “transition” related services and drugs.

Through a series of Right-To-Know requests submitted by the Pennsylvania Family Institute to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, troubling details have come to light regarding the taxpayer-funded experimentation on children.

From 2015 to 2023, nearly 5,000 young people aged 18 and under received taxpayer-funded “services related to sex reassignment and transition-related services and drugs.”

- In 2021 alone, 197 children **aged 6 to 12** received these taxpayer-funded services and drugs in Pennsylvania—an almost **12-fold increase** from 2015, when only 17 children were the total for this age group.
- In 2023, a staggering 1,918 young people **aged 13 to 18** received taxpayer-funded so-called “transition” related drugs and services in Pennsylvania, compared to just 90 in 2015.

Annual Totals for Recipients Receiving Services Related to Sex Reassignment and Transition Related Services and Drugs						
Year	Non-CHIP Recipients Aged 0-5	Non-CHIP Recipients Aged 6-12	Non-CHIP Recipients Aged 13-18	CHIP Recipients Aged 0-5	CHIP Recipients Aged 6-12	CHIP Recipients Aged 13-18
2015	Less Than 11	17	90	0	0	Less than 11
2016	Less Than 11	58	284	0	0	Less than 11
2017	Less Than 11	61	415	0	0	Less than 11
2018	Less Than 11	75	662	0	0	Less than 11
2019	Less Than 11	98	871	0	0	Less than 11
2020	Less Than 11	114	992	0	0	Less than 11
2021	Less Than 11	197	1,535	0	0	Less than 11
2022	Less Than 11	173	1,885	0	0	Less than 11
2023	Less Than 11	116	1,918	0	0	Less than 11

Table 1. Annual Totals for Recipients Receiving Services Related to Sex Reassignment and Transition Related Services and Drugs through Pennsylvania Medical Assistance between 2015 and 2023. Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Time Period	Distinct Non-CHIP Recipients Receiving Services Related to Sex Reassignment and Transition Related Services and Drugs
2015 - 2023	4,919

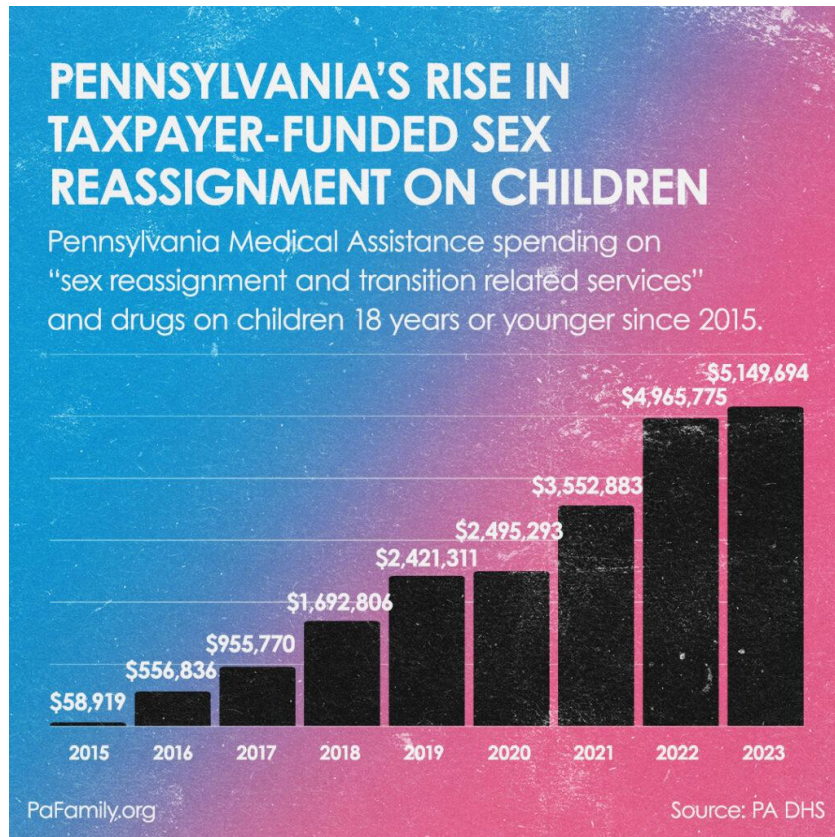
Time Period	Distinct CHIP Recipients Receiving Services Related to Sex Reassignment and Transition Related Services and Drugs
2015 - 2023	14

Table 2. Distinct Non-CHIP & CHIP Recipients Receiving Services Related to Sex Reassignment and Transition Related Services and Drugs through Pennsylvania Medical Assistance between 2015 and 2023. Source: PA Department of Human Services

Fact #2: Taxpayer-funding of children being chemically and surgically mutilated has risen significantly in Pennsylvania.

Reports show over \$21.8 million has been spent using taxpayer funding on these “sex reassignment” drugs and procedures. Specifically, \$21,849,286.84 has been reportedly spent on “Pennsylvania Medical Assistance spending on sex reassignment and transition related services and drugs” between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2023, on recipients aged 18 and younger.

- In 2023, the total taxpayer dollars spent on these drugs, surgeries, and procedures were over \$5 million (\$5,149,694). In 2015, the total was \$58,919.22.
- While over \$227,000 was spent through the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the vast majority was spent through Medicaid.



Year	BH HealthChoices	FFS	PH HealthChoices	CHIP
2015	\$ 53,725.18	\$ 90.00	\$ 4,128.46	\$ 975.58
2016	\$ 386,080.43	\$ 961.53	\$ 167,963.19	\$ 1,830.83
2017	\$ 442,755.45	\$ 1,079.34	\$ 503,871.21	\$ 8,063.72
2018	\$ 521,081.52	\$ 2,384.07	\$ 1,138,166.84	\$ 31,173.63
2019	\$ 681,944.21	\$ 2,475.31	\$ 1,724,887.76	\$ 12,003.26
2020	\$ 527,263.17	\$ 1,336.57	\$ 1,921,808.66	\$ 44,884.36
2021	\$ 859,153.92	\$ 2,722.07	\$ 2,671,883.44	\$ 19,123.85
2022	\$ 1,323,504.54	\$ 3,974.33	\$ 3,600,715.16	\$ 37,581.25
2023	\$ 1,174,156.06	\$ 2,008.41	\$ 3,901,567.28	\$ 71,962.25

Table 3. Totals of Pennsylvania Medical Assistance spending on sex reassignment and transition-related services and drugs for service dates between 2015 and 2023. The data is based on the latest Fee-For-Service (FFS) paid claims, Physical Health (PH) HealthChoices paid encounters, and Behavioral Health (BH) HealthChoices paid encounters. Data as of February 5, 2024. Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Fact #3: Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia is one of the worst offenders for the chemical and surgical mutilation of children.

Medical watchdog *Do No Harm* identified the [Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia \(CHOP\)](#) as being the nation’s top offending hospital for this type of abusive medical procedure.

For years, medical professionals from CHOP’s gender program have lobbied in Harrisburg for policies that lack sound scientific support and are causing irreversible harm to an increasing number of children.

In 2015, when Rachel Levine was appointed Pennsylvania’s new Physician General, the state saw a marked increase in support and funding for pediatric “sex reassignment” procedures. In 2017, in an email to the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Gender Clinic Co-Founder Nadia Dowshen, Dr. Levine asked for supportive literature on sex-change surgeries on minors. “I’m not aware of existing literature but it is certainly happening,” replied Dowshen.

Despite acknowledgement of the lack of scientific literature, Dr. Dowshen and CHOP officials continued to aggressively lobby state officials to include coverage for these procedures for children in the renewal of state funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

In 2020, Dr. Dowshen testified before the PA House of Representatives and infamously stated, “age is just a number”—while admitting that CHOP has conducted double mastectomies on girls as young as age 14. Dr. Dowshen also advocated for guidance that would recommend no lower age limit for this irreversible surgery on children.

While CHOP claimed these were 'evidence-based' services to justify taxpayer funding, the scientific support is lacking, and the harms are undeniable.

The United States Supreme Court is expected to issue a ruling this June in *United States of America v. Skrametti*, a case where politically motivated interest groups are challenging state laws designed to protect children from harmful medical practices.

The Independence Law Center—a constitutional civil rights law firm offering pro bono legal services—filed an amicus brief in the *Skrametti* case on behalf of international organizations that support families impacted by gender dysphoria. The brief highlights a growing global consensus: many nations are reversing course on allowing liberal access to medical transition procedures for minors, instead moving towards safer, non-invasive psychological treatments.

“There is a rising global consensus among industrialized nations that once allowed minors liberal access to medical transitioning procedures to now suspend those efforts in favor of non-invasive psychological treatments. Systematic reviews over the past several years have consistently demonstrated that medical transitioning treatments are

dangerous and irreversible, with largely unknown long-term consequences. **The State has a compelling interest in safeguarding the physical and psychological well-being of minors, and protecting minors from unsafe medical procedures is a part of that interest.**” (Emphasis added)

Unfortunately, thousands of children in Pennsylvania have already been subjected to a system that promotes the use of non-FDA approved puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and even irreversible surgeries, with some being subsidized by taxpayer funding.

Removing healthy body parts from children is not healthcare. It's not supported by science and ignores the reality of regret felt by so many who have since detransitioned. Again, every child deserves the opportunity to grow up healthy and whole.

This was the core of my message outside of the U.S. Supreme Court the day of the *Skrametti* oral arguments, where I had the honor of speaking at the Stop the Harm rally.

I closed my rally remarks with this story. When I hear Hershey, Pennsylvania, it's not chocolate that comes to the forefront of my mind, but the two weeks I lived at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital when my infant son went into cardiac distress. A nurse sat down with me and said, “If you're a praying person, I would start praying.” Miraculously, by God's grace, my son was stabilized, underwent successful heart surgery, and recently celebrated his 10th birthday.

My son will never say to me, ‘Dad, I regret my heart surgery.’ He had a broken body part and, thanks to modern medicine, he was healed.

Chloe Cole and many others like her now live with regret and pain after medical professionals removed *healthy* body parts during their youth. They were children—14, 15, 16 years old—who regret taking puberty blockers or their irreversible surgery because of the influence of some in the medical industry pushing so-called “gender affirmation.”

As a father, a taxpayer, and simply a human being who cares, I support compassionate legislation in Pennsylvania like the proposed Do No Harm Act, which would ensure our healthcare system protects children from damaging, unsafe, and irreversible medical procedures.

About Pennsylvania Family Council

Pennsylvania Family Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening families by advocating for foundational values essential to the well-being of society. Visit www.pafamily.org to learn more.