

Internal medicine physicians decry government interference in patient-physician relationship

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The American College of Physicians (ACP) strongly objects to laws and policies that interfere in the patient-physician relationship and prevent physicians from providing their patients with evidence-based medical services. This includes the legislation passed by the Alabama legislature

yesterday, which would criminalize providing gender-affirming care to minors. Physicians should not be subject to threat for ensuring that their patients receive care that is in accordance with the recommendations of ACP and other medical organizations. Transgender individuals already face extreme barriers to accessing necessary health care, and this type of interference in the patient-physician relationship is unacceptable.

ACP also objects to policies that encourage discrimination against persons who are LGBTQ, like a separate bill that was also passed in Alabama yesterday that includes a version of the recently enacted Florida law prohibiting classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity. Laws and policies that codify discrimination and restrict access to [health care](#) for LGBTQ persons reinforce marginalization and increase the risk of anxiety, [substance use disorder](#), suicide, and other [mental health issues](#) for those it impacts.

These policies block access to health care, harm the patient-physician relationship, and harm the health and well-being of LGBTQ persons. Instead of these sorts of discriminatory policies, we need to seek ways to better support these individuals and their families, improve access to care for these services, and reduce social stigma.

The objection was published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

More information: Hilary Daniel et al, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Disparities: Executive Summary of a Policy Position Paper From the American College of Physicians, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2015). [DOI: 10.7326/M14-2482](https://doi.org/10.7326/M14-2482)

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