

Medical groups urge protections for health workers providing gender-affirming care

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Three leading medical groups have asked the U.S. Department of Justice

to investigate growing threats to doctors, hospitals and families providing and seeking gender-affirming care.

In a letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Medical Association (AMA) and Children's Hospital Association (CHA) called for swift action to investigate and prosecute all organizations and individuals involved.

"Whether it's newborns receiving [intensive care](#), children getting cancer treatments or families accessing compassionate care for their [transgender](#) adolescents, all patients seeking treatment deserve to get the care they need without fear for their [personal safety](#)," said AAP President Dr. Moira Szilagyi.

"We cannot stand by as threats of violence against our members and their patients proliferate with little consequence," Szilagyi said in a joint association news release. "We call on the Department of Justice to investigate these attacks and [social media platforms](#) to reduce the spread of the misinformation enabling them."

The organizations noted in their letter that the AAP and the AMA collectively represent more than 270,000 doctors and [medical students](#). CHA speaks for more than 220 U.S. children's hospitals.

[Threats](#) have affected hospitals and [health care providers](#) all across the country, from Boston to Seattle, the letter noted. Providers have needed extra security. Staff and families are experiencing "elevated and justifiable fear."

"Individuals in all workplaces have the right to a [safe environment](#), out of harm's way and free of intimidation or reprisal," said AMA President Dr. Jack Resneck Jr.

"As physicians, we condemn groups that promote hate-motivated intolerance and toxic misinformation that can lead to grave real-world violence and extremism and jeopardize patients' health outcomes. The AMA will continue to work with federal, state and local law enforcement officials to develop and implement strategies that protect hard-working, law-abiding physicians and other [health care workers](#) from senseless acts of violence, abuse and intimidation," Resneck said in the release.

These providers are under threat for providing federally protected, evidence-based care, the groups noted.

In their letter, they wrote: "Our organizations are dedicated to the health and well-being of all children and adolescents. We are committed to the full spectrum of patient care—from prevention to critical care. We stand with the physicians, nurses, mental health specialists, and other [health care professionals](#) who provide evidence-based health care, including gender-affirming care, to children and adolescents."

Coordinated disinformation campaigns on social media are making matters worse, the groups said.

The medical organizations also called on technology platforms, including Twitter, TikTok and Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, to do more about organized campaigns that lead to harassment against hospitals and their staff. They called for strong action when falsehoods are spread about specific doctors and institutions, and urged social media companies to enforce their own safety and conduct policies.

"We are committed to providing safe, supportive and inclusive health care environments for each and every child and family, and the clinicians and staff who are dedicated to caring for children," said CHA President Amy Wimpey Knight. "Threats and acts of violence are not a

solution, nor a substitute, for civil dialogue about issues of a child or teen's health and well-being."

More information: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has more on [gender-affirming care](#).

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