

EPATH statement on the Italian draft law regarding the use of medical gender affirming treatments for transgender youth.

The European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH) has been contacted by several concerned families in Italy, urging the organization to express its opinion on a proposed draft law introducing new regulatory procedures for prescribing puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones to transgender individuals under the age of 18 (“Disposizioni per l’appropriatezza prescrittiva e il corretto utilizzo dei farmaci per la disforia di genere”).

According to the proposed law: (i) puberty blockers and hormones can be provided to minors with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria carried by a multidisciplinary team, and after having documented outcomes of previous psychological, psychotherapeutic, and, where appropriate, psychiatric treatments; (ii) healthcare providers will be required to fill in a national register in order to monitor the correct use of the drugs; (iii) the register must detail information relating the decision-making process for prescribing treatments, including the documented outcomes of previous psychological, psychotherapeutic, and possibly psychiatric treatments, any diagnosed comorbidities, clinical monitoring, and follow-up; (iv) an approval by the National Pediatric Ethics Committee is mandatory for each prescription (at least until the Ministry of Health will adopt specific protocols); (v) drugs will be dispensed through hospital pharmacies.

Through this statement, EPATH wishes to express its deep concern regarding the proposed legislation, which EPATH fears will risk delaying and restricting access to puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormone therapy — interventions that, in many cases, are essential for the health and well-being of transgender youth. EPATH is particularly concerned that the current draft could introduce significant barriers to the provision of timely, appropriate, and individualized care, potentially jeopardizing both the psychological and physical health of transgender and gender-diverse minors.

As currently written, the draft law appears to endorse practices that are not aligned with the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care, as well other European guidelines (i.e. the recently published German ones). The requirement for every adolescent to document the outcomes of previous psychological, psychotherapeutic, or even psychiatric pathways before a prescription can be issued may turn supportive care into a gatekeeping process — limiting or delaying necessary interventions through excessive procedural burdens. EPATH fears it may create room for forms of therapies aimed to persuade the young person that their gender identity should be 'in line' with the gender assigned at birth. Furthermore, EPATH fears that placing decisions in the hands of committees removed from direct care relationships does not protect young people but endangers them. EPATH questions the necessity of mandating ethical committee approval for access to care, and instead highlights the importance of relying on qualified, experienced providers who follow established scientific and ethical guidelines.

Barriers to gender-affirming care are not neutral: they can seriously endanger the psychological and physical well-being of transgender and gender-diverse minors. Such obstacles may also lead young people to seek self-medication or pursue healthcare abroad without proper medical supervision, significantly increasing risks to their overall health and safety.

In its previous Statement of Serious Concern on Recent Developments in Europe and the United States, EPATH has already warned about the growing erosion of the rights of LGBT+ and transgender communities. We expressed alarm over how legislative and regulatory initiatives are increasingly being used to stigmatize, marginalize, and exclude — rather than support — vulnerable individuals and their families. EPATH fears that the Italian proposal, if adopted, would further contribute to this concerning trend and foster a climate of mistrust that undermines access to appropriate and respectful care.

EPATH calls on Italian policymakers to base their legislative initiatives on the best available scientific evidence and internationally recognized standards of care. We remain committed to engaging with Italian institutions and healthcare professionals to ensure that transgender youth are provided with ethical, evidence-based, and compassionate care that respects their rights and promotes their well-being.

Sincerely,

Iva Zegura (EPATH President) & the EPATH Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iva Zegura', is positioned within a light gray rectangular box.

References

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Coleman E, Radix AE, Bouman WP, Brown GR, de Vries ALC, Deutsch MB, et al. Standards of care for the health of transgender and gender diverse people, version 8. Int J Transgend Health. 2022;23(Suppl 1):S1–259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644>

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AWMF Guideline (German Association of Scientific Medical Societies) - Gender Incongruence and Gender Dysphoria in Childhood and Adolescence - Diagnosis and Treatment (S2k) AWMF Registry No. 028 – 014 https://register.awmf.org/assets/guidelines/028_D_G_f_Kinder-_und_Jugendpsychiatrie_und_-psychotherapie/028-014eng_S2k_Geschlechtsinkongruenz-Geschlechtsdysphorie-Kinder-Jugendliche_2025-06.pdf

EPATH statement of serious concerns recent developments in europe and the us https://epath.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/epath-statement-of-serious-concern-on-recent-developments_09-05-2025.pdf

European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) Statement on Conversion or Reparative Therapy for Normal Variants of Sexual Orientation <https://www.europsyche.org/Resources/EAP-Guidelines-and-Position-Statements/EAP-Statement-on-Conversion-Therapy>

EPA Statement on conversion „therapies“ and LGBTQ Patients <https://www.europsy.net/app/uploads/2022/01/EPA-statement-on-ban-on-conversion-therapy.pdf>