

## EPATH STATEMENT OF SERIOUS CONCERNS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE AND THE US

The current social climate worldwide is rapidly and alarmingly turning hostile towards sexual and gender minorities and particularly trans and gender-diverse populations of all ages. This escalating trend undermines decades-long achievements in rights and healthcare provision and poses an immediate and serious threat to essential human rights – most notably due to its impact on access to medical care for transgender adults and youth. EPATH is seriously concerned and sees that its aim of promoting health, increasing quality of life and ensuring rights for healthy development and well-being of transgender people are more than ever severely threatened.

Currently, there are European countries where care providers are personally threatened, which makes the provision of care extremely difficult. Professionals in gender-related healthcare, both clinicians and researchers, are targeted and attacked, sometimes including serious threats and violence. Institutions where research and clinical activities have continued despite these ongoing difficulties are becoming increasingly less secure both physically and financially. Other countries have restricted access to their clinical care practices by adapting their clinical guidelines, especially for young people. These developments are deeply troubling, especially when considering the already prevalent and increasing stigmatization, discrimination, and healthcare access barriers faced by the Trans and Gender Diverse population.

The recent developments in the US are posing a significant threat to the global progress of this field. Like other medical fields, gender-related healthcare is striving to progressively strengthen the evidence base for its practices. However, funding of gender-related research in the US has recently been abruptly cut (Heidt, 2025; Wadman & Jacobs, 2025). In addition, the executive order to ban transgender care for youth will, if judicial appeals fail, lead to a disappearance of such care in the largest country of the Western world, destroying decades of work by clinician and researchers and leaving transgender youth and their families without any of these resources (The White House, 2025). The recently published “Evidence Review” by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria does not give trust that this development will stop soon.

Structural transphobia includes regulations and laws alongside societal norms and attitudes and associated with adverse mental and physical health conditions (Bränström & Pachankis, 2021; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2024; Lattaner et al., 2024; Price et al., 2024). Structural stigma adds to the stigma experienced at interpersonal and individual levels which contributes to minority stress (Frost & Meyer, 2023), which is also known to be associated with health inequalities. Indeed, research on structural stigma shows that minorities face detrimental consequences even if they do not directly experience discrimination or violence in their daily lives. Therefore, this change in climate is a pressing public health threat.

Public debates on medical care provided to TGD populations are increasingly led by political arguments, and an overflow of misinformation is presented against scientific evidence and clinical experience. This misinformation, which often distorts the realities of TGD healthcare and perpetuates harmful stereotypes, is a significant barrier to the provision of quality care.

EPATH is highly worried about these developments. The urgency of these trends necessitates immediate and concerted action. By publishing this statement EPATH:

- Calls for steps to be taken against the above-mentioned threats to reverse the negative effects ensuring that research can be performed and there is access to care for the TGD population.
- Calls for increased awareness and attention by all health professionals, policymakers, and society to stop these threatening developments.
- Underscores the need for solidarity and collaboration among stakeholders to effectively address these worrisome tendencies. It is crucial for professionals to unite, share experiences, and express solidarity to counter this trend.
- Encourages national and international professional care associations to promote practice which accords to evidence-based practice, through guidelines for each profession.
- Invites all individuals and organizations to take a proactive stance when evidence-based gender-related care is endangered in their specific country.
- Calls all parties involved to prioritize consultation with health care professionals and people with lived experience when creating health care related action plans and legislations.

EPATH is determined to continue its efforts to provide the means for researchers and clinicians to communicate and collaborate. EPATH must and will continue to support and promote evidence-based practices in gender-related healthcare, as they are key to advancing the field and improving the health outcomes of TGD populations.

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