



The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

February 8, 2024

Dear Premier Ford and Deputy Premier Jones,

Thank you for your ongoing recognition of the importance of children's physical, developmental and mental health, and the historic investments in children's healthcare your government made this past July. It is in this context that we are writing today, to express our appreciation for your commitment to respect the rights of patients and clinicians to make clinical decisions when it comes to gender-affirming care for transgender and gender-diverse children and youth.

This is a principled and evidence-based position. Effective relationships between a patient and their clinicians are based on trust and confidentiality, and guided by best-available evidence to support physical and mental well-being. Gender-affirming healthcare for children and youth must remain as decisions between the patient, their parents/caregivers, and their clinicians, without intrusion by government.

Our clinicians see firsthand the harm, pain and damage that occurs when transgender and gender-diverse children and youth are outed against their will and are not adequately supported on their journey. Policies aimed at fostering inclusion and representation and honouring the human rights of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth in all settings are not only critical to their overall health and wellbeing, they are life saving. For example, research has shown that for transgender youth who choose a name or pronoun different from the one given at birth, use of their chosen name or pronoun in multiple contexts affirms their gender identity and reduces mental health risks known to be high amongst this group. A 2018 study found that transgender youth allowed to use their chosen names and pronouns reported a 34 percent decrease in suicidal thoughts and a 65 percent decrease in suicide attempts.

Children and youth who seek gender-affirming care are entitled to timely and equitable access to effective care—whether social, psychological, or medical. As leaders in the delivery of specialized pediatric healthcare in Ontario, we are fully committed to supporting the health, well-being and equitable delivery of care for 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth. Our clinical leaders would be pleased to meet with you to continue to share evidence-based practice and policies that will strengthen current programming and improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Churchill
CEO, Empowered Kids Ontario



Dr. Ronald Cohn
President and CEO, The Hospital for Sick Children



Lauren Ettin
Executive Director, Kids Health Alliance



Julia Hanigsberg
President and CEO, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital



Alex Munter
President and CEO, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario



Bruce Squires
President, McMaster Children's Hospital



Nash Syed
President, Children's Hospital – London Health Sciences Centre



Tatum Wilson
CEO, Children's Mental Health Ontario



- cc. The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Patrick Sackville, Chief of Staff, Office of the Premier
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Blair Hains, Chief of Staff, Minister of Education
Suzanne Dennison, Chief of Staff, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Jane Kovarikova, Chief of Staff, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services