New Federal Efforts to Protect LGBTQI+ Youth Health in 200 Words

Adolescent Health & Well-Being

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Transgender and gender-diverse youth often face discrimination and barriers in accessing health care, which can lead to significant harmful mental and physical outcomes. Grounded in research conducted by PolicyLab and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) experts highlighting the lifesaving aspect of gender-affirming care for transgender youth, PolicyLab has offered recommendations to policymakers, payers, and other stakeholders to ensure gender-affirming care is accessible and affordable.

With the right care, transgender and gender-diverse youth can thrive. To this end, PolicyLab's recommendations have focused on fostering a positive policy environment supportive of this population. In line with this approach, the Biden Administration recently released an executive order that adds protections for LGBTQI+ youth, including provisions that aim to expand and protect access to gender-affirming care.

The executive order charges the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with protecting LGBTQI+ children and families from attacks on their access to health care, and instructs HHS to release sample policies for states on how to expand access to comprehensive health care for this population. HHS is also tasked with taking steps to address barriers that LGBTQI+ individuals and families face in accessing quality, affordable, comprehensive health care, including mental health care, reproductive health care, and HIV prevention and treatment, and to work with states to promote expanded access to gender-affirming care.

With the backdrop of developing state restrictions on abortion and other reproductive health services, which will hit youth and especially those who are LGBTQI+ at disproportionate rates, the executive order is particularly important. We will be looking for opportunities to inform the follow up to it with our research and the clinical expertise of CHOP's Gender and Sexuality Development Program, and hope that it can support positive change.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director ***Lauren Walens***.

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