



Eating Disorders Coalition Disapproves and Decries Administration's Attempt to Erase Transgender Definition in Federal Programs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 25, 2018) — The Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC) is dismayed by recent [New York Times](#) media reports of an attempt by the Administration to roll back civil rights. The Administration, through the Department of Health and Human Services, seeks to drop meaningful Title IX protections, thereby effectively endorsing sex discrimination in education programs receiving government financial assistance. The proposed re-definition would limit the classification of sex as solely 'male' or 'female', thus permanently (and unchangeably) defining a person's identity by the sex organs with which they are born. The proposal eliminates the definition for transgender individuals. With over 2 million individuals identifying as transgender or gender-diverse in our nation, such a change would be fundamentally detrimental to these persons, with a radically toxic effect upon their health and well-being. This attempt fails to recognize decades of scientific research into the psychology, genetics, and physiology of the transgender population. Worrisomely, the proposed action opens the door for the erasure of further protections of LGBTQIA persons, particularly with respect to vital and affordable health and mental health care services.

“This attack on the transgender community is nothing short of barbaric and eviscerates our fundamental American values of liberty and justice,” said Dr. S. Bryn Austin, President of the Board of Directors of the Eating Disorders Coalition. “To claim this cruel proposal is justified by science is utterly ignorant of a century of research on sex and gender. As scientists and clinicians, as advocates and Americans, we will not stand for this attempt to dismantle the basic rights and dignity of the transgender community. Not now, not ever.”

Eating disorders affect the lives of 30 million Americans during their lifetime, and particularly have a higher prevalence amongst the transgendered and gender-diverse populations. Research has shown that transgender and cisgender sexual minority young adults have elevated rates of compensatory behaviors (e.g., vomiting, use of diet pills or laxatives) as well as higher instances of eating disorder diagnosis.¹ Additionally, the intense degree of harassment and discrimination faced by transgender and other sexual minority youth is linked to further injurious behaviors, such as binge eating and fasting/vomiting to lose weight.² At once, the Administration's proposal diminishes protections for citizens and creates further healthcare burden in our country.

¹ Diemer, E. W., Grant, J. D., Munn-Chernoff, M. A., Patterson, D., & Duncan, A. E. (2015). Gender identity, sexual orientation, and eating-related pathology in a national sample of college students. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 57*(2), 144-149.

² Watson, R. J., Veale, J. F., & Saewyc, E. M. (2017). Disordered eating behaviors among transgender youth: probability profiles from risk and protective factors. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 50*(5), 515-522.

Such action would weaken protections for transgender persons, and the adverse effects would be significant to the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of this population. The EDC strongly urges the Administration to reconsider this unnecessary and unwarranted proposal.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, D.C.-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of treatment providers, advocacy organizations, academics, parents of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. Additional resources can also be found at www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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