

Parental Authority Over Children in Colorado

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It is becoming increasingly obvious that public schools are not safe places for children. Boards of Education, principals, and teachers outright lie about issues like transgender education. There are numerous reports of children receiving COVID vaccines without parental consent at school. There are hundreds, if not thousands of families that are dealing with the consequences of administrators and teachers deliberately withholding information from parents about their children, particularly in the area of gender dysphoria. Recent videos made public by Project Veritas show that teachers and administrators attend continuing education programs at which they learn how to secretly insert transgender and liberal ideology into their curricula. In these videos, these important influencers of children openly display their disdain for conservative values and parental control over children.^{1 2}

A new bill passing through the Colorado legislature adds one more insidious way in which schools can ruin the lives of children and their families. The legislation provides for an annual mental health assessment for students in grades 6-12. Proponents state that this legislation will help to identify students who have mental health issues early so that they can receive help.³

Parents can opt out, which is a very different process than giving permission for this assessment. In other words, no permission slip will be sent home for parents to sign; rather the assumption will be that the assessment is ok for all students unless a parent specifically requests to opt out.

This is not the first time the Colorado legislature has allocated funds to address child and adolescent mental health. According to the Colorado Behavior Health Administration (BHA), the Colorado legislature allocated \$9 million of federal stimulus funding for programs and training to address Colorado's Mental Health crisis.⁴

Through another bill,⁵ a mental health program called IMATTER was established, also managed by the BHA, to provide six free virtual counseling sessions to children and adolescents.⁶ When visiting the site, two options are presented; "parents" and "youth." I clicked on "youth," claimed to be 15 years old, and completed the survey, which concluded that I was at low risk of substance abuse but asked me if I wanted to sign up for six free virtual counseling sessions. I responded "yes," and was taken to a page that displayed this statement: "Providing your parent or guardian's name and contact information is optional if you are 12 or older."⁷ It appears that even without this new legislation, children ages 12 and older can contract for counseling services without their parents knowing about it in Colorado.

The new Colorado bill would involve a questionnaire administered by a screener, defined as “the entity selected by the department pursuant to this party to conduct the mental health assessment.” This is vague, as not even the credentials of the potential screeners are defined in the bill. If the screener decides that the student “may be suffering from a mental or emotional concern,” parents should be notified and provided with information about available resources, including IMATTER.⁸

The dangerous part of this bill is that parents can theoretically opt out, but children ages 12 and older can opt back in on their own and be referred to IMATTER by the screener without parental consent.

Supporters of the bill include organizations like Inseparable Us⁹, which states on its website that it is funded by the Wellbeing Trust. Wellbeing Trust proposes the addition of federally funded mental health programs in daycare centers, schools, workplaces and health systems.¹⁰

Envision:You¹¹, an LGBTQ advocacy network, also supports the bill, stating that LGBTQ students in Colorado are at greater risk of mental health concerns than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts.

The mental health professionals to which children are likely to be referred are also concerning, as their professional associations endorse medical intervention for children who suffer from gender dysphoria. For example, the American Psychological Association posts statements like this on its website:

“Research indicates that providing gender creative children who eventually identify as cisgender the freedom to explore their gender – even with puberty blockers – helped them feel more confident in their ultimate decisions about their gender identity (Ashley, 2021).”

“Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of gender (i.e., agender, bigender, man, Two Spirit, woman, etc.), which can be the same or different from person’s sex/gender assigned at birth (APA, 2015). Supportive evidence-based interventions—including but not limited to mental health counseling, social transition support, and hormone therapies—greatly improve mental health outcomes for transgender youth (APA 2015).”

“Access to gender-affirming care has a positive relationship with the mental health of transgender youth and lowers their risk of depression and suicide (Bauer et al., 2015; Green et al., in press). Transgender youth who have access to gender-affirming medical care experience improvements in mental health and often show mental health comparable to their cisgender peers (Toomey et al., 2022). Additionally, the distress experienced by youth who are provided treatments, but then decide to discontinue them and grow up to be cisgender, is

significantly less than that which is experienced by transgender youth when such treatments are delayed (Ashley, 2021)."¹²

The American Psychological Association clearly supports the use of hormone blockade for children who report that they are suffering from gender dysphoria. Where do children find information about gender dysphoria? Of course, online, but also at school, where it is sometimes openly discussed and promoted.

The National Association of Social Workers also endorses gender-affirming care for children and includes a link to another organization it supports and belongs to called Project Thrive: A National Campaign to Support LGBTQ Youth. This organization lists these additional sponsors on its website:¹³

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association of School Librarians
- American Counseling Association
- American School Counselor Association
- National Association of School Nurses
- National Association of School Psychologists
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Education Association
- National PTA
- Society of Pediatric Nurses
- School Social Work Association of America

So, to summarize, in Colorado children ages 12 and older are able to seek mental health counseling without parental knowledge or consent. The Colorado State legislature is working to pass a bill to allow children as young as age 12 to be given a mental health assessment at school without parental consent. This assessment can lead to referral to mental health professionals, all of whom belong to professional organizations and societies that have endorsed transgender ideology and medical intervention for children. Additionally, organizations of school officials ranging from school librarians to principals endorse these dangerous practices too.

To be clear, many psychologists and social workers do not affirm gender dysphoria and mutilation of children. But parents are not given the opportunity to seek those professionals if children ages 12 and older choose to act on their own.

This bill is just one more way in which schools, advocacy organizations and healthcare providers are interfering with the parent/child relationship. The potential for children as young as age 12 to contract for mental health services through referrals from school should terrify all parents.

Schools need to return to focusing on academics and leave parenting to parents.

¹ <https://rumble.com/v2c6nss-new-york-asst.-superintendent-covertly-pushing-dei-agenda-within-school-dis.html>

² <https://rumble.com/v2ce38q-new-york-school-teachers-detail-disruptive-lgbtq-indoctrination-plan-in-cla.html>

³ Katie Spence. Colorado Seeking Annual Mental Health Check for Children in School. *Epoch Times* March 9 2023

⁴ Behavioral Health Recovery Act. <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-137>

⁵ Rapid Mental Health Response For Colorado Youth. <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1258>

⁶ <https://imattercolorado.org/>

⁷ <https://platform.imattercolorado.org/public/register/about-you/en>

⁸ Katie Spence. Colorado Seeking Annual Mental Health Check for Children in School. *Epoch Times* March 9 2023

⁹ <https://www.inseparable.us/>

¹⁰ https://healingthenation.wellbeingtrust.org/?page_id=97

¹¹ <https://www.envision-you.org/resources>

¹² <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/gender-affirmative-care>

¹³ <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=dX2Shu80uLk%3d&portalid=0>