

The Washington Stand

Controversial Trans Clinic Pushed Schools to ‘Affirm’ 5th Grade Girls Identifying as Boys

By Ben Johnson | February 17, 2023

A pediatric transgender clinic under multiple investigations for harming teenagers and potentially defrauding taxpayers has announced it will continue carrying out services — even as emails show clinic employees advising a local school to “affirm” an entire group of fifth-grade girls who identified as transgender.

The latest controversy engulfing The Washington University Transgender Center at St. Louis Children’s Hospital came when officials at Parkway Schools asked how it should handle an entire group of 10-to-11-year-old girls who suddenly described themselves as transgender *en masse*. “The short story is that one of the students in the 5th-grade class is coming out as [t]rans[gender]. She has told several of her friends and now several of them are also saying they are trans,” wrote the school official in an email dated October 7, 2021. “We do not want to discourage them if this is the case, but we’re also suspecting there could be other reasons they are doing this.”

Rapid onset gender dysphoria (ROGD) can be “initiated, magnified, spread, and maintained via the mechanisms of social and peer contagion,” found Dr. Lisa Littman in a 2018 study. But the gender clinic employee told the school Littman’s “language isn’t affirming” and asserted, without proof, that the studies underlying this social contagion view are “invalid.” At the same time, the official admitted, “I have seen this happen with mental health diagnoses,” such as ADHD.

The gender clinic recommended the elementary school provide “as much support and discussion as possible around their gender exploration,” because a few of the preteens may go forward with a gender transition procedure. “If in a few weeks or months, a student wants to go by their legal name and pronouns that match their sex assigned at birth, no harm was really done in affirming them before,” the employee insisted.

Concerned parents raised concerns over the way the clinic dismissed psychosomatic illnesses for ADHD but treated every case of gender dysphoria as legitimate. “The utter lack of curiosity about the underlying causes of such a trend among ten-year old children by medical professionals is immoral at best and an abdication of professional responsibility at worst,” said Nicki Neily, the president of Parents Defending Education (PDE), which uncovered the communications.

The emails said the advice to affirm came from Dr. Sarah Garwood, who “is also medical director in charge of the Supporting Positive Opportunities with Teens (SPOT) clinic inside Jennings Senior High School,” noted PDE. The facility describes itself as “[y]outh partnering with community for social justice” and states it exists to “remove barriers that currently impede youth from seeking or obtaining health and prevention services.”

The advice “sounds less like ‘treatment’ and more like indoctrination,” said one of the state’s U.S. senators, Josh Hawley (R). Hawley launched an investigation into the St. Louis-based clinic, as did Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey (R) and two state agencies. Bailey’s inquest focuses on potential Medicaid fraud and prescribing experimental cancer drugs to teenagers.

“If even a fraction of the whistleblower’s new allegations is corroborated, the Center should be immediately shut down,” said Hawley.

The incriminations stem from a legal affidavit and accompanying article in The Free Press by Jamie Reed, a whistleblower who worked in the clinic from 2018 to 2022. She detailed the way her former colleagues used high-pressure tactics, including unfounded threats that children would commit suicide without the clinic’s services, to convince parents to consent to their children’s mutilation, sterilization, and possible castration. The clinic kept children on puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones even as their mental and physical condition worsened, Reed testified.



“We need more trans industry whistleblowers describing how children are being abused and manipulated,” said Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D., president and founder of The Ruth Institute. “Reed’s comments show how deeply the medical profession has been corrupted by the transgender ideology.”

One of Reed’s detractors, Rabbi Daniel Bogard, who testified in favor of transgender procedures on minors like his son, called Reed’s opposition “incredibly ideologically-oriented.” Reed describes herself as “politically to the Left of Bernie Sanders.”

Aspects of Reed’s account have surfaced in other transgender clinics that target minors — including one associated with HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Rachel Levine.

Biden Official Levine Discussed How to Profit from Transgender Surgeries

Emails between Levine and Rollyn M. Ornstein of Penn State Health Children’s Hospital show Levine commenting on the profitability of surgically removing teenage girls’ healthy breasts. Ornstein sought the administrators’ approval to hire a social worker for a pediatric gender clinic and solicited Levine’s input on “potential revenue, including downstream.” Ornstein wanted “to help [administrators] realize the eventual ROI [return on investment] for this necessary position.”

Levine replied, “You should be able to fund a [social worker] for evaluation and therapy for pediatric and adolescent patients,” although the patients would “most likely be limited to FTM Top surgery”; that is, teenage girls seeking to identify as male by having a double mastectomy.

The social worker often “helps” children bill the clinic’s transgender procedures to private insurance or Medicaid.

The university established the Gender Health Clinic in 2019 and hired as its director Amy Keisling, a licensed social worker.

Detransitioners flew to Missouri this week in a heartfelt attempt to spare other confused teens the permanent mental and physical scars they endure. “Instead of leaving me whole and allowing me to grow and feel comfortable, I was medicalized, mutilated, and possibly sterilized,” Luka Hein told Fox 2 St. Louis (which deceptively edited a statement by Chloe Cole to make it sound as if she would have committed suicide without the treatment. In reality, Cole rebuffed the common assertion and is now suing those who carried out her double mastectomy.)

University officials professed they were “alarmed” by Reed’s testimony, had initiated an investigation, and would “hold our medical practitioners to the highest professional and ethical standards.”

But the facility announced Tuesday it will continue its current transgender medical practice on minors. Since the clinic “is the only place in the entire state of Missouri where transgender youth can access the care they need to ensure their mental and physical well-being,” the facility stated, “we cannot institute a moratorium that would deny critical, standards-based care to current and new patients.” Administrators agreed to provide unspecified additional oversight.

“I am surprised and disappointed by this decision to continue” carrying out these procedures, Senator Hawley told Fox 2 St. Louis.

Missouri Lawmakers Attempt to Protect At-Risk Teens from the Transgender Industry

Hawley filed new legislation allowing minors to sue doctors who subjected them to transgender medical interventions and other medical practitioners who participated in the clinic’s actions, as well as the clinic itself and any university or hospital associated with it. It also bars such organizations from receiving federal funding.

State lawmakers have also tried to safeguard teenagers from the transgender industry. On Thursday, the Missouri House General Laws Committee voted to send the Missouri Children Deserve Help Not Harm Act (H.B. 419), which would protect minors from transgender drugs and surgeries, to the full House of Representatives by an 8-5 vote. The committee also approved another bill (H.B. 183) requiring student athletes to compete against members of their own sex by a 9-5 vote. ■

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