

Protecting Youth from Sex Change Treatments

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of youth experiencing confusion about their God-given sex and seeking to make changes toward becoming the opposite sex through chemical and in some cases, surgical treatment. This is an alarming trend and doesn't bode well for the physical, mental, and emotional health of our children. Please don't think this is not happening in Iowa because it is. Minors should be protected from sex change treatments and/or surgery.

Sex change treatment and/or surgery is mostly permanent and irreversible. There may be partial recovery of a person's original state, but certainly no total recovery of their original state. What we are talking about here is the chemical castration, sterilization, and sometimes mutilation of emotionally distressed children. It is tragic, appalling and unconscionable. I would consider this child abuse.

A minor is too young to make such a life changing decision. Youth and their parents are unable to comprehend and fully appreciate the risk and long-term life implications of these treatments. One court in Great Britain, in the case of Keira Bell, a young woman who regretted her transition, found that children and teens are incapable of giving informed consent to such treatment.

People under the age of 21 in Iowa, are prohibited from consuming alcohol, in order to protect their health and safety. And youth under 18 are prohibited from buying tobacco and even getting a tattoo. We don't leave these activities up to the parents. The state has an interest in protecting children. Sex change treatments are way more invasive and dangerous than any of those.

A young person can experience discordance between their sex and their gender identity, and may in some cases be diagnosed with gender dysphoria. However, a substantial majority of those minors (at least 85% and some studies indicate more) who experience this will outgrow it once they go through puberty and will eventually accept the sex they were created to be. The reality is people change over time.

Therefore it is better to take a wait-and-see approach with these children.

We should resist those in the medical community who are pushing this by prescribing puberty blocking drugs that alter a child's hormonal balance (and also are not approved by the FDA), cross-sex hormonal drugs, or by removing perfectly healthy sex organs. These clinics pushing this reinforce these children's confusion and make little effort to guide them to proper treatment. This is medically irresponsible.

These treatments are unproven scientifically and poorly studied as they are experimental. They have severe and sometimes fatal effects. This is a medical scandal. These treatments commit them to a lifetime infusion of hormones which contradict their biology.

Known harms to these treatments are decreased bone density, memory impairment, sexual dysfunction, sterility, risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, asthma, pulmonary disease, cancer, and decreased life expectancy. These children are also expected to suffer through a lifetime of complications from the surgery.

Studies have shown that individuals who have undergone this treatment suffer from increased mortality rates, higher suicide rates than the general population, and significantly more mental health issues than the general population, such as substance abuse, depression, and psychiatric hospitalizations.

No matter how many hormones are given to help a person present as the opposite sex, science and biology tell us they will never be the opposite sex. We must remember that sex change treatment can never actually change a person's sex. It can only alter the body's hormones or add or remove body parts to a degree to make the person appear more like the opposite sex. A person's sex is determined at the time they are conceived and is marked in every single cell of that person's body by their DNA either containing an XX chromosome for a female or an XY chromosome for a male. In addition there are over 6500 other arrangements in a person's chromosomes that indicate male or females. None of this material in our DNA can be changed.

The solution to minors suffering from confusion about their sexual identity or gender dysphoria is compassionate care and counseling geared toward helping the child learn how to handle the trauma he has experienced with

the goal of helping him learn to accept the sex he was created to be. The reality is that you can't start over with a new body just because you don't like the one you have and that taking hormones will not magically transform you into the opposite sex.

Many of these youth turn out to be very successful, once they've learned to accept themselves for who they are and also for their unique gifts and personalities and to know that is a good thing. It also helps as they learn that being uncomfortable with one's body is actually a normal part of growing up.

Rural Emergency Hospitals

We passed a bill out of the Senate this past week and it creates a new license for rural hospitals called "rural emergency hospitals" (REH). An REH means a facility that provides rural emergency health services 24/7 and does not provide any inpatient acute care. This is a federally authorized license and rules are set at the federal level. Critical access hospitals such as Waverly Health Center, Floyd County Medical Center, Community Memorial Hospital in Sumner, and MercyOne New Hampton are qualified for this designation REH. A certificate of need is not required. The advantage of this designation is that it authorizes a higher reimbursement rate under Medicare, providing an extra infusion of funding for rural hospitals.

Passed Senate Committee

Fresh Milk: This bill provides for the on-farm, small scale production and sale of raw, unpasteurized, ungraded milk. The bill helps to meet the niche market demand while promoting strong, local connections between consumers and producers. The raw milk producer is required to post the coliform and standard plate tests at their distribution point where their raw milk products are sold. The producer may deliver raw milk to a consumer, but not at a place of business where food or food items are sold retail. Producers also may not sell raw milk at farmers markets or home-based food businesses. Containers holding raw milk or a raw milk dairy product shall have a label notifying consumers that the milk is not subject to state inspection or other public health regulations. The bill exempts raw milk

dairies, raw milk dairy products, and raw milk from DIA or IDALS inspection.

Health Care Omnibus Bill: This bill:

1. Expands the More Options for Maternal Support (MOMS) program, which was started last year to provide state grant funding for pregnancy resource centers. More funding is planned plus funding will be provided for programs to address the needs of fathers regarding employment, health care, parenting skills, and other life skills.
2. Expands a current program, the Center of Excellence program, that helps bring specialists to rural areas
3. Establishes a family practice/obstetrics fellowship program for doctors in rural and underserved areas of the state. Beginning in FY 24, there will be funding to support 4 fellowship positions
4. Allows state employees paid parental leave for births and adoptions under federal FMLA
5. Increases the amount of adoption subsidy payments. This covers reasonable, necessary legal costs directly related to the legal adoption of a child.

Moving in Committee

Governor's Reorganization Bill: In this bill the governor is asking to realign state departments in order to streamline the functioning of state government and make it more efficient. It takes 37 government agencies down to 16. It has been 40 years since Iowa has taken a comprehensive view of its government structure.

Welfare Reform: This bill is designed to address the issue of errors and fraud in Iowa's public assistance programs. [According to the Iowa City Press Citizen](#), the total amount of unemployment insurance overpayments for 2022 was up 6,086% since 2017, costing over \$129 million in unwarranted spending. Fraud payments were also up 242% last year totaling \$13.8 million. This bill works to adopt a more efficient process for identifying eligibility for welfare, which includes checking employment, assets, residency, and citizenship. We want to ensure these programs are available for Iowans in legitimate need.

Feel free to contact me with ideas, thoughts, and concerns. My phone is 319-987-3021 or you can email me at sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov . I want to hear what you are thinking and will listen to your input. Together we will work to make a difference for the future of Iowa. Thank you very much for the honor of representing you!

Sincerely,

Sandy