# Federal Court Blocks Florida's Ban on Medical Care for Transgender Minors



### Federal Court Ruling on Florida's Ban of Medical Care for Transgender Minors

A federal district court has blocked Florida from enforcing a law that bans medical care for transgender minors. The ruling, issued by District Judge Robert Hinkle, declared the law "unconstitutional," emphasizing that "gender identity is real."

The contested law, passed in 2023 by Florida's Republican-led legislature and signed by Governor Ron DeSantis, prohibits healthcare providers from prescribing hormones or puberty blockers to individuals under the age of 18. The law also imposes restrictions on gender-affirming treatments for adults.

Judge Hinkle's 105-page order stated that Florida's regulations violate the equal protection rights of transgender individuals. The judge underscored that the state cannot deny safe and effective medical treatment that is otherwise approved when not used for supporting transgender identity.

The ruling was celebrated by advocates for transgender rights, with Simone Chriss, transgender rights initiative director at Southern Legal Counsel, describing it as "a victory for the state of Florida." Chriss stated that the federal court saw the healthcare ban as discriminatory.

Governor DeSantis’ office has announced plans to appeal the ruling, arguing that the law aims to protect children in Florida and that the court's decision contradicts the will of the state’s residents.

### Rising Trends in Gender Dysphoria Diagnoses Among Youth

Recent data indicates a significant increase in the diagnosis of gender dysphoria among children and teenagers. A report by LexisNexis Risk Solutions reveals that insurance claims for gender-affirming healthcare among minors rose by 133% from 2019 to 2023. The report also highlights a broader increase in mental health issues among young people, with claims for eating disorders and anxiety rising by 108% and 61%, respectively, during the same period.

The rise in gender dysphoria cases is partly attributed to greater societal acceptance and increased willingness to seek treatment. Experts suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic, characterized by lockdowns and heightened online interaction, might have contributed to self-reflection and doubt regarding gender identity among youth.

Studies have shown a concurrent increase in gender-affirming surgeries and other treatments. Estimates suggest that approximately 300,000 teens aged 13 to 17 now identify as transgender, more than doubling the estimate from 2017. States like Virginia and Indiana have reported some of the highest increases in gender dysphoria diagnoses, with rates rising over 200% from 2018 to 2022.

Sessions with mental health professionals often precede gender-affirming treatments, which may include counseling, puberty blockers, and hormone therapy. Some minors also undergo surgical procedures to better align their physical appearance with their gender identity.

Dr. Abbey Jo Schrage, a psychotherapist specializing in transgender children, attributes the rise to increased awareness and cultural acceptance of diverse gender identities, facilitated by extensive online resources and social media.

### Conclusion

Recent developments highlight the evolving legal and social landscape surrounding transgender healthcare in the United States. Federal courts and statistical data point to increased recognition and demand for gender-affirming treatments amidst ongoing debates on the rights and protections for transgender individuals.