



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON LGBTQ YOUTH

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Co-Chairs

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Executive Director

Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth Statement on HRSA Priorities and Fenway Health

For over thirty years, the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth has served as an oversight body for the Commonwealth. As an independent state agency, we identify gaps in service provision for LGBTQ youth through thorough investigative measures and engagement with multiple stakeholders. Our mandate is to deliver fact-based findings to the Governor, the Legislature, and most importantly, to the constituents we serve by advocating for actionable pathways, accountability, and equitable resources.

After consulting with leadership at Fenway Health, trusted community partners, members of the Massachusetts Legislature, and concerned parents, we have reached the following position, which is rooted in fact, strengthened by duality, measured by the totality of the circumstances, anchored in community, and oriented toward solutions.

This administration's coordinated attack on health equity has not only placed organizations in untenable positions but has also sown division within our community, particularly among those whose intersecting identities are most at risk.

Before we go any further, we must pause to center our love, our rage, and our unwavering solidarity with our trans siblings - especially our trans youth. You are not alone. You are seen, you are needed, and you are loved beyond measure. Every action we take, every policy we fight, every word we write, is rooted in our commitment to your safety, your joy, and your right to thrive.

We hold you in our hearts as we navigate this moment together. Our advocacy is not abstract - it is an act of love in motion.

Understanding the Landscape -

What is HRSA?

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is the primary federal agency tasked with improving access to health care for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. As part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA supports programs for underserved populations, including mothers and children, people living with HIV/AIDS, rural residents, and low-income communities.

What are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)?

FQHCs are nonprofit community health centers that provide comprehensive primary care - including medical, dental, and behavioral health services - on a sliding fee scale based on a patient's ability to pay. They are an essential component of the healthcare system, ensuring access regardless of insurance status or income.

By contrast, hospitals are for-profit entities that receive indirect government funding through Medicare and Medicaid.

The Facts

Fact 1: The current administration's executive order - while not a law - has directed HRSA priorities in ways that are rooted in transphobia. These priorities impose new grant compliance requirements that could devastate funding for evidence-based, intersectional, and medically accurate services for marginalized communities if enforced.

Fact 2: This executive order's language - which has been publicly available since January 28, 2025 - effectively prohibits gender-affirming medical interventions for youth under 19. However, it has been challenged through legal injunctions, delaying full implementation.

Fact 3: The new federal fiscal year, which includes HRSA's updated grant priorities, began on October 1, 2025.

Fact 4: There are ongoing assertions that federal funding will be revoked for programs related to gender-affirming care, harm reduction, and housing-first models.

Fact 5: Fenway Health, an FQHC, has reported that its federal grants are at risk of being terminated "for convenience" and "without appeal" under the new HRSA priorities.

What This Means

Fenway's decision to pause new prescriptions for hormone replacement therapies (HRT) and puberty blockers is made out of an abundance of caution. We understand that this has caused deep concern among families and young people.

According to HRSA data, Fenway receives approximately **\$36 million** in federal funding to support LGBTQ services. Should that funding be revoked, essential programs - particularly those related to HIV/AIDS care - would face devastating cuts, affecting over **30,000 patients**.

Legal Considerations (as gleaned from qualified partners)

Does Fenway's decision violate Massachusetts law?

While no formal legal analysis has been completed by our colleagues, it is important to clarify that Massachusetts' **Shield Law** protects *practitioners*, not health centers themselves. Therefore, it does not supersede federal grant priorities, even under Shield 2.0.

State legislators are actively developing a plan to pair Shield 2.0 with dedicated funding to cover HRT and puberty blockers for approximately 3,000 patients - of whom roughly 2,000 currently receive these treatments. Massachusetts has anticipated this federal shift and is taking concrete steps to safeguard care for all people of trans experience.

Is Fenway Discriminating Against Trans Individuals?

That determination lies within the courts. However, we know that:

- Youth under 19 can still access some (not all) primary care services and behavioral health, optical, and dental services at Fenway, regardless of gender identity.
- Fenway has committed to working individually with affected families - approximately
- **300 patients (200 receiving HRT or blockers)** - to ensure continuity of care, including sufficient medication supplies and referrals to telehealth providers.

We recognize that this moment is distressing. These numbers are not meant to minimize harm but to contextualize the scope and reinforce that ***Massachusetts can meet this challenge together.***

Solutions and Action Steps

- **Fenway Health** has outlined a transition plan for affected patients and families.
- **Massachusetts** is finalizing a trust fund to support families in need, to be paired with the Shield 2.0 protections.
- **The Commission** will continue to serve as an advocacy resource and provide individual assistance where needed. We will also share a comprehensive list of legal, medical, and mental health resources.

A Sobering Reflection -

The Commission believes that Fenway's approach to communicating this change was deeply flawed. The lack of transparency and failure to engage the community has eroded trust and reinforced existing divides. A siloed decision-making process that prioritizes one segment of the community over another is shortsighted and avoidable.

That said, speculation about nationwide fallout is premature. Fenway's situation does not necessarily predict the fate of other FQHCs. What is needed now is balance, transparency, and unity, because our trans siblings depend on us for a grounded, fact-based response.

The community's rush to judgment and criticism poses an existential threat to our collective well-being, and its divisiveness serves only to please this administration. Our continued engagement in *either-or* thinking - rather than embracing the gift of duality - along with perfectionism, defensiveness when called in, and top-down decision-making without community input, undermines our shared mission. When individualism outweighs collective care; when the quantity of condemnations takes precedence over the quality of statements that inform and unite us; and when we operate under a constant sense of urgency - we embody the very tenets and characteristics that contradict our core values. This approach is not only imprudent, but also emotionally violent toward the most vulnerable members of our community.

We call on leadership across our networks to move with balance. We are advocates - and also targets - of this administration's attacks. Understanding our own heightened emotions during this time- it is still our duty to lead differently: to engage without fear, to communicate without panic, and to build solutions grounded in care.

Lean when you need to. Retreat when you must. Return with solutions.

In Power, Service, and Boundless Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shaplaie D. Brooks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shaplaie" being the most prominent part.

Shaplaie Brooks

Executive Director, Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth

The Commission on LGBTQ Youth is established by law as an independent state agency to recommend and advocate to all branches of state government effective policies, programs and resources for LGBTQ youth to thrive. Founded in 1992 as the first body of its kind in the nation, the Commission has been advocating for LGBTQ youth wellbeing in and out of school for 33 years.

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MAILING ADDRESS

418 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA 02215

WEBSITE

www.mass.gov/cgly

Resources:

Legal

The ACLU

Location: Massachusetts

Services: Provides legal and advocacy services to protect civil rights and liberties through litigation, legislative advocacy, public education, and direct action.

Contact: ACLU.org, Phone 617-482-3170

Attorney General's Office

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Advocacy and resource provision.

Contact: Mass.gov, Phone 617-727-2200

Committee for Public Council Services

Locations: Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Framingham, Holyoke, Hyannis, Lawrence, Lowell, Malden, New Bedford, Northampton, Pittsfield, Quincy, Roxbury, Salem, Springfield, Worcester

Services: Provides legal representation in MA for those unable to afford an attorney in all matters in which the law requires the appointment of counsel.

Contact: [CPSC Homepage](#), [Directory Page](#)

GLAD Law

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Legal services and strategies, public policy advocacy, and education, specifically regarding gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation.

Contact: GLADLaw.org, Phone 617-426-1350

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commission@ma-lgbtq.org

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Community Support

The AGLY Network: Find Your Closest AGLY [Here](#)

BAGLY

Location: Boston, MA

Contact: [BAGLY](#), Phone 617-227-4313

SWAGLY

Location: Worcester, MA

Contact: swagly@aidspprojectworchester.org

NAGLY

Location: Salem, MA

Contact: NAGLY.org

18 Degrees

Location: Pittsfield

Contact: 18Degrees.Org

Boston GLASS

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Community support, mental health counseling and clinical case management, peer support, free and confidential HIV/STI testing, PrEP Services, etc.

Contact: [Boston GLASS](#), Phone: 617-519-1727

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Assistance with identity documents such as ID changes, education and training services, and emergency financial assistance through the REACH program.

Contact: Masstpc.org, Phone 617-778-0519

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Medical

Boston Children's Hospital—GeMS (Gender Multispecialty Service)

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Multidisciplinary care including mental health support, puberty blockers, and hormone therapy (as appropriate)

Contact: [BMC Gender Health](#), Phone 617-414-4841

Boston Medical Center—CATCH Program

Location: Boston, MA

Services: Integrated behavioral health, medical evaluation, hormone therapy for youth

Contact: [BMC Gender Health](#), Phone 617-414-4841

Transhealth

Location: Northampton, MA (Western Mass)

Services: Pediatric and adolescent primary care, puberty blockers, hormones, mental health services

Contact: transhealth.org, Telehealth available

UMass Memorial Hospital— Youth Gender Services

Location: Worcester, MA

Services: Gender-affirming primary and specialty care for patients up to age 19

Contact: [UMass LGBTQIA+ Services](#), Phone 855-862-7763

Mental Health

Therapists:

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commission@ma-lgbtq.org

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Kirbie MacEwen, LISCW

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