

[U.S.](#)

Florida banning transgender health care treatments for minors

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Transgender children in Florida will be barred from receiving hormones or undergoing surgeries to treat gender dysphoria under a rule approved Friday by state medical officials at the urging of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The Florida Board of Medicine and the state Board of Osteopathic Medicine voted at a joint meeting in Lake Buena Vista to finalize rules governing gender affirming health care for minors. The rule is set to take effect after a weekslong public input period.

The ban comes as DeSantis and Republicans in other states move to limit access to the treatments for minors, often characterizing them as medically unproven and potentially dangerous in the long term, as another political battle against liberal ideologies.

Many doctors, mental health specialists and medical groups have argued that treatments for transgender youth are safe and beneficial, though rigorous long-term research is lacking. Federal health officials have described the gender-affirming care as crucial to the health and well-being of transgender children and adolescents.

DeSantis has made criticizing such treatments for minors a routine part of his reelection campaign, often referring to the procedures in graphic terms during rallies and speeches. The new policy, finalized days before the election, marks another example of DeSantis' ability to leverage the power of government to accomplish controversial political goals, bolstering his national reputation as a combative GOP culture warrior.

The rule prohibits doctors from prescribing puberty-blocking, hormone and hormone antagonist therapies to treat gender dysphoria in minors. It bans sex reassignment surgeries or other surgical procedures that alter primary or secondary sexual characteristics in minors.

"Today's vote from the Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine will protect our children from irreversible surgeries and highly experimental treatments. I appreciate the integrity of the Boards for ruling in the best interest of children in Florida despite facing tremendous pressure to permit these unproven and risky treatments. Children deserve to learn how to navigate this world without harmful pressure, and Florida will continue to fight for kids to be kids," Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo said in a statement.

[Florida health officials](#) banned state Medicaid insurance coverage for gender dysphoria treatments this year and issued a report that said the treatments have not been proven safe or effective. After the report's publication, Ladapo, a DeSantis appointee, called for the adoption of new rules around the treatments.

Florida has also clashed with federal health officials who advocate for providing the treatments for young people.

Gender-affirming health care for youths has been a target for Republicans in recent years. Last year, the

American Medical Association issued a letter urging governors to block any legislation prohibiting the treatment, calling such action "a dangerous intrusion into the practice of medicine."

[Arkansas](#) was the first state to enact such a ban on gender affirming care, with Republican lawmakers in 2021 overriding GOP Gov. Asa Hutchinson's veto of the legislation. [Alabama](#) Republicans this year approved legislation to outlaw gender-affirming medications for transgender youths. Both laws have been paused amid unfolding legal battles.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, a Republican, signed a bill last month that bars federal funds earmarked for the University of Oklahoma Medical Center from being used for gender reassignment treatments for minors. Stitt also called for the Legislature to ban some of those gender reassignment treatments statewide when it returns in February.

Top Tennessee Republicans also have vowed to push for strict anti-transgender policies. The state already bans doctors from providing gender-confirming hormone treatment to prepubescent minors. To date, no one has legally challenged the law as medical experts maintain no doctor in Tennessee does so.

In Florida, DeSantis signed a law last year barring transgender girls and women from playing on public school teams intended for student athletes identified as girls at birth.