

# DeSantis asks medical board to ban transgender healthcare

Transgender healthcare in Florida faced a double whammy from Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration Thursday.

**What's happening:** State surgeon general Joseph Ladapo asked the state board regulating doctors to essentially ban transition-related care for transgender minors, according to a letter obtained by [NBC News](#).

- Hours earlier, the state Agency for Health Care Administration released a [46-page report](#) that would justify banning Medicaid coverage for transgender people of any age, claiming treatments for gender dysphoria like hormone replacement therapy, puberty blockers and surgeries are under-researched and ineffective.
- The agency said it will initiate a rule-making process for Medicaid's gender-affirming treatment coverage, with more information to be published in the Florida Administrative Register.

**Flashback:** Last month, the Florida Department of Health [advised doctors](#) to ignore federal guidance and stop assisting children and teens with gender transitions.

**Why it matters:** Ending care and coverage for trans people in Florida would likely violate the [Affordable Care Act's discrimination protections](#).

- Gender-affirming care is standard, accepted medical treatment and has been for years, endorsed by all the major medical organizations including the [American Medical Association](#) and [American Psychiatric Association](#).
- If the state ends coverage for transgender people, it would join Texas, Tennessee, Nebraska, Missouri, Kentucky, Georgia, Arkansas and Arizona in having a Medicaid policy that explicitly excludes transgender health coverage and care.

**The big picture:** This is a strong attack from the DeSantis administration at the start of LGBTQ+ Pride month.

DeSantis has previously focused his attention on transgender children and teens, [banning them from girls' and women's sports](#) and even declaring an NCAA Florida swimmer the "[rightful winner](#)" in a race after a transgender competitor beat her.

- [The "Parental Rights in Education" law](#) — dubbed "Don't Say Gay" by critics for banning classroom instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity from kindergarten through 3rd grade — goes into effect next month.

**What they're saying:** Journalist Alejandra Caraballo [pointed out](#) that the agency's reports heavily cite "debunked pseudoscience" of [rapid-onset gender dysphoria](#) (ROGD).

- "This is just pure cruelty to low-income trans people," she [tweeted](#).
- Tampa psychologist Gary Howell, who treats transgender youth and adults, told [NBC](#) that DeSantis, who focused his recent legislative battles on parental rights, is now fighting to remove rights from parents with transgender children.

"It's unconstitutional for the government to step in and deprive youth — and especially trans youth — of getting the necessary medical care they need," he said.

*Editor's note: This story has been updated with Gov. DeSantis asking the state board regulating*

*doctors to ban transition-related care for transgender minors.*