



For Immediate Release

Whitman-Walker Institute Decries Misleading Propaganda About Transgender Health During Congressional Hearing

WASHINGTON, D.C. [May 16, 2024] — [Whitman-Walker Institute](#), which leverages research, policy, and education to advance health equity nationwide, says it's standing by to further inform the chair of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce and others about the strong and well-established body of evidence about medical care for transgender people.

Dr. Kellan Baker, Executive Director of Whitman-Walker Institute, and an expert in transgender health, says transgender people — like all people — deserve access to necessary medical care that's backed by decades of scientific and medical evidence. He noted that the May 15th committee hearing featured extensive and intentional distortions of this evidence base in an attempt to mislead the American public and further advance the medically unsound and discriminatory bans on this care that are currently on the books in more than 20 states.

"We're grateful committee member Rep. Mark Takano of California very appropriately entered into the official record Whitman-Walker Institute's bibliography documenting the strong and well-established body of evidence, developed over decades, that demonstrates that individualized and age-appropriate medical care for transgender people, including transgender youth, improves mental health and overall well-being. These peer-reviewed research studies and systematic reviews have been published in major scientific journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Adolescent Health, Pediatrics, and The Lancet," says Baker.

Baker points out that the research shows the positive effects of this care include decreases in depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, as well as improvements in quality of life and body satisfaction. He urges everyone to review the existing scientific research so there can be no further confusion.

The hearing also focused on the recent Affordable Care Act Section 1557 regulation, which was released in April by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Section 1557 prohibits discrimination in health insurance coverage and health care nationwide on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and sex. The new regulation follows the U.S. Supreme Court in clarifying that prohibited sex discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. These protections are critical for the health and well-being of LGBTQ people, who continue to be subjected to harassment, denial of care, and even assault when seeking vital healthcare services.

[Whitman-Walker Institute](#) is affiliated with [Whitman-Walker Health](#), a clinic serving thousands of transgender patients, which was the lead plaintiff in a 2020 [federal lawsuit](#) brought to reverse the then-Trump administration's weakening of Section 1557's nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people.

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About Whitman-Walker Institute

Whitman-Walker Institute is a Washington, D.C. based organization that leverages cutting-edge research, policy, and education to advance health equity at the federal level and in states across the country. We bring to this work expertise in rigorous research and health policy analysis, deep relationships with state and federal policymakers, longstanding partnerships across multiple justice movements, and the direct service experience of Whitman-Walker Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center that serves thousands of diverse patients across the D.C. area and beyond. The Institute is home to nationally recognized experts in areas of policy such as LGBTQI+ health equity, care for transgender people, insurance reform, social determinants of health, HIV prevention and treatment, and sexual orientation and gender identity data collection. More info can be found at: www.whitman-walker.org/institute/

About Whitman-Walker

For over fifty years, Whitman-Walker has been part of the fabric of the local Washington, DC community as well as to our nation as first responder and care-provider for those living with HIV; a leader in LGBTQI+ care and advocacy; a research center working to discover breakthroughs in HIV treatment and prevention science; and one of the DC's most trusted partners during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Whitman-Walker envisions a society where all people are seen for who they are, treated with dignity and respect, and afforded equal opportunity to health and wellbeing. More info can be found at: www.whitman-walker.org.