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MassEquality Responds to Fenway Health's Decision to Halt Gender-Affirming Care for Minors and Young Adults

MassEquality expresses its deep concern over Fenway Health's recent announcement that it will no longer provide medical gender-affirming care, including hormones and puberty blocks, to patients under the age of 19.

Fenway Health, a federally qualified health center (FQHC), cited new federal directives related to compliance with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under the Executive Order on *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*. Refusal to comply with the HRSA directives would make Fenway ineligible for federal funding that it relies upon in order to care for any of the 30,000 patients who rely on their services.

"While we understand that this administration is threatening to withhold funding if FQHCs refuse to comply, which could harm the thousands of patients who rely on Fenway Health, transgender young people should not be considered an acceptable loss," said Tanya Neslusan, Executive Director of MassEquality.

It is unacceptable for our government to force healthcare providers into choosing between delivering the care their most vulnerable patients need and receiving the federal funds they rely on to operate. For many transgender and nonbinary youth, gender-affirming care can be critical to mental health, stability, and overall well-being. While there are other such providers in Massachusetts who are prepared to continue providing this critical care, the abrupt suspension of these services places additional stress on the young people and their families seeking and expecting a stable continuity of care.

The current administration is targeting transgender people, reproductive rights, and the broader LGBTQ+ community. We have already seen cuts to HIV funding and reproductive care, along with a new prohibition on federal support for FQHCs that provide gender-affirming care to minors and young adults under 19. We must be concerned about what comes next. If the government succeeds in restricting funds to organizations serving these targeted populations, the consequences for our healthcare system will be catastrophic.

"Our healthcare should not be beholden to the whims of the federal government, rather than being guided by science and the customized care plans developed by medical professionals, knowledgeable about the individual needs of each patient." Neslusan continued, "This is the time for all of us to stand up and say clearly and unequivocally that this is not okay."

MassEquality remains committed to protecting access to gender-affirming care for all people, including youth, and calls on healthcare providers, advocates, and policymakers across Massachusetts to uphold the Commonwealth's longstanding values of equity, dignity, and medical autonomy.

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About MassEquality:

MassEquality is the leading statewide grassroots advocacy organization working to ensure that everyone across Massachusetts can thrive from cradle to grave without discrimination and oppression based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We partner across identities, issues, and communities to build a broad, inclusive, and politically powerful movement that changes hearts and minds and achieves policy and electoral victories.