

Dear KY AAP Members,

As pediatricians, one of the most critical aspects of our job is to advocate for the health and well-being of all children - including LGBTQ+ youth who face growing challenges across our state and country.

Policies and laws targeting LGBTQ+ identities, especially those affecting transgender and gender-diverse youth, are rising at an alarming rate with over 800 bills already introduced nationwide in 2025. Limited access to gender-affirming care, inclusive education, and safe environments send a frightening message to young people and their families and furthermore challenges our ability to provide compassionate healthcare.

More than ever before, we understand that pediatricians need support to bolster resilience in their LGBTQ+ patients as you may be the only adult offering life-saving support to a child.

The Impact on Mental Health

LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk of mood disorders, substance use, and suicidality due to discrimination and traumatic stress. According to the Trevor Project's 2023 survey, more than 40% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and children without affirming support were at even greater risk.

As pediatricians, we know that affirming care saves lives. Creating safe clinical spaces to help children and families build resilience and heal from traumatic stress can make a critical difference.

Resources to Support Your Practice

The American Academy of Pediatrics continues to lead with compassion and advocacy. We encourage you to explore and share these vital resources:

- **STATEMENT:** [AAP Statement](#) on the alarming report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on medical care of transgender individuals that “misrepresents the current medical consensus and fails to reflect the realities of pediatric care.”
- **GUIDE:** [A Pediatrician’s Guide to an LGBTQ+ Friendly Practice](#) —clear action steps and scripts to help with communication
- **VIDEO:** [Mental Health in LGBTQ Youth Video](#)—13-minute video by a Triple Board-certified physician on providing affirming care and navigating difficult conversations.

Join Us in Advocacy

The KY AAP DEI Task Force stands in solidarity with our LGBTQ+ youth and their families. We encourage you to speak with your legislators, support local organizations

doing this work on the ground, and stay informed about policy developments that affect your patients. Every voice counts!

Thank you for everything you do to ensure every child in Kentucky feels seen, valued, and safe.

Sincerely,
The KY AAP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

**Please submit any questions or feedback to Dr. Julia Richerson, Chair, DEI Task Force, juliaericherson@gmail.com*