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PES Statement Promoting Safety of Transgender Youth

The Pediatric Endocrine Society (PES), the leading professional society for this specialty in the United States, strongly opposes the guidance issued on February 22, 2017, by the Departments of Justice and Education, which eliminates protection of the rights of transgender youth.

As medical providers of transgender youth, we have seen the discrimination and safety concerns that this population faces, which may lead to mental illness and high risk of suicide. Transgender children and adolescents need a safe and supportive school environment in order to thrive like any other young person. Not allowing them to use the restroom that matches their gender identity is a violation of human rights and sends a message of intolerance that will promote further discrimination and segregation.

Furthermore, it is known that verbal, physical and sexual assault have occurred when transgender individuals living according to their gender identity enter a restroom that does not match their gender identity. On the other hand, no adverse consequences have occurred when schools have allowed transgender students to use the restroom that is consistent with their gender identity. In fact, many transgender individuals easily blend in to society as their affirmed gender, never having publicly disclosed their transgender status. It would be inappropriate for them to enter a bathroom based on their sex assigned at birth, as individuals in the community in which they live often don't realize that they are transgender.

As experts in the care of transgender youth, we strongly oppose the decision by the Departments of Justice and Education and ask that the rights and safety of transgender children and adolescents be protected.