

AP

2 transgender boys sue after University of Missouri halts gender-affirming care to minors

HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH

November 17, 2023 · 2 min read

 278

FILE - Glenda Starke wears a transgender flag at a counterprotest during a rally in favor of a ban on gender-affirming health care legislation, March 20, 2023, at the Missouri Statehouse in Jefferson City, Mo. In a lawsuit filed in federal court, Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, two transgender boys are suing th [... More](#)

Two transgender boys are suing the University of Missouri over its decision to [stop](#) providing gender-affirming care to minors over concerns that a new state law could create legal issues for its doctors.

The lawsuit, filed Thursday in federal court, alleges that the university is discriminating against the teens based on their diagnoses of gender dysphoria.

The new Missouri law, which [took effect Aug. 28](#), outlawed puberty blockers, hormones and gender-affirming surgery for minors. But there are exceptions for youth who were already taking those medications before the law kicked in, allowing them to continue receiving that health care.

The suit said that the teens, who are identified only by their initials, should

be covered under that “grandfather clause” and allowed to continue receiving treatment.

University of Missouri spokesperson Christian Basi said Friday that the four-campus system is reviewing the lawsuit and is not in a position to discuss it.

Asked about it Thursday after a Board of Curators meeting, University President Mun Choi said the school's position was that it “would follow the law of the land.”

The University of Missouri Health Care stopped treatments for minors in August. Washington University Transgender Center at St. Louis Children's Hospital followed suit in September, saying the law “creates unsustainable liability for health-care professionals.”

The issue the institutions cited is that health care providers who violate the transgender health care law face having their medical licenses revoked. Beyond that, any provider who prescribes puberty blockers and hormones as a form of gender-affirming care for minors could face lawsuits from those patients for as long as 15 years after they turn 21.

“Providers could be held liable for damages even if they did not do anything wrong or unreasonable,” Basi said at the time.

But since the announcement, neither teen has been able to find other health care providers in Missouri willing to refill their prescriptions. By February, K.J. will run out of puberty-delaying medication and J.C. will run out of testosterone, the lawsuit said.

Going without, the lawsuit adds, would be “deeply traumatic” and cause “severe emotional and physical distress.”

J. Andrew Hirth, an attorney for the plaintiffs, didn't immediately respond to an email or phone message from The Associated Press seeking comment.

But he wrote that the university's policy change discriminates based on gender and “has nothing to do with its doctors' medical judgment or the best interests of its transgender patients.”

 **View comments (278)**



