



BOARD OF HEALTH

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Johnson County Board of Health Position Statement On Rights of Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming Individuals

Johnson County Board of Health (JCBOH) supports the dignity and rights of transgender and gender diverse (TG/GD) individuals, recognizing their identities and advocating for the adoption and application of inclusive policies and practices that acknowledge and address their needs. This includes policies that address issues such as bodily autonomy, privacy, and individual agency. JCBOH emphasizes that discrimination based on gender identity or expression harms the social, emotional, psychological, physical, and economic well-being of the affected individuals and our community as a whole.

A review of research shows that TG/GD individuals experience disparities that stem from multiple sources, including inequitable laws and policies, societal discrimination, and a lack of access to quality mental and physical health care:

- In 2020, the poverty rate of TG/GD individuals in the US was 34.8% - approximately 2.2 times higher than for cisgender individuals. TG/GD adults are twice as likely to be unemployed than cisgender adults
- One in five transgender individuals has experienced homelessness due to discrimination and rejection by family
- 28% of transgender people reported not visiting the doctor when they needed to due to fear of encountering discrimination
- In the state of Iowa, 52% of TG/GD youth have seriously considered suicide and 22% have attempted suicide within the past year

The disparities observed within the TG/GD community affect individuals in an unjust manner and it's crucial the discriminatory practices and policies are addressed to bridge these gaps and eliminate these inequities. TG/GD youth with at least one accepting adult had 33% lower odds of a past-year suicide attempt compared to TG/GD with no accepting adults.

A community where all can achieve optimal health.

JCBOH aligns with the position of respected organizations such as the American Public Health Association, American Medical Association, and others. These organizations advocate for inclusive practices including using chosen names and pronouns, providing access to gender-aligned restrooms, and endorsing that gender-affirming care is medically necessary and should be covered by health insurance. Research indicates that such policies significantly protect against discrimination and stigma, reduce health disparities, and promote equity for TG/GD individuals.

JCBOH strongly encourages community partners, including schools, healthcare organizations, places of worship, leasers, lenders, social service agencies, and policy makers to develop adopt, and apply policies and practices that create an inclusive and affirming environment for TG/GD individuals of all ages.

We condemn harassment, threats, and violence, aimed at patients, families, and doctors, and oppose policies and legislation that undermine evidence-based, clinical practice guidelines that are universally backed by major medical associations.