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Updates to Pediatric and Adolescent Gender Affirming Care

Dr. Aimee Becker, chief clinical officer, UW Health •

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Content

Due to recent federal actions, UW Health has paused prescribing hormone therapy and puberty blockers for gender-affirming care to patients under the age of 18. Our Pediatric and Adolescent Transgender Health (PATH) Clinic remains open. No care team member's employment is impacted by these changes. There are no changes to gender-affirming care for adults.

We understand this is difficult news. Our care providers are working directly with impacted patients and families to help support their ongoing care needs.

On Dec. 19, 2025, two proposed rules were published in the [Federal Register](#). One would revise the hospital [Conditions of Participation](#) to prohibit hospitals from providing surgical or pharmaceutical interventions for gender affirming care to patients under the age of 18. Hospitals must meet the Conditions of Participation not only to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs but also to operate as a hospital in Wisconsin. The second [rule](#) would prohibit Medicaid from covering surgical or pharmaceutical therapy for gender-affirming care for patients under 18 (or under 19 for the Federal Children's Health Insurance Program or CHIP). There is a 60-day period before final rules would be issued. These new rules could be effective as early Feb. 17.

HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy also made a [declaration](#) that surgical and pharmaceutical interventions such as puberty blockers and hormone therapy are not safe or effective treatments for pediatric gender affirming care and fail to meet

professionally recognized standards of care. Hospitals and individuals who furnish services that fail to meet professionally recognized standards of care may be subject to exclusion from the Medicare and Medicaid programs. This declaration has already been used to refer several children's hospitals across the country that provide pediatric and adolescent gender affirming care for investigation.

After careful review and consideration of these federal actions, it was determined that UW Health will not provide hormone therapy and puberty blockers to patients under the age of 18 at this time.

UW Health is committed to providing high-quality, compassionate and patient-centered care to our patients and families, including LGBTQ+ patients, and supporting an affirming environment for our LGBTQ+ staff. We recognize the uncertainty and strain faced by our impacted patient families and will continue to do all we can to support their health and well-being. We want to thank all the care teams who are supporting our patients through this difficult news.

If you have questions, please send them to askaleader@uwhealth.org and we will work to answer them as we are able.

FAQ

Why are the Conditions of Participation important?

The Conditions of Participation establish standards that a hospital must meet in order to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Furthermore, a Wisconsin hospital cannot be licensed as a hospital if it does not meet the Conditions of Participation. The Conditions of Participation address every aspect of hospital operations, including patient rights, infection control, nursing care, and others, and are designed to ensure safe and effective care for all patients, regardless of payment source.

How will this impact our care teams?

The PATH Clinic is not closing. Impacted care teams will continue to care for patients at UW Health.

How are we engaging impacted patients and families?

Patient families are being called directly by their care teams. We will continue to care for patients in the PATH clinic.

Will this impact behavioral health support for patients?

Behavioral health is not impacted by these federal rules, and we are dedicating additional resources to provide behavioral health care for our patients and families.

What do I do if I want to speak out on these proposed rules?

UW Health team members can engage with community organizations or make statements on governmental actions in their personal time and speaking on their own behalf, not on behalf of UW Health or the University of Wisconsin.

University employees should reach out to the campus Office of Federal Relations if they are considering submitting comments to the federal government in response to a proposed rule change or request for information in their capacity as a university employee.

University employees retain the right to formally comment on public issues as private citizens but must not do so using university resources and must make clear they are not speaking on behalf of UW–Madison.

See: <https://federalrelations.wisc.edu/2025/09/17/process-for-submitting-comments-to-the-federal-government/>

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