

# Health Equity in Gender-Affirming Care: Evaluating Alberta's Bill 9 and Implications for Transgender Youth

## Position Statement

### The Core Position on Bill 9

Alberta's Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act (Bill 9) introduces restrictions on gender-affirming care for minors that conflict with evidence-based medical practice and contribute to health inequities among transgender youth.<sup>1</sup>

## Context - Health Inequity

### Disproportionate Mental Health Challenges

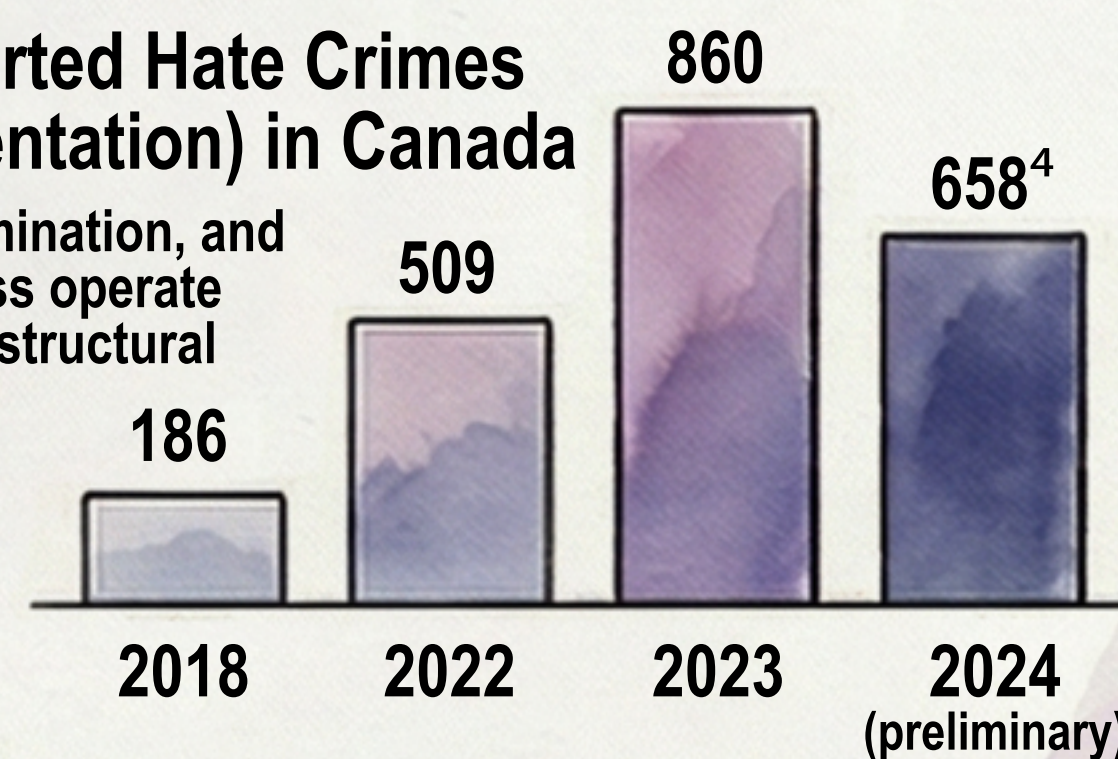
Transgender and gender-diverse youth experience disproportionately high rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and barriers to accessing healthcare.<sup>23</sup>

### Benefits of Gender-Affirming Care

Gender-affirming care is associated with reduced depression, lower suicidality, and improved mental health outcomes.<sup>23</sup>

### Police-Reported Hate Crimes (Sexual Orientation) in Canada

Violence, discrimination, and healthcare access operate within the same structural environment.<sup>10</sup>



## Health Equity Implications

### Increased Mental Health Risks and Stigma

Restrictions on care may increase mental health risks, delay treatment, reinforce stigma, and create unequal access across provinces. Research shows that barriers to gender-affirming care and discrimination are associated with poorer mental health outcomes and reduced healthcare access.<sup>1011</sup>

### Amplified Inequities for Intersectionally Marginalized Groups

Health inequities are amplified for transgender youth, racialized LGBTQ+ populations, and rural communities.<sup>1011</sup>

### Conflict & Health Inequity

## Policy Gaps

### Gap 1 — Misalignment with Medical Evidence

Peer-reviewed research demonstrates improved mental health outcomes associated with gender-affirming care.<sup>235</sup>

### Gap 2 — Restriction of Clinical Autonomy

The policy limits healthcare providers' ability to deliver individualized, evidence-based care.<sup>1</sup>

### Gap 3 — Inconsistency with Rights Frameworks

Federal Canada: Gender identity and expression are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act.<sup>6</sup> Federal policy recognizes health inequities affecting 2SLGBTQ+ communities.<sup>7</sup> International: Right to health (ICESCR)<sup>8</sup> and non-discriminatory access to healthcare (CRC).<sup>9</sup>

## Existing Policy (Alberta)

### Legislative Restrictions under Bill 9

Bill 9 and related provincial measures restrict access to puberty blockers and hormone therapy for minors, prohibit gender-affirming surgical interventions for minors, and introduce government regulation into clinical decision-making.<sup>1</sup>

### Impact on Healthcare Delivery

These measures directly affect healthcare delivery, physician autonomy, and access to evidence-based care pathways.<sup>1</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Align with Evidence

Align policy with evidence-based medical standards.<sup>23</sup>

### Recommendation 2: Protect Autonomy

Protect clinical autonomy.<sup>1</sup>

### Recommendation 3: Expand Services

Expand access to affirming mental health services.<sup>2</sup>

### Recommendation 4: Accountability

Implement monitoring and accountability mechanisms.<sup>7</sup>

### Recommendation 5: Human Rights

Align with rights-based frameworks.<sup>68</sup>