

January 3, 2023

Governor Pritzker
Senate President Harmon
House Speaker Welch
Illinois General Assembly

RE: Gender Affirming Care

Dear Governor Pritzker, Senate President Harmon, and House Speaker Welch,

Thank you for your leadership and advocacy in protecting access to reproductive healthcare in Illinois. Access to comprehensive healthcare, including reproductive care, is essential for all Illinoisans to stay healthy and to thrive. Today, I am writing to you on behalf of Howard Brown Health to urge you to ensure that access to gender affirming care is protected alongside reproductive care in Illinois. Howard Brown is a federally qualified health center in Chicago, and we provide comprehensive care to about 30,000 patients annually, about 20% of whom identify as transgender, genderqueer, and nonbinary. As one of the state's largest providers of gender affirming care, we see firsthand how life-saving this care can be, and it must be protected.

There is strong scientific and clinical consensus that gender affirming care is medically necessary and can dramatically improve health outcomes and well-being for transgender and non-binary (TNB) people. [Research](#) has shown that gender affirming care is associated with better mental health outcomes for transgender people, including reduced suicide attempts, less depression, and higher life satisfaction. A recent 2022 [study](#) found that gender affirming care in TNB youth was associated with 60% lower odds of depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality over a 12-month follow-up. That is why every major U.S. medical professional organization, including the including the [American Medical Association](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [Federation of Pediatric Organizations](#), and [American Psychological Association](#), supports access to gender affirming care for TNB youth and adults.

Despite the overwhelming support for gender affirming care from medical experts, a growing number of political extremists have been launching legislative attacks on TNB people. In the past year, state and federal legislators have introduced bills that aim to prevent TNB people from accessing life-saving medical care. These bills are rooted in transphobic myths and misinformation, and they fly in the face of established scientific and clinical best practices and recommendations. The hateful rhetoric around these bills has resulted in rising anti-LGBTQ+ extremism across the country, including violent threats and



attacks against members of the community, allies, and providers of gender affirming care here in Illinois.

We must take action now to protect access to gender affirming care and to strongly rebuke attacks and hate against the LGBTQ+ community. Illinois has always been a leader in protecting LGBTQ+ rights and naturally acts as a safe haven for LGBTQ+ people in neighboring states. We need legal protections to ensure access to gender affirming care and to protect providers who offer such care. Please feel free to reach out to Tim Wang, Director of Policy and Advocacy at timothyw@howardbrown.org should you have any questions!

Sincerely,

David Ernesto Munar
President and CEO