



February 15, 2021

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

MNA is the nonprofit state professional nurses association representing the voice of nearly 18,000 Registered Nurses (RNs) in Montana including more than 1000 licensed as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). MNA is the recognized professional organization, which lobbies for nursing practice issues to protect the practice of professional nurses and also protect the public in all areas of health care.

Opposition to HB 427: “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR YOUTH HEALTH PROTECTION LAWS; PROHIBITING SURGICAL PROCEDURES FOR THE TREATMENT OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN MINORS; PROVIDING ENFORCEMENT; AND PROVIDING DEFINITIONS...”

The Montana Nurses Association (MNA) is opposing HB 427 because the unintended risks posed by this bill clearly outweigh any intended benefits.

MNA fully appreciates the concerns brought forward by sponsors of this bill. It is obvious that the bill was introduced with genuine concern for the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents, however, the ambiguity regarding the language in this bill can be expected to cause confusion for Montana patients, their families, and their healthcare providers, thus resulting in delays, impeding access, and even withholding of necessary care for patients.

In addition, HB 427 risks criminalizing Montana healthcare practices, furthermore, due to this unnecessary and uninvited regulation, it will result in the reduction of already scarce providers in our state.

What is troubling about HB 427 is the ambiguity that the legislation actually poses for *medical and mental health providers, the Montana Boards’ of Nursing, Medicine, and Pharmacy*, all affecting *patients, families, and patient advocates*. Further, despite the attempt at specificity of the bill’s language, it opens the door for future restrictions in practice of providers.

The health and safety of children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria are utmost in the minds of Montana’s licensed healthcare providers. High ethical standards and accepted standards of practice from the *American Academy of Pediatrics* and the *World Professional Association for Transgender Health* already exist. HB 427 will not contribute to safer care but will actually weaken the protections already in place.

We urge you to vote against HB 427 and we must all work together to protect ALL Montana children.

Respectfully,

John Honsky, APRN
MNA Council on Advanced Practice
Vicky Byrd, MSN, RN
CEO MNA (vicky@mtnurses.org)