
24 November 2025

PATHSA Statement on the New Zealand Government's Ban on New Prescriptions of Puberty Blockers

The Professional Association for Transgender Health South Africa (PATHSA) strongly opposes the New Zealand Government's ban on new prescriptions of puberty blockers for trans young people. This decision threatens their health and wellbeing.

Gender diversity is a fundamental aspect of the human experience, and the right of young people to explore and affirm their gender is integral to their wellbeing. Limiting access to safe, evidence-based care puts trans and gender-diverse youth at serious risk.

PATHSA expresses deep concern at the New Zealand Government's decision to ban new prescriptions of puberty blockers for trans young people. This decision disregards clinical expertise, the lived realities of affected youth and their families, and decades of safe international use of these medications.

Grounded in South Africa's constitutional commitments to dignity, equality and freedom, and mindful of the global rise in anti-gender movements that threaten the rights and safety of trans youth, PATHSA stands in solidarity with the Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa (PATHA) and the communities impacted by this harmful policy.

Puberty blockers are an established medical intervention used safely for many paediatric conditions, including gender incongruence. Restricting access does not prevent young people from being trans; it only increases distress, dysphoria, suicidality, and the risk of families turning to unregulated or unsafe alternatives. Evidence-based care requires integrating academic evidence, clinical experience, and the values and preferences of young people and their families. The level of the evidence base for puberty blockers is similar to many other paediatric treatments, and a ban is therefore not justifiable.



Such decisions create avoidable harm, undermine trust in healthcare systems, and politicise essential medical care. We are particularly concerned about the precedent this sets globally, including on the African continent, where access to gender-affirming healthcare is already constrained by inequities rooted in colonial legacies, discrimination and under-resourced health systems.

PATHSA therefore:

- Stands firmly with trans and gender-diverse young people in Aotearoa New Zealand and affirms their right to developmentally appropriate, evidence-based healthcare.
- Supports calls for the New Zealand Government to reverse this discriminatory ban.
- Reaffirms that access to puberty blockers is a vital component of ethical, patient-centred gender-affirming care.
- Calls on all governments to safeguard the healthcare rights of trans young people, and to resist decisions driven by ideology rather than medical evidence and human rights principles.

We hold in our thoughts the young people and families who will experience fear, distress and uncertainty as a result of this policy. PATHSA remains committed to advocating for care that upholds dignity, autonomy and the inherent worth of every trans and gender-diverse young person.

We urge policymakers, healthcare professionals, and communities to stand together against harmful restrictions and protect the rights of trans youth.