



Deanna Adkins, M.D.
Center for Child and Adolescent Gender
Care at Duke Children's Hospital

Duke Gender Care Center Fights Discriminatory Bathroom Bill

WHEN DR. DEANNA ADKINS OPENED THE Center for Child and Adolescent Gender Care at Duke Children's Hospital in the middle of 2015, little did she know that less than a year later her state would become the epicenter of the debate surrounding LGBTQ non-discrimination protections, particularly transgender people's rights to use the restroom aligned with their gender identity. North Carolina's legislature and former Governor Pat McCrory would pass a reckless and extreme law known as House Bill 2 that would harm Dr. Adkins' patients and bring increased attention to the important work that her clinic does.

Like many clinics of its kind, the Center for Child and Adolescent Gender Care evolved from Dr. Adkins' experience treating transgender children and adolescents. Dr. Adkins initially referred patients to clinics in Boston and Toronto, but under guidance from a colleague, she agreed to treat a local patient. That led to more referrals, and she realized that there was a need for a dedicated, comprehensive gender center.

The once-a-week clinic, which is the first of its kind in North Carolina and only one of a few located in the Southeast, is staffed by providers from Duke in an array of disciplines, including endocrinology, social work, urology, pediatric surgery, child and adolescent medicine, psychiatry, psychology and pastoral care. They work

together to provide holistic, evidence-based, patient- and family-centered care. Patients come from throughout North Carolina, from several neighboring states and from as far away as Florida. The clinic served 127 patients during its first year, and administrators anticipate nearly doubling that number next year.

HB2 passed during the clinic's first year. While transgender children and adolescents in North Carolina had this wonderful new resource to provide them with the lifesaving medical care that they needed, their lives were also under direct attack by their state government. "Since HB2 passed, our patients are more anxious and afraid. They are immediately targets for harassment and bullying when they use a public restroom. More and more withdraw from school and society," said Dr. Adkins. "I am really concerned because this self-isolation escalates their depression, which increases their risk of suicide even more."

To protect her patients, Dr. Adkins has been outspoken about her opposition to HB2 and has provided expert testimony in a federal lawsuit regarding the bill. While efforts to overturn HB2 move forward, Dr. Adkins will continue to speak out for her patients. Most importantly, she will continue to grow the clinic where she provides the medical care that they need and deserve to live healthy and authentic lives.

Hear from Dr. Adkins and other healthcare providers speak out about working with transgender children and youth in this moving video.

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