

Governor Walz Signs Executive Order Restricting Conversion Therapy in Minnesota

Governor Tim Walz today signed Executive Order 21-25, protecting Minnesotans from conversion therapy. Conversion therapy, also known as “reparative therapy,” refers to a counseling practice that seeks to change a patient’s gender or sexual orientation. Every leading medical and scientific association including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and National Education Association have strongly and uniformly rejected conversion therapy for minors, citing its harmful effects on the long-term mental health of LGBTQ+ youth.

“Our kids deserve to grow up in a state that values them for who they are – not one that tries to change them,” said Governor Walz. **“This Executive Order aims to protect young and vulnerable Minnesotans from the cruel and discredited practice of conversion therapy and affirms that the LGBTQ+ community is an integral part of One Minnesota. This is not the end of our work to see this practice become a thing of the past. We will continue to fight for love over hate every single day.”**

“No one should ever be told that they need to change who they are to be deserving of love and acceptance, especially our children. It’s our job to make sure our LGBTQ+ relatives, friends, and neighbors know they are valued and loved members of our community,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. **“I’m tremendously grateful to the survivors who have shared their heartbreaking stories to inspire action, the advocates who never stopped pushing for this change, and the legislators who have authored and carried bills through the House and Senate over the years. We call on our partners in the Legislature to move a comprehensive ban on conversion therapy across the finish line – but we will not wait to do what’s right.”**

The Executive Order restricts the practice of conversion therapy in Minnesota by directing state agencies to take the following actions:

- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Commerce will request attestations from health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and health plan companies that they do not cover conversion therapy and pursue administrative remedies against HMOs and health plan companies that engage in unfair business practices related to conversion therapy. MDH and Commerce will also engage in rulemaking as necessary to restrict coverage of conversion therapy.
- MDH will prepare a report on the public health impacts of conversion therapy.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) will not pay for conversion therapy services through Minnesota Health Care Programs such as Medicaid and will pursue recovery for payment for conversion therapy services.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) will investigate and pursue civil enforcement actions against health care providers who are engaged in discriminatory practices related to conversion therapy.

"Thank you so much, Governor Walz, for seeing our humanity, recognizing the harm that conversion therapy causes, and doing something about it," said Mara Glubka, Director of Transforming Families. **" Thank you for doing the right thing."**

"We at OutFront are incredibly grateful and excited to see Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan signing onto this Executive Order. This Executive Order will protect LGBTQ+ youth and their families from the harmful practice of conversion therapy," said James Darville, Policy & Organizing Director for OutFront Minnesota. **"We also want to thank all of the survivors, organizers, and Minnesotans who have worked tirelessly to eradicate this harmful practice in our state. We look forward to continuing our work alongside legislators, Governor Walz, and his team to make Minnesota a more equitable place for all Minnesotans"**

"Governor Walz's action to prohibit conversion therapy will save lives," said Jeremy Hanson Willis, CEO of Rainbow Health, an organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ and HIV health equity and provides mental health care. **" This order recognizes the pain that too many LGBTQ+ Minnesotans and their families have gone through and will help heal the wounds caused by this damaging and dangerous practice,"**

"Gender Justice is relieved that Governor Walz has decided to take executive action to do what the Minnesota legislature still refuses to do: Protect LGBTQ+ young people from abuse aimed at changing who they are. At the same time, we can't afford to let our guard down. The same legislators who have for years blocked the conversion therapy ban are the same ones now promising to reintroduce legislation attacking transgender kids next session. We will continue to work for a world where everyone can thrive, regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Today is a step towards making that world a reality," said Gender Justice.

23 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have taken action against conversion therapy. Executive Order 21-25 goes into effect fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State.