

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- August 1, 2022

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## **Advocates and Providers Praise MA Leadership in Protecting Access to Abortion Care and Essential Healthcare for Transgender People**

*Access to abortion and to gender-affirming care are rights secured by the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth.*

(Boston, MA – August 1, 2022) -- H. 5090, An Act Expanding Protections for Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Care, is now law in Massachusetts. It provides critical protections for access to reproductive health care, including abortion care, and essential healthcare for transgender people, including for individuals who may travel from out-of-state to seek care in the Commonwealth.

H. 5090 was championed by leaders in both the House and Senate, including Senator Cindy Friendman, Representative Aaron Michlewitz, House Speaker Ron Mariano, and Senate President Karen Spilka. Governor Baker signed the measure on Friday.

The Act protects providers and patients of reproductive health care and established, evidence-based healthcare for transgender people from malicious out-of-state legal action. It also inscribes in statute that access to reproductive health care and to gender-affirming care are rights secured by the laws and constitution of Massachusetts.

Today's bill signing follows quick action by House and Senate leadership to address the impact of the June 24 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* which obliterated the half-century-old precedent established in *Roe v. Wade* protecting access to abortion. A growing number of states are now moving to ban abortion within their borders, and some may seek to impose penalties on anyone traveling out-of-state for care as well as on out-of-state providers.

Members of the LGBTQ community require reproductive healthcare including abortion at least as frequently as non-LGBTQ women, and access is a critical LGBTQ issue. At the same time, the forces seeking to undermine reproductive freedom are also working in multiple states to criminalize parents and doctors for providing medically necessary care for transgender youth. Four states have enacted such bans to date, and additional bills are anticipated in the next legislative session.

Massachusetts LGBTQ advocates, healthcare providers and practitioners praised the state's legislators for taking swift action to ensure critical access to care is protected.

Polly Crozier, GLAD Senior Staff Attorney, who worked with the Beyond Roe Coalition, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Office of the Attorney General, and legislative leaders in support of H 5090:

“As states across the country seek to block and even criminalize access to abortion care and lifesaving healthcare for transgender youth, we thank the Massachusetts legislature for quickly moving to establish critical protections for patients and providers. Parents across the country bring their transgender children to Massachusetts to receive quality individualized, interdisciplinary care. With state legislatures passing unprincipled laws restricting the ability of parents to care for their children and putting transgender young people in harm’s way, it’s incredibly powerful to have Massachusetts state unequivocally that access to evidence-based gender-affirming healthcare is a right. This Act cements the state’s role as a leader in providing access to essential healthcare, including access to abortion and lifesaving care for transgender people.”

Dallas Ducar, CEO, Transhealth Northampton:

“By passing this crucial legislation, the Massachusetts legislature and Governor Baker have enshrined vital rights into our state’s constitution. We know access to gender-affirming care and abortion services are simply good healthcare. Make no mistake, this swift and decisive action by our state’s leaders will save the lives of Massachusetts residents as well as those who seek refuge from states that are in the process of actively criminalizing essential care.”

Renee Chrichlow, MD, FAAFP:

“Massachusetts has and will continue to lead the way in the field of medicine. In order to care for their patients, physicians and health care professionals must be able to practice medicine freely and without threat of punishment, harassment, or retribution.”

Carl G Streed Jr MD MPH, Research Lead, Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery at Boston Medical Center:

"At a time when science and health care are being attacked by politicians, this new legislation is a step to ensure patients receive competent and compassionate care supported by evidence."

Carl Sciortino, Executive Vice President of External Relations, Fenway Health:

"Fenway Health was founded on the principle that healthcare is a right, not a privilege, and we are as committed to that core belief now as we were when we opened our doors over fifty years ago. We applaud the legislature and Governor Baker for enacting this law ensuring access to reproductive and gender-affirming care. We will continue to do everything in our power to protect that right and to ensure that the people who count on us – and people everywhere – have access to the health care they need."

Andrew Cohen, Director/Lead Attorney, General Legal Practice and Kara Hurvitz, Staff Attorney, HealthLawAdvocates:

"Health Law Advocates applauds the Massachusetts legislature and Governor Baker for quickly protecting access to gender-affirming care and abortion services. This legislation is particularly important right now, as too many other states are moving to limit access. Once again, Massachusetts is a leader in ensuring that individuals and families are able to access life-preserving medical services. Thank you for establishing these much-needed protections for patients and medical providers."

The full list of advocates, organizations, and practitioners signing onto this statement are:

Boston Alliance of LGBTQ Youth (BAGLY)  
Boston Gay Men's Chorus  
Citizens for Juvenile Justice  
Ethos  
Fenway Health  
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)  
Greater Boston PFLAG  
HealthLaw Advocates  
The History Project: Documenting LGBTQ Boston  
Keshet  
Massachusetts Advocates for Children  
The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth  
Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce  
Mass Trans Political Coalition  
MassEquality  
The Network/La Red  
OUT Now  
Speak OUT  
Y2Y  
Michelle Berton, LMHC, Clinical Coordinator, The Home for Little Wanderers  
(Waltham House)  
Jen Brown, Therapist and Practice Owner, Whole Self Counseling  
Melanie Cohn-Hopwood, MSW, LICSW, LifeCycles Therapy  
Mandy Coles, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center  
Renee Crichlow, MD FAAFP  
Will Dempsey, LICSW, Will Dempsey, LICSW, LLC  
Dallas Ducar, CEO, Andrew Cronyn, MD, and Aleah Nesteby, FNP, Transhealth Northampton  
Sarah Eley, LICSW  
Nancy Hathaway, Attorney in Juvenile Court  
Catharine Hunter, LMFT, Catie Hunter Counseling  
Sabra Katz-Wise and Brittany Charlton, Co-Directors, Harvard SOGIE Health Equity Research  
Collaborative  
Rebecca Minor, LICSW, Gender Specialist LLC  
Kerry Pinnisi, LMHC, Kerry Pinnisi Counseling, LLC  
Deanna Saunders, Ms., Let's Heal  
Anna C. Stern, LICSW

health law **advocates**  
Lawyers Fighting for Health Care Justice



Carl G Streed Jr, Physician and Research Lead, Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery,  
Boston Medical Center