

June 9, 2023

To the HPM Community:

A few weeks ago Texas state leaders passed legislation that would ban gender-affirming medical care for children, making it the largest state yet to do so of the 16 that have now taken such actions. Florida's governor signed a similar law the same week. These represent the latest among many efforts in Texas, Florida, and many other states to restrict access to supportive services for transgender youth, to prevent transgender youth from participating in single-gender sports or using restrooms based on their gender identity, to prohibit public education related to sexual orientation or gender identity, and otherwise marginalize and discriminate against individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community. Here in Georgia, five bills targeting the rights of transgender and non-binary youth were proposed this year. These include Senate Bill 140, which became law in March, restricting access to gender-affirming health care and supports in the state.

There are tremendous risks associated with denying gender-affirming care, as many studies have shown and as has been underscored in public statements by the American Academy of Pediatrics and other organizations. These risks include heightened rates of suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depression among transgender individuals. As troubling as these findings are, they underestimate the full impact of all of these multi-dimensional discriminatory policies have on our community and our collective feelings of welcome and belonging.

We of the HPM Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee are dismayed and angered by these discriminatory policies, and we feel great concern for those in our community who are hurt and suffering from this institutionalized bigotry. We stand in full support and solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ members of our community and all those who are personally impacted by these political developments.

Whatever these policies imply about the will of these states and their citizens, we all belong, and we deserve to be heard, respected, and included. We must continue our research, education, advocacy, and community-building to advance these values at Rollins and more broadly.

For those of us who are experiencing emotional support needs, there are many available resources through the [Faculty Staff Assistance Program](#), [Counseling and Psychological Services](#), and [Office of Spiritual and Religious Life](#). Please connect with friends and other members of the community too, including those of us who serve on the HPM DEI Committee. We can all support each other in times like these.

The HPM DEI Committee

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