



## **Position Statement of the Ray E. Helfer Society On Gender Affirming Care Being Considered Child Abuse and Neglect**

The Ray E. Helfer Society is an international, multi-specialty society of physicians having substantial research and clinical experience with all medical facets of child abuse and neglect. The physicians of the Ray E. Helfer Society have a great deal of experience working with governmental organizations investigating and protecting children suspected of suffering harm from child abuse and neglect. Along with many other organizations devoted to providing quality medical and mental health care for children, and in keeping with the joint statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) the Texas Pediatric Society (TPS), and the Texas chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Ray E. Helfer Society opposes equating evidence based, gender affirming care for transgender youth with child abuse, and the criminalization of such care. The provision of medical and mental health care, consistent with the standard of care, is in no way consistent with our definitions of child abuse. The medical and mental health evaluation and management of these youth would be in no way enhanced, and likely harmed, by the involvement of a state child protection agency. We advocate for appropriate, scientifically sound medical care for transgender youth and resolutely oppose subjecting their families to threats of involvement in the child protection system or their medical providers to civil or criminal penalties merely for providing optimal treatment to these vulnerable youth.

*This statement was adopted by vote of the Society's Executive Committee in February 2022.*