

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

November 4, 2024

The Honorable Monica M. Bertagnolli, M.D.  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Director Bertagnolli:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is conducting oversight of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant of \$9.7 million to an ongoing research project titled, “The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth.”<sup>1</sup> We are alarmed that the project’s principal investigator, Dr. Johanna Olson-Kennedy, is withholding publication of the project’s research findings which cast doubt on the efficacy of the “gender affirming” model, because she believes the findings could be “weaponized” by critics of transgender medical interventions for children.<sup>2</sup> NIH is responsible for overseeing its extramural research projects to ensure supported researchers practice transparency, exemplify scientific integrity, and are proper stewards of taxpayer funds. Therefore, in light of the NIH grantee’s unwillingness to release the research project’s findings, we ask that you provide documents and information to assist the Committee’s oversight of this matter.

One research study in this project, known as the Trans Youth Care (TYC) study, gave medical puberty blockers to 95 children in the early stages of puberty and observed subsequent mental health outcomes over two years.<sup>3</sup> Nine years after the study began, Dr. Olson-Kennedy claims the TYC cohort did not report any mental health improvements after initiating puberty blockers.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Dr. Olson-Kennedy claims the TYC cohort’s mental health was “in really good shape” when the study began, implying that puberty blockers have no adverse clinical impacts on mental health.<sup>5</sup> However, a 2020 paper authored by TYC researchers conflicts with Dr. Olson-Kennedy’s account.<sup>6</sup> According to this paper, the children in the TYC

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<sup>1</sup> Nat’l Insts. of Health, Project Number 5R01HD082554, available at [https://reporter.nih.gov/search/OPTb\\_4f5-kOe2wU2YYzola/project-details/10615754](https://reporter.nih.gov/search/OPTb_4f5-kOe2wU2YYzola/project-details/10615754).

<sup>2</sup> Azeen Ghorayshi, *U. S. Study on Puberty Blockers Goes Unpublished Because of Politics, Doctor Says*, N. Y. TIMES (Oct. 23, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Diane Chen et al., *Psychosocial Characteristics of Transgender Youth Seeking Gender-Affirming Medical Treatment: Baseline Findings from the TYC Study*, J. ADOLESCENT HEALTH (Aug. 21, 2020), available at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7897328/>.

cohort did experience troubling mental health symptoms when the study began. In addition to gender dysphoria, 51 percent of the TYC cohort reported elevated depression symptoms and 57 percent reported clinically significant anxiety.<sup>7</sup> Two-thirds of the children reported suicidal ideations and one fourth of those with suicidal ideations reported at least one past suicide attempt.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Olson-Kennedy's apparent mischaracterization of the TYC study's results and refusal to publish taxpayer-funded research because they contradict her pre-existing biases and could be cited by critics of "gender affirming" medical interventions is an irrefutable example of politicization of scientific research to further an ideological agenda. Deliberately mischaracterizing and withholding the results of the TYC study has serious implications for the health and safety of children who are subjected to "gender affirming" medical procedures, many of which are irreversible and hold lifelong implications despite lacking adequate scientific support for their efficacy or safety.<sup>9</sup>

NIH has a duty to conduct oversight of its extramural research grants and ensure that its funded research exemplifies its purported principles of scientific integrity.<sup>10</sup> To assist the Committee's oversight of this matter, please provide the following documents and information, covering the period August 1, 2015, to present, as soon as possible but no later than November 18, 2024:

1. All research grant applications and summary statements regarding NIH Project Number 1R01HD082554, "The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth," including any and all documents related to or containing any discussion of medical ethics;
2. All progress reports regarding NIH Project Number 1R01HD082554, "The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth";
3. All unpublished project data in NIH's possession, custody, or control regarding NIH Project Number 1R01HD082554, "The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth"; and
4. All documents and communications between or among Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), NIH, and/or HHS, regarding NIH Project Number 1R01HD082554, "The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth."

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<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> The Cass Review, *Independent Review of Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People: Final Report* (Apr. 2024), available at <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/>; See also Megan Twohey & Christina Jewett, *They Paused Puberty, but is There a Cost?* N. Y. TIMES (Nov. 14, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> NAT'L INSTS. OF HEALTH, THE SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (Sept. 2024), available at <https://osp.od.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Final-NIH-Scientific-Integrity-Policy.pdf>.

Hon. Monica Bertagnolli

November 4, 2024

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To ask any follow-up questions or arrange for the delivery of responsive documents please contact Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Lisa McClain

Chairwoman

Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

cc: The Honorable Katie Porter, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services