

**Hello, I'm a parent who has lived in the Farmington Valley for about 15 years. We moved to Connecticut when my son was six or seven, and now he's 22. I'm speaking as a mother whose family was harmed by the current approach to transgender medicine. I want to share our experience and encourage other parents to speak out.**

My son graduated from our public high school in 2021 at age 17. That summer he attended a pool party with peers he hadn't seen since elementary school. The school was a private school in the area for gifted students. By my estimate, roughly 25-30% of those teens and very young adults (that I knew of) were identifying as transgender or nonbinary at the time. I don't know how many later pursued medical transition, but the sudden prevalence in this age group concerned me as a parent.

Later that summer, our family experienced a serious tragedy. About a week after that, after starting college nearby, my son texted me late one night to say he now identified as transgender. This came as a shock. Growing up, he had never expressed feeling female, and we didn't raise him to believe in regressive sexist stereotypes or that there was a wrong way to be male anyway. In fact, he wore a shirt that said "Birthday Boy" every year on his birthday until he outgrew it.

He had already been seeing a therapist for post-pandemic stress and grief. When he began questioning his gender, he was quickly referred to a therapist in the group who specialized in gender-affirmation. At the time, I thought this was something like being gay, because I didn't understand how rapidly this process could move toward irreversible medical treatment. I assumed therapy would focus on emotional wellbeing, trauma, and rule out comorbidities that could potentially impact how he feels about himself.

Instead, after only a handful of telehealth visits, without an in-person evaluation, he received a letter supporting cross-sex hormones. He told us at the time that the therapist told him he was "definitely trans." She did not appear to explore underlying stressors, grief, or the impact of comorbidities (I've noticed that many of these youth have some combination of ASD, OCD, and/or ADHD) before recommending an irreversible medical pathway.

We had no way to stop it. It didn't matter whether we removed him from our insurance, because he knew it was very easy to obtain cross-sex hormones at places like Planned Parenthood without it. Some gender clinics were even advertising on their websites that they would prescribe hormones on the first visit without safeguards, so he didn't even need the letter from the affirming mental health provider.

I was particularly alarmed because I had estrogen-positive breast cancer in my twenties. I asked the endocrinologist whether estrogen treatment could increase my son's cancer risk. She didn't have answers. We knew he already had a higher risk because he has a first degree relative with the disease. As a cancer survivor who went through chemotherapy and hair loss, major surgeries, and long recovery, that uncertainty is terrifying. No parent wants to see their child face preventable health risks. My son was not suicidal when he was given estrogen. This is not life-saving care.

My concern comes from a place of love. It's about questioning a medical approach that moved far too quickly to help him achieve a certain look without adequately weigh long-term consequences like fertility, cancer risk, and lifelong dependence on medication. I was told by a friend at the time, a physician who agreed to the medical transition of her own minor child, that if I didn't go along with this, my son's medical providers would encourage him to separate from our family. Unfortunately, I have met local families that were broken over this issue.

Back in 2021, I didn't know anyone who was speaking out, and sharing gender critical views on social media could get you deplatformed. Thankfully, after a few years, I was able to eventually find community first online and then in real life. Since 2025, I've connected with many parents in Connecticut and across the country with similar experiences, especially with older teens and young adults. Most remain quiet publicly because they fear damaging their relationship with their child. Others feel isolated as other family, friends, teachers, and sometimes even church clergy affirm their child in what they see as effectively a method of self-harm.

Supporting a non-affirming approach does not mean a parent doesn't love their child. It means they have concerns about irreversible medical harm.

I've also met parents whose daughters underwent mastectomies and hormone treatments shortly after turning 18. As a breast cancer survivor, I know firsthand that breast removal is not a minor procedure. It involves permanent physical and emotional consequences, including loss of sensation and the inability to breastfeed. These are serious decisions for very young people, some of whom have not even dated yet. Making a healthy body part completely non-functional with surgery isn't the same as when a young person might choose a strange hair color or even a tattoo.

Many of the young people I've encountered who began identifying as transgender were navigating other challenges first: grief, anxiety, autism spectrum traits, or family disruptions. Adolescence is already a vulnerable time for identity exploration. I worry that

medicalization can sometimes short-circuit deeper healing that might otherwise occur. It's especially sad because a lot of these youth are quirky out of the box thinkers and some of the nicest people you'll ever meet.

I believe young people deserve psychological support, time, and space to grow without being rushed toward irreversible medical interventions. That belief comes not from judgment, but from love and concern.

I'd like to tell any parents out there who are in a similar situation that you are not alone, and speaking compassionately about your experience can help others. Silence leaves families feeling isolated, and we need to let our legislators know that things need to change.

In my own family, I continue to share new research and information with my son because I care about his health and future and I want him to be fully informed. The gift of being our authentic self is completely free, and it doesn't require the field of medicine to enjoy it.

Ultimately, this is about safeguarding vulnerable young people while keeping families intact. We can approach this with compassion and a commitment to truth, even when the conversation is difficult. Thank you.