

12 November 2022

PT Proud Advocacy Committee: Statement of Support

The American Physical Therapy Association Academy of Leadership and Innovation's LGBTQIA+ Committee-Catalyst Group, PT Proud, honors the resilience, courage, and bravery that transgender athletes must demonstrate to continually pursue participation in sport despite legislative attempts to prevent their involvement. As experts in human movement, physical therapists are inherent advocates for the benefits of regular physical activity. The literature strongly supports that participation in sport has extensive benefits such as improved mood, stress levels, cardiovascular health, and sleep habits.¹ It also helps develop self-confidence, leadership skills, teamwork, and social support. Placing restrictions on involvement in sport based on one's gender identity has extremely harmful effects for transgender individuals of all ages. Research from The Trevor Project reveals that transgender and nonbinary youth who have

access to at least one gender-affirming space are 25% less likely to attempt suicide.² Allowing transgender students to participate in gender-affirming sports activities is one of many ways that communities can support transgender individuals. While many believe that transgender athletes pose a threat to other athletes such as creating performance discrepancies, current research is largely lacking a definitive conclusion on the existence of competitive advantage of transgender athletes over cisgender athletes. Furthermore, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) reveal that trans-inclusive policies do not cause harm to other youth athletes.³ PT Proud stands in support of all transgender and gender nonconforming youth and athletes, and advocates for protective anti-discrimination legislation for this community.

Resources:

1. Eime, R.M., Young, J.A., Harvey, J.T. *et al.* A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 10, 98 (2013).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-10-98>
2. 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. The Trevor Project.
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>.
3. Goldberg, S.K., Santos, T. Fact Sheet: The Importance of Sports Participation for Transgender Youth. Center for American Progress.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-importance-sports-participation-transgender-youth/>. Published March 18, 2021.