

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Supporting the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act

**From:** Kaiden

**Sent:** November 23, 2021 4:26 PM

**To:** Office of the Mayor <[Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 1 Office <[ward1@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward1@hamilton.ca)>; Farr, Jason <[Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca](mailto:Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca)>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <[ward3@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward3@hamilton.ca)>; Merulla, Sam <[Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca](mailto:Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca)>; Jackson, Tom <[Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca)>; Pauls, Esther <[Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca](mailto:Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 8 Office <[ward8@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward8@hamilton.ca)>; Clark, Brad <[Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca](mailto:Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca)>; Pearson, Maria <[Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca)>; Johnson, Brenda <[Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca)>; [loyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca](mailto:loyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca); VanderBeek, Arlene <[Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca](mailto:Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca)>; Whitehead, Terry <[Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca](mailto:Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca)>; Partridge, Judi <[Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca](mailto:Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca)>

**Subject:** Supporting the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act

Dear Hamilton City Councillors & Mayor Eisenberger,

My name is Kaiden, and I am writing to you as the Project Coordinator for the Hamilton Trans Health Coalition. We are a coalition of over 150 healthcare and service providers as well as trans and non-binary community members, who are dedicated to increasing access to gender-affirming care to improve the health and well-being of our local gender diverse community.

I'm writing to ask that you consider endorsing the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act (aka Bill 17), recently tabled in the provincial legislature. If passed, Bill 17 will mandate the provincial government strike an Advisory Committee on gender-affirming care, to make recommendations to the Minister of Health for improving access to and coverage for this care in Ontario. The Bill has passed second reading and been referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. We are supporting a public campaign to ask the provincial government to put Bill 17 on the Committee's agenda and ensure it passes. You can find more details on Bill 17 here: <https://transhealthontario.org/>

Currently in Hamilton, many trans and non-binary community members are unable to access gender-affirming care. This includes both general affirming healthcare and healthcare specific to medical transition (things like hormones and referrals for gender-affirming surgeries). In my role, I respond to requests from community members to try and support them in accessing this care, in whatever ways I can. Since I started in April of this year, I've received over 100 requests for support accessing gender-affirming medical care and over 50 requests for support accessing trans affirming mental healthcare. These are frequently from people who have been turned away from their providers, experienced transphobia, or have called around and been told no again and again.

Many of the barriers that trans people experience when trying to access affirming healthcare, stem from systemic issues that need to be solved at the provincial level. For example, OHIP does not cover all medically necessary transition related surgeries and is not aligned with international standards. Gender-affirming care clinics, often a local trans community's lifeline to gender-affirming care, are increasingly losing their funding and either closing or being forced to turn people away as their waitlists exceed 2-3 years or more. This is life saving healthcare that has been proven to improve mental health and overall well-being for trans and non-binary folks who require it.

I'm asking for your support and public endorsement of Bill 17 as a tangible action to demonstrate ongoing support for Hamilton's local trans and non-binary community. The City of Hamilton's adoption of the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression was a fantastic step forward, and supporting this Bill is aligned with the values laid out in the Protocol. I recognize that as City Councillors and the Mayor, you cannot directly influence the provincial government, but your support would be incredibly meaningful to the community, nonetheless.

Additionally, Mayor Watson and two City Councillors from Ottawa have released an open letter in support of Bill 17, that I have attached in case it is of interest.

I am more than happy to discuss further, answer questions, or help draft an endorsement if I can be of use in anyway. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your consideration.  
All the best,

Kaiden (he/him)  
Project Coordinator  
Hamilton Trans Health Coalition  
[hamiltontranshealth.ca](http://hamiltontranshealth.ca)  
Hours: Mon-Wed 9am-5pm, Thurs 9am-12pm



**Jim Watson**  
Mayor Maire

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November 3rd, 2021

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5th Floor, 77 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
[christine.elliott@pc.ola.org](mailto:christine.elliott@pc.ola.org)

**By Email**

Dear Minister Elliott,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Ottawa trans and gender diverse community to ask for your support for Private Members Bill 17, the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act.

The objective of the bill, which is the creation of a provincial advisory committee on gender affirming care, is an essential first step to improving the health and healthcare of transgender, non-binary, 2-Spirit and gender diverse people in Ontario. Trans and gender diverse people in Ottawa consistently face barriers to gender-affirming healthcare, which in turn has a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. This bill is an important step forward to improve healthcare coverage and access for trans and gender diverse people in Ontario.

Many gender affirming procedures and treatments, such as facial feminization surgery, permanent hair removal, and chest contouring remain uncovered or only partially covered through Ontario's health insurance. Beyond coverage, trans and gender diverse Ottawans often struggle to find a trans-inclusive and trans-competent family physician, often spending years on waitlists for medically necessary healthcare. Inadequate coverage, barriers to access and insufficient community and social service supports put trans and gender diverse residents in a tough position.

Gender affirming healthcare is recognized as medically necessary by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health and many other recognized medical institutions and organizations in Canada and around the world. The current state of gender-affirming healthcare means that medically necessary services are inaccessible to the majority of trans people. As such, improving gender affirming healthcare in Ontario would have an immediate and positive impact on trans and gender diverse communities across the province and in Ottawa.



Should you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Watson".

Jim Watson  
Mayor  
City of Ottawa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine McKenney".

Catherine McKenney  
Councillor Ward 14 - Somerset

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresa Kavanagh".

Theresa Kavanagh  
Councillor Ward – 7 Bay

CC: Fae Johnstone, Executive Director of Wisdom2Action