

AP FACT CHECK

Norway didn't ban gender-affirming care for minors, as headline falsely claims



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AP'S ASSESSMENT: False. The country has not changed its guidelines on gender-affirming care for minors, which currently includes non-surgical treatments but recommends against surgery for under-18s in most cases. An independent Norwegian healthcare board not associated with the government recently proposed increased restrictions on such care — though not an outright ban — but it has no authority to institute the changes. Norway's health agency is considering the recommendations but confirmed nothing has been banned.

THE FACTS: As Republican lawmakers across the U.S. [ban gender-affirming care](#) for minors, social media have in recent days shared a misleading article to falsely suggest Norway has made similar changes to its laws.

“Norway joins Sweden, Finland, UK, Texas, Florida, Oklahoma, and Tennessee in banning gender affirming care for minors,” reads one tweet sharing the article that had more than 81,000 likes as of Thursday.

OTHER NEWS

The image is a dark blue rectangular graphic with a large, faint white checkmark in the background. In the foreground, the text "AP NEWS VERIFICATION" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a white checkmark icon inside a white circle.

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The article was published on May 13 by SOTT.net, a website that has previously shared misinformation. The article's text is an opinion piece first published by the Washington Examiner two months earlier, which never claims Norway has banned such care. But SOTT had changed the headline from "Norway offers a step forward in eliminating gender ideology" to "Norway bans child sex changes, joins Finland, Sweden, and UK in rejecting gender ideology."

Reached for comment, SOTT.net acknowledged in a statement that the proposed changes do not include a ban, and changed the headline.

The Norwegian Directorate of Health, the governmental body that develops health guidelines in the country, has not instituted any bans related to gender-affirming care for minors, spokesperson Thomas Berg confirmed. Instead, the headline and social media users are misrepresenting recommendations made by an outside advisory board.

The current [guidelines](#) say minors with gender dysphoria should undergo an interdisciplinary assessment by a team of healthcare specialists, and from there may receive puberty-delaying

treatment once puberty has started, and estrogen or androgen hormone therapy no earlier than age 16. The guidelines say surgical treatment is generally “not applicable” for minors under 18, but chest surgery may be appropriate in special cases, based on a comprehensive assessment and parental consent.

An independent organization, The Norwegian Healthcare Investigation Board, released [a report](#) in March that recommended increased regulations for such care. The report did not propose an outright ban on any treatment, and the board does not have the authority to enact any of its proposals.

“It is not true that the proposals or implementation of the requirements suggested will represent a ban,” Dr. Stine Marit Moen, the board’s medical director, told the AP in an email. “On the contrary, our report highlights the need to ensure safe help and secure the treatments given in Norway.”

One of the board’s recommendations is to declare treatment for minors including hormones, puberty blockers and surgery as “exploratory” or “experimental,” which local LGBT+ advocacy groups say would make it much harder for youths to access care.

Christine Marie Jentoft, an advisor on gender diversity with The Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity, also known as FRI, explained that this would mean these treatments would need to be connected to research or a study, and would make it impossible for private and municipal healthcare providers to provide such care.

“In this case the children would need to get an individual assessment, and the treatment would need to be in connection with research,” Bjarte Espeland Horpestad, a member of the LGBT+ network for the Norwegian Liberal Party, told the AP in an email.

The Norwegian Directorate for Health said on Sunday that it is considering whether it will follow the board’s recommendations, the advocates noted, citing [news outlets](#) in Norway.

Associated Press writer Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark contributed to this report.

This is part of AP's effort to address widely shared misinformation, including work with outside companies and organizations to add factual context to misleading content that is circulating online. [Learn more about fact-checking at AP.](#)