

# ACLU: Federal court rules Wisconsin state employee health insurance must cover transgender workers

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MILWAUKEE – A federal court found that denying health insurance for gender-affirming medical care violates the Constitution and federal non-discrimination law. The federal lawsuit was filed on behalf of Alina Boyden, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Shannon Andrews, a cancer researcher at the University of Wisconsin Medical School by the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Wisconsin, and volunteer attorneys from the law firm Hawks Quindel.

The decision concluded that there was no reason to exclude medically necessary care for transgender workers and said that some of the state's arguments appear "unhinged from reality."

"I'm pleased the court recognized that denying coverage for my medical care was sex discrimination. I, personally, was lucky to be in a position to have retirement funds and savings I could take out to fund my medical care, but had I been less fortunate I would not be alive today," said Andrews. "I feel vindicated that the court recognized what the state did was wrong. I hope that this will be a powerful signal that trans people are not fair game for discrimination and that our lives and health are not a political football."

The state's Group Insurance Board approved health insurance coverage for gender-confirmation surgery for state employees, effective January 1, 2019. The ACLU views this decision as a step toward ensuring that transgender people's rights to be themselves are protected.

"As the court found, depriving transgender people of access to transition-related care is sex discrimination," said Larry Dupuis legal director for the ACLU of Wisconsin. "We will continue our work until all transgender people can get the

medical care they need, just like other people can.”