



Genital Autonomy
Legal Defense and Education Fund
Affirming rights. Protecting choice. Redressing harm.
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**Testimony on HB94: Medicaid Coverage of Newborn Circumcision
House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee
New Hampshire State Legislature – January 29, 2025**

The Genital Autonomy Legal Defense and Education Fund (GALDEF) is an IRS-recognized non-profit that works with circumcision sufferers to document their harm and with their attorneys to bring impact litigation to ensure that all children, regardless of sex, are protected from medically unnecessary genital surgeries. GALDEF SUPPORTS HB94 to end Medicaid coverage of newborn circumcision.

Besides being medically unnecessary, infant circumcision is painful and traumatic to newborns, it removes specialized erogenous tissue, and damages the inherent design and functioning of human male genitalia. Since the 1990s, evidence has been emerging about long-term adverse physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and self-esteem consequences upon infants, children, adolescents and the adults they become; evidence that the American for-profit medical industry has never fully acknowledged or studied and which it chooses to ignore.

Even according to the 2012 circumcision policy statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – which expired in 2017 without being renewed or replaced – the AAP admits ***“The exact incidence of complications after newborn circumcision is unknown.”*** This is why they and other U.S. medical associations are “flying blind” when they assure the public that newborn circumcision is safe and harmless. Our plaintiffs and members of our Cooperating Attorneys Network would beg to differ.

Below is just a small sample of this emerging evidence, which is why litigation is being prepared that will change the legal landscape in the U.S. with regard to holding accountable all individuals, corporations, agencies and state governments who facilitate this harmful traditional practice.

In 2022 researcher Alfonso Cepeda-Emiliani and his team revealed that *“the penile prepuce has a highly organized, dense afferent innervation pattern early in fetal development.”* Afferent neurons bring sensory information from the outside world to the brain.

That same year, Tye and Sardi published a critical overview of literature about psychological, psychosocial, and psychosexual implications of penile circumcision, arguing for *“more attention to the potential long-term effects that may not be properly considered when the patient is an infant or child.”*

Also in 2022 researcher Mehta Uberoi and her team published their findings from surveying online forums devoted to circumcision grief. They concluded:

“We identified three major categories of complications: physical such as pain during erections and lost sensitivity, psychological such as anxiety and violation of autonomy, and sexual such as feeling that the sexual experience was negatively altered or being unable to complete a sexual experience. We also identified a “discovery process” where some men described coming into awareness of their circumcision status. Findings suggest that neonatal circumcision can have significant adverse consequences for adult men. Removal of normal foreskin tissue should be limited to adult men who choose the procedure for cosmetic reasons or when medically indicated.”

Shame or fear of ridicule are two main reasons why most circumcised men don’t publicly discuss their true thoughts about the condition of their penis; even less so with doctors, where several surveys reveal that almost 40% of medical and mental health professionals were found to be unsympathetic, dismissive, ridiculing or unhelpful. The unfortunate result of this unacknowledged shame, fear and grief is diminished health and well-being. Several surveys have found common themes among men who suffer from unwanted circumcision:

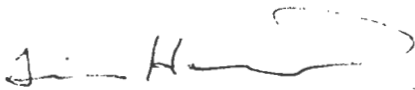
- 65% Dissatisfaction/Distress
- 31% Helplessness to change the situation
- 31% Hopelessness to regain bodily integrity
- 33% Depression
- 13% Homicidal ideations of harming one’s circumciser
- 13% Suicidal ideations or attempts

Genital autonomy organizations are well aware that actual suicides over circumcision distress are not as rare as one might think. These generally occur among young men in their 20s.

To cope with distress over unwanted circumcision, many respondents resorted to smoking or abuse of alcohol or prescription/illicit drugs. The most common coping behavior was sexual compulsivity, where 22% of respondents resorted to increased frequency of (often unprotected) sexual acts to compensate for poor quality sexual experiences. Circumcision harm not only affects men, but also their relationships with parents, family members and intimate partners.

Why would the State of New Hampshire want to remain a knowing participant in – and take on future legal liability – for inflicting a social custom upon Medicaid-eligible newborns that has questionable medical efficacy, especially after being warned about emerging evidence of long-term harms?

Because of this growing awareness about long-term adverse outcomes from newborn circumcision on the sexual health and emotional well-being of children and the adults they become, GALDEF SUPPORTS HB94’s end to Medicaid coverage for newborn circumcision.



Tim Hammond, Executive Director

January 29, 2025

Date

“Circumcision is a solution in search of a problem”

Author Edward Wallerstein “Circumcision: An American Health Fallacy” (1980)

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