1,000 LGBT youth protected from conversion therapy in 2018

Laws passed in five states this year prohibit the practice on minors by licensed health care professionals.

New estimates from the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law find that 1,000 LGBT youth ages 13-17 will be protected from conversion therapy by a licensed health care professional in the five US states that passed bans on the practice in 2018—Washington, Hawaii, Maryland, Delaware, and New Hampshire.

To date, 14 states and the District of Columbia as well as 40 localities have banned health care professionals from using conversion therapy on youth. Approximately 7,000 LGBT youth would have received the therapy from a therapist before they turned 18 if their state had not banned the practice.

“These statewide bans protect LGBT youth from a practice that numerous professional health associations consider harmful and ineffective,” said Christy Mallory, the state and local policy director at the Williams Institute. “Public opinion polls show overwhelming support for ending the practice of conversion therapy on young people.”

Conversion therapy is treatment intended to change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of LGBT people. It is grounded in the belief that being LGBT is abnormal.

In January 2018, a study by the Williams Institute provided the first estimates of U.S. youth at risk of undergoing conversion therapy before they reach adulthood. In that study, researchers estimated that 20,000 LGBT youth will undergo conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before the age of 18.
Approximately 57,000 youth will receive the treatment from a religious or spiritual advisor. State laws do not prevent religious or spiritual advisors from providing conversion therapy as long as they are acting solely in a spiritual capacity.

The researchers also found that approximately 698,000 LGBT adults in the U.S have received conversion therapy at some point in their lives, including about 350,000 who received it as adolescents.

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_The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, a think tank on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy, is dedicated to conducting rigorous, independent research with real-world relevance._