

September 7, 2022

Mr. Stuart Sternberg
Principal Owner
Tampa Bay Rays
1 Tropicana Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Dear Mr. Sternberg:

Major League Baseball (MLB) is woven into America's cultural identity. Ted Williams joined the U.S. Navy Reserve during World War II in the prime of his career. Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. President George W. Bush threw out the first pitch in Game 3 of the 2001 World Series. Baseball isn't just a game, it is an American institution that transcends politics, religion, race, and geography.

It is for this reason I was alarmed to learn that the Tampa Bay Rays donated \$20,000 to Metro Inclusive Health (MIH) in the Tampa region. The National Review recently reported that MIH provides services to individuals who identify as transgender, "such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), reproductive care, and specialist referrals."¹ As reported, these services are not exclusively provided to adults – MIH is also in the business of "prescribing gender-transition hormones for minors."

There has been a lot of misinformation and disinformation surrounding HRT for minors, some of it pushed from the very highest levels of our government. Given your leadership role in our community, and the important role the Rays play, it is important that you know the facts.

First, MIH is using puberty blockers in a way that is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In other words, these medicines and hormones have not been federally approved for "gender transforming care" in minors.

Second, as a result, there is almost no safety data associated with the use of these so-called treatments. Dr. Lawrence Tabak, Acting Director of the National Institutes of Health testified that federal researchers are only "observing the longer-term psychological impact of these protocols" and they have only "a small number of observational studies to gather the data on the effects." Fortunately, other nations have been more diligent in pursuing scientific answers to these questions. Earlier this year, Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare "concluded that the evidence base for hormonal interventions for gender-dysphoric youth is of low quality, and that hormonal treatments may carry risks. ... As a result of this determination, the eligibility for pediatric gender transition with puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones in Sweden will be sharply curtailed."² Finland adopted a similar approach the previous year.

¹ <https://www.nationalreview.com/2022/08/the-mlbs-unseemly-support-for-youth-gender-transitions/>

² <https://segm.org/segm-summary-sweden-prioritizes-therapy-curbs-hormones-for-gender-dysphoric-youth>

Third, and this should come as no surprise, the impact of these so-called treatments in young teens is irreversible. A 2019 article exploring “[g]ender affirming medical care of transgender youth” in *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care* notes, “[i]t is important that all youth understand the irreversibility and potential side effects of initiating” such treatments.³ A pre-print of that same article casually observes “hair growth is irreversible” after the first year of testosterone therapy and changes to the “pelvic region ... may be irreversible.”⁴

For whatever good MIH may do in providing care and mental counseling for vulnerable populations in Tampa Bay, it is engaged in extremely harmful and irreversible practices not backed by science. The Rays Baseball Foundation’s goal of “improving the lives of those in need within our community, focusing primarily on education, youth development, wellness and social responsibility” is a noble one. Yet, the donation made to MIH indicates a lack of awareness about the nature of the organization’s activities and the long-term damage it can have on the very people your foundation and MIH claim to serve.

I understand this can be a confusing issue given the vocal nature of local activists, a legacy media totally uninterested in the facts, and a public health establishment that willfully ignores science in the name of some unseen “progress.” Should you wish to learn more, my office is available to brief you, and your team, on this critical matter to ensure everyone understands how dangerous these practices are.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1538544219301245?via%3Dihub>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8496167/>