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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

MATT GALLIVAN, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
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May 13, 2026

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Chuck Jones  
President and CEO  
Thundermist Health Center  
25 John A Cummings Way  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Dear Mr. Jones:

Recent reports indicate that providers affiliated with Thundermist Health Center (Thundermist) allegedly performed gender transition services on vulnerable patients by providing puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.<sup>1</sup> As a physician and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), these allegations raise serious concerns that Thundermist providers may have promoted irreversible gender transition services in a manner not supported by sound scientific data. Organizations including the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) and the American Medical Association (AMA) have acknowledged that the evidence supporting certain gender transition procedures for minors remains insufficient or of low certainty.<sup>2</sup> More concerningly, Thundermist is a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded health center, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

President Trump made clear that protecting patients from these types of gender transition services should be a national priority. The President worked to restrict such practices through Executive Order (EO) 14187, *Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation*, which protects children from irreversible harm through gender transition services and directs federal agencies to enforce all applicable laws that prohibit or limit these services.<sup>3</sup> Further, in March 2025, following a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality and Safety Special Alert Memo (QSSAM) alerting providers to the dangers of chemical and surgical mutilation of children, HRSA

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<sup>1</sup> Amended Complaint, *Ulery v. Rafferty*, No. PC-2023-05366 (R.I. Super. Ct. Oct. 2023), <https://legalinsurrection.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Ulery-Amended-Complaint-filed.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Jacobs, *Doctors' Group Endorses Restrictions on Gender-Related Surgery for Minors*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Feb. 4, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/04/health/gender-surgery-minors-ama.html>; see also American Society of Plastic Surgeons, *Position Statement on Gender Surgery for Children and Adolescents* (Feb. 3, 2026), <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/health-policy/positions/2026-gender-surgery-children-adolescents.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Executive Order 14187, *Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation*, 90 Fed. Reg. 8771 (Feb. 3, 2025).

announced plans to review its own grants and programs in order to protect children from such practices.<sup>4</sup>

As a HRSA-funded health center, Thundermist receives mandatory and discretionary grant funding from the Community Health Center Fund. It also receives enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, revenue from participation in the 340B Discount Drug Pricing Program and enjoys a federal non-profit tax exemption. Thundermist is also eligible for direct and indirect federal funding or subsidization to train and employ residents, physicians, and other clinicians through the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program (THCGME), the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and other HRSA-administered workforce programs authorized under Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA), among other sources. For fiscal year (FY) 2024, for example, the majority (66 percent) of Thundermist's grants and contributions revenue were derived from HHS and HRSA.<sup>5</sup>

HRSA-funded health centers play a vital role in delivering primary care services to underserved populations and receive significant federal support to carry out that important mission. Providing harmful, irreversible gender transition services is outside the scope of primary care and raises questions about whether such services are medically necessary, consistent with federal policy, and fall within the intended scope of care supported by federal funding.

Accordingly, please respond to the following questions, on a question-by-question basis, no later than **May 28, 2026**:

1. How long has Thundermist provided gender transition-related services, including prescribing puberty blockers and facilitating gender transition procedures, to its patients?
2. Please identify all gender transition-related services provided at Thundermist from January 1, 2017, to present, including but not limited to the prescription and administration of puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones, gender transition procedures or surgical referrals, mental health services related to gender dysphoria, and legal and social services.
  - a. Please provide the approximate number of patients treated and the ages of patients treated with these services in compliance with all Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rules and regulations.
3. Please provide the average cost to patients for all gender-transition related services, including sliding fee scale discounts offered.

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from Health Res. & Servs. Admin. to Hospital Administrators, Colleagues, and Grant Recipients (Mar. 6, 2025), <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/grants/march-2025-letter-hospital-admins-grantees.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Thundermist Health Center, Audit for period ending Aug 2024, [https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display\\_audit/2024-08-GSAFAC-0000369389](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display_audit/2024-08-GSAFAC-0000369389).

4. Please describe all policies, protocols, and guidelines governing the provision of gender transition-related services from January 1, 2017, to present, including any changes made during this period.
  - a. Please provide all documents related to Thundermist's policies that were in effect at any point during this timeframe.
  - b. Please provide all educational materials and policy documents related to informed consent and parental notification requirements for services provided to individuals under age 19.
    - i. Additionally, please explain whether patients under age 19 are receiving these services when parental consent is not provided.
5. Please list all sources and amounts of federal funding received from FY 2017 to present, including but not limited to PHSA Section 330 grants, Title X grants, 340B revenue, and Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program reimbursement.
  - a. Please provide this data in an Excel spreadsheet format.
6. Please describe Thundermist's current compliance measures related to executive directives concerning gender transition services for individuals under age 19.
7. What, if any, remedial actions have been taken to ensure that services provided at Thundermist align with federal directives?
8. Please explain how the provision of gender transition-related services aligns with Thundermist's mission as a HRSA-funded health center focused on primary care services.
9. Has Thundermist been a party to any litigation regarding gender transition-related services being performed on individuals under age 19? If so, please list either the case name, citation, docket number, or party information.
10. When was Thundermist most recently approved for PHS deemed status under Section 224 of the PHSA?
  - a. Please provide copies of Thundermist's Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) deeming or redeeming applications submitted to HRSA since 2017.
  - b. Please provide copies of all responses from HRSA to Thundermist's FTCA deeming or redeeming applications.
11. On October 20, 2023, a former patient filed a lawsuit in Rhode Island Superior Court against Thundermist providers, alleging medical malpractice, negligence and lack of

informed consent related to gender transition.<sup>6</sup> The defendants include Jason R. Rafferty, M.D. and several other Thundermist providers. Dr. Rafferty has also been named in a separate but similar malpractice lawsuit involving the treatment of a patient for “gender-affirming care.”<sup>7</sup> Taken together, these cases raise ongoing concerns about Dr. Rafferty’s clinical decision making.

- a. Please provide all dates that Dr. Rafferty was employed at Thundermist.
- b. Were you aware that during the time Dr. Rafferty was providing gender-transition related services to minor patients at Thundermist he was also the lead author of the American Academy of Pediatrics 2018 policy statement on “*Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents?*”<sup>8</sup>
- c. Prior to hiring Dr. Rafferty, did he express any intent to provide gender transition-related services at Thundermist?
- d. Prior to hiring Dr. Rafferty, were you aware of any active or pending litigation against him for providing gender-transition related services? If so, was this litigation disclosed in response to questions about Thundermist’s risk management procedures in FTCA deeming applications?

12. Does the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency program include any formal or informal training, instruction, or educational materials related to gender-transition related services?<sup>9</sup> If so, please describe the frequency and content of such training and provide copies of any related curricula or training materials.

- a. Can residents opt out of training related to the provision of these types of services? If so, please provide information on how residents may opt out.
- b. Please provide a copy of Thundermist’s application to receive its 2023 Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Development Award.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Amended Complaint, *Ulery v. Rafferty*, No. PC-2023-05366 (R.I. Super. Ct. Oct. 2023),

<https://legalinsurrection.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Ulery-Amended-Complaint-filed.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Complaint, *Ayala v. Am. Acad. of Pediatrics*, No. PC-2023-05428 (R.I. Super. Ct. Oct. 23, 2023),

[https://dw-wp-production.imgix.net/2023/10/Ayala-v-AAP-Complaint\\_stamped.pdf](https://dw-wp-production.imgix.net/2023/10/Ayala-v-AAP-Complaint_stamped.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Jason Rafferty, *Enduring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents*, AM. ACAD. OF PEDIATRICS, (Oct. 1,

2018), <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for>.

<sup>9</sup> *Family Medicine Residency—Faculty*, THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER, <https://www.thundermisthealth.org/family-medicine-residency/faculty/> (last visited Apr. 28, 2026).

<sup>10</sup> *FY23 Teaching Health Center Planning and Development (THCPD) Awards*, HEALTH RES. & SERVS. ADMIN., <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/funding/teaching-health-center-planning-development-awards> (last visited Apr. 28, 2026).

13. Please provide a detailed description of the services and practices of Thundermist's school-based health centers or "Health Huts" operating at Villa Nova Middle School, Woonsocket High School, and Deering Middle School.<sup>11</sup>

- a. Do providers working at these school-based health centers provide information, guidance, or referrals to students regarding gender transition-related services?
  - i. If so, are parents required to provide any additional consent prior to their child receiving any information, guidance, or referrals from providers regarding gender transition-related services?

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Chairman

U.S. Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions

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<sup>11</sup> *School-Based Health Centers – Health Huts*, THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER, <https://www.thundermisthealth.org/services/school-based-health-centers/> (last visited Apr. 28, 2026).