



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 25, 2025

Federal Mental-health Agency Pushing Gender Ideology Could Be on Trump's Chopping Block

A federal mental-health agency has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on LGBTQ activism over the past decade, making it a ripe target for President Donald Trump's war on gender ideology.

[Daily Caller](#) reported Thursday:

Nearly \$360 million in [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) grants over the past four years were awarded to projects including the keyword "transgender," according to government data reviewed by the Daily Caller News Foundation [DCNF].



Amiaheroyet (talk)/Wikipedia
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Many of those programs push the transgender lobby's [unscientific idea](#) that parents must "affirm" their children's chosen gender identities or risk losing their kids to suicide. Under the Biden administration, SAMHSA spent at least [\\$6.8 million](#) on such programs in 2023 and 2024.

Although SAMHSA was created in 1992 to help those most in need of mental-health treatment, Manhattan Institute policy analyst Carolyn Gorman told the DCNF:

Most [SAMHSA] dollars don't go to serious mental illness (like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) but, rather, community mental health aimed at the "worried well," prevention efforts (even though we don't know how to prevent mental illness, or suicide for that matter), and other educational/awareness campaigns on common issues and normal distress, or whatever faddish issue of the day is, like improving emotional wellness for "LGBTQIA+."

Affirmative Actions

In early January, Gorman wrote a [City Journal column](#) calling on Trump to "abolish" SAMHSA. The agency is "a hub for progressive activism," she charged. "Seemingly any left-wing priority can win SAMHSA support if proponents claim that addressing it would reduce 'trauma' or improve 'mental well-being.'"

Since LGBTQ — especially "T" — issues are among the Left's highest priorities these days, it comes as no surprise that SAMHSA has been at the forefront of promoting gender ideology. Indeed, according to Daily Caller, "the agency has become a major funder of efforts to make unquestioningly affirming children's feelings about their gender the dominant approach to treating mental health issues."

For example:



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SAMHSA's recent LGBTQI+ Family Support grant opportunity funded a project targeting the children of [military](#) families, aiming to convince parents that they should actively support their child's desires to live as the opposite gender. Another grant went to a Michigan organization that intends to [enlist](#) public school districts in locating students to refer to its program, the DCNF previously reported.

SAMHSA gave \$3.5 million in 2020 to launch the [Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity](#) at the University of Connecticut. The center funds studies to "prove" its contention that "behavioral health disparities experienced by LGBTQ+ populations can be attributed to" such things as "minority stress," "abuse from unsupportive family members," and an "absence of social programs specializing in LGBTQ+ services." It also promotes other government-funded initiatives such as AFFIRM Caregiver, which counsels parents to support their kids' gender choices. A [ScienceDirect](#) study of the program explained:

Affirmative practice is not merely the absence of explicit homo/bi/transphobia; rather affirmative practice embraces and promotes a worldview which explicitly supports and validates the identities, strengths, and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and actively works to dismantle systems of oppression by addressing the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that maintain oppression.

Grant Schemes

Because SAMHSA officials believe so strongly in "affirmation," they naturally devote many of their taxpayer dollars to pushing it. That often occurs in "unexpected places," wrote Daily Caller:

One \$375,000 SAMHSA grant [awarded](#) in 2024 to an LGBTQ community center in New York City seeks to reduce substance abuse risk by offering "affirming and inclusive services" for youth. Using grant funds, the center intends to help public schools implement [programs](#) like Proud & Empowered, which pulls students out of class for lessons on LGBTQ activism.

Students who participate in Proud & Empowered learn LGBTQ history, including through a "queer jeopardy" game, and read articles highlighting how LGBTQ students have arranged classroom walk-outs and marches, [according](#) to the program's website.

Another \$16,000 in agency [funds](#) went towards installing "gender-neutral" restrooms in a Connecticut substance abuse clinic.

SAMHSA offered guidance to states in 2024 on using [grant](#) funding not explicitly earmarked for LGBTQ causes to support that group.

On top of all that, noted Gorman:

The agency's own employees have ranked it one of the worst places [to work](#) in Washington. The Government Accountability Office, meantime, has found that SAMHSA makes [unsubstantiated claims](#), [hasn't properly documented how grantees](#) qualified for funding, and has [failed to complete](#) program reviews.



President's "Pre-peal" Prerogative

"What happens next with the agency really comes down to whether or not you believe it can be reformed," Gorman's colleague Joseph Figliolia told the DCNF.

It also comes down to whether one believes the federal government should even have such an agency to begin with. Since the Constitution nowhere grants Washington the authority to involve itself in mental-health matters, SAMHSA should go.

Agency employees have reason to fear unemployment. SAMHSA's budget has more than doubled over the last decade. Shuttering it would both save taxpayers money and align with Trump's [executive order](#) banning gender ideology in federal agencies.

In her column, Gorman argued that "abolishing SAMHSA would be relatively simple" since most of its funding is discretionary. Trump could cut off the agency's funds immediately while awaiting (one hopes) a repeal bill from Congress, she argued.

She contended that the agency

harms the people it is intended to help, pursues unfounded approaches to mental-health care, and serves as an incubator for progressivism. The Trump administration would do well to put an end to it.



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