

19 July 2024

Pamela Buffone

Via email [info@genderreport.ca](mailto:info@genderreport.ca)

Dear Pamela Buffone:

I am the Senior Manager for Journalistic Standards and Public Trust at CBC News. I am writing to reply to your July 17 email addressed to CBC Ombudsman Jack Nagler asking that CBC News retract part of a video published to YouTube by CBC Nova Scotia. Brodie Fenlon, Editor in Chief of CBC News, asked me to explain why we won't be doing that.

The video, titled [How youth can access gender-affirming care in Nova Scotia](#), was published October 4, 2023.

In that video, our journalist, Andrew Lam, explained how young people in Nova Scotia can access specialized care. A clinician explained that some of those people ultimately may not need medical options. Lam then briefly explains the medical care that is available. That section includes information:

There are puberty blockers, which temporarily stop the progression of puberty and provide the child with more time to seek supports and to explore their goals and gender identity – for example through clothing. The treatment is reversible, with puberty typically beginning within three to six months after stopping treatment. And international guidelines say that puberty-blocking treatment can help reduce the distress that comes with starting physical changes.

Other options are explored in the piece.

You wrote to the Ombudsman:

It is extremely irresponsible for the CBC to suggest that puberty blockers can be used for the treatment of gender dysphoria without recognizing that there is not enough medical evidence available to know whether the risks will outweigh the benefits.

You go on to explain:

The claim that when puberty blockers are stopped, puberty returns in 3-6 months is only accurate for children experiencing precocious puberty. It is not accurate to apply this statement in the context of gender-related distress.

You point to reviews in Europe, including the recent Cass Review, which you feel believe “that new gold standard of medical evidence on the usage of puberty blockers for gender incongruence in children is very clear that the use of puberty blockers for this purpose cannot be assumed to be safe.” Finally, you write that [[World Professional Association for Transgender Health](#)]is no longer a credible Standard of Care,” and you outline your reasons for drawing that conclusion.

I appreciate reading your comments and am happy to explain our approach.

Our journalists are guided in their work by the CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices, or JSP, a copy of which you can find at [this link](#). The JSP requires our journalism to be fair, balanced and accurate.

Our reporting in this video is consistent with our reporting in the article [How gender-affirming health care for kids works in Canada](#), published in November, 2023. There, Dr. Tania Culham, who works with Trans Care B.C., notes that puberty blockers have been used for more than 40 years to treat precocious puberty, and about 20 years for “transition-related care.” Dr. Culham also says, “The whole point of the puberty blocker is that they are reversible.”

In February, CBC News published [How hormone blockers put puberty on pause](#) that provides more information about the benefits and risks of hormone blockers, including the importance of introducing them at the onset of puberty.

While the latter two articles expand and build on the reporting you see in Andrew Lam's October video, none of that renders the original content incorrect. It is all in line with the Canadian Pediatric Society's statement on [gender-affirming care for youth](#), which says "Hormonal suppression is reversible, and endogenous sex-steroid production and/or effects will resume if hormone blockers are discontinued." The statement broadly endorses the WPATH approach.

As you know, the Cass Review was issued in the UK in April, several months after Andrew Lam's report was posted. CBC News has [reported on that review](#) and the immediate implications of it. I note that [just this week](#), leaders of the British Medical Association are debating a response to the review, with at least one Council member calling the resulting ban on puberty blockers in the UK a "terrible political decision which will cause incredible harm to trans people."

Our coverage of this developing story will continue.

It is my responsibility to tell you that if you are not satisfied with this response, you may wish to submit the matter for review by the CBC Ombudsman at [ombudsman@cbc.ca](mailto:ombudsman@cbc.ca).

Sincerely,

Nancy Waugh

Sr. Manager, Journalistic Standards, CBC News

CC: Brodie Fenlon, Editor in Chief, CBC News

Ian Brimacombe, Managing Editor, CBC News

Mark Harrison, Executive Producer, CBC Health

Office of the Ombudsman

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Nancy Waugh (she/her)

Sr. Manager, Journalistic Standards & Public Trust, CBC News