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Wall Street Journal runs op-ed from longtime anti-trans psychiatrist, Paul McHugh

By [Ross Murray, Director of News](#) | June 13, 2014

WALL STREET JOURNAL

Today, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an op-ed from [Dr. Paul McHugh](#), a well-known opponent of [transgender healthcare](#), in which he claimed that "transgender surgery isn't the solution." The op-ed is filled with outdated and factually inaccurate information about transgender people, and McHugh, despite his credentials, draws disturbing conclusions from medical data presented without context.

Facts left out of this op-ed include the [American Psychological Association](#) and the [American Medical Association's](#) positions that healthcare treatments, including hormone therapy and surgeries, are medically necessary for many transgender people. These institutions have also declared that trying to change a person's gender identity, much like trying to change their sexual orientation, is a waste of time that only causes more distress for the individual.

The op-ed attempts to connect advances for transgender healthcare, such as the [Department of Health and Human Services' recent decision](#) to remove a regulation in federal Medicare that banned transgender healthcare coverage, as the result of a "government and media alliance." However, such advances are actually steps to bring the practices of healthcare coverage providers in line with what authorities on healthcare support.

McHugh also failed to mention the many transgender people whose lives have improved as a result of living as the gender they identify with, rather than the one they were assigned at birth. Anguish felt by transgender people, even after receiving medical treatment, could be the result of several factors outside of surgical outcomes, including family rejection, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, anti-trans harassment and violence, and [other issues that transgender people face every day](#). McHugh cites a study from the Karolinska Institute to claim that transgender healthcare *causes* distress for transgender people, leading to earlier death, but the [study's own conclusion explicitly dismisses that line of reasoning](#).

McHugh's reduction of all the difficulties that transgender people may face to a single issue is incredibly misleading and irresponsible, and fuels anti-trans stigma that could prevent transgender

people from accessing services that do improve their well-being. Instead of listening to transgender people (some of whom are psychologists and doctors themselves), the Wall Street Journal is promoting someone who has dedicated most of his career opposing the findings of medical associations on many psychological issues, including the reality of transgender people.

GLAAD immediately reached out to editors at the Wall Street Journal. The Editorial Page Editor offered to receive a letter to the editor in response to McHugh. GLAAD is considering that option, even while speaking out about the inclusion of this misleading op-ed.

"At a time when more and more media outlets are following the best practices on reporting about transgender people, the Wall Street Journal is moving in the opposite direction," said GLAAD's President and CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis. "By publishing McHugh's op-ed, contradicting widely accepted medical standards for transgender care, they are sacrificing accuracy and integrity."

The Human Rights Campaign also spoke out against the op-ed. "The fact is transgender people are our neighbors, our co-workers, our sons and daughters, and despite facing enormous barriers, are some of the strongest and most resilient people I know," said Chad Griffin, President of the Human Rights Campaign. "McHugh's piece only furthers the stigma that faces the transgender community and isn't worth the ink it cost to print. Furthermore, his half-truths are rejected by the medical community he purports to represent -- including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association, who have all issued statements affirming the benefit of transition-related care."

McHugh's op-ed in the Wall Street Journal comes just a week after the *Chicago Sun-Times* ran an op-ed by anti-LGBT activist Kevin D. Williamson titled "Laverne Cox is Not a Woman." After outreach from GLAAD, the *Sun-Times* pulled the op-ed, noting the false claims and misinformation contained within.

Issues: [Transgender](#)

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Sandra Stewart · University of Toledo

McHugh is one of the folks I look for in journal articles, if I find him the article is immediately suspect.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · June 14 at 8:27pm



Susanna Boudrie

He published this on the John Hopkins site a month ago. I told Cecilia Dhejne, who wrote the article that he uses as main argument. She posted a reply on John Hopkins that he is not giving a correct picture of her article. In spite of the fact that he has been corrected by her, he uses it again as his main argument.

best regards

Susanna Boudrie

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · Edited · June 14 at 10:48am**Susanna Boudrie**

Cecilia Dhejne has provided APA with information for a respons

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · June 14 at 11:32am**Gina Leigh Duncan** · East Carolina University

So disappointed in the WSJ that they would give this guy a platform to spew these vile inaccuracies and half truths! He has been espousing this premiss for some time now and it is wrong and it is damaging to our transgender community!

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 5 · [Follow Post](#) · June 14 at 9:34am**Elizabeth Maupin** · Wellesley

Well, the Wall Street Journal's editorial page is notoriously conservative. But that doesn't make it any more excusable.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · June 14 at 10:05am**Jennifer Stanberry** · Top Commenter

Another clown protesting too much.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · June 14 at 12:09pm**Brandi Wyne** · Dodge City High School

Then good journalism requires a chance for a rebuttal by a spokesperson from the transgender community.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 2 · June 14 at 3:55pm[View 1 more](#)**Christina Snowblood** · Pornographic Scenarist at Deadly Viper Assassination Squad

I never read the WSJ or any other Fox/Murdock scandal sheet.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · [Follow Post](#) · June 14 at 2:31am**Katie Sprinkle** · Carrollton, Texas

Well, I will not read the WSJ until they repudiate this type of hate and I will ask my attorney friends who have it in their offices to discontinue their subscriptions until this is corrected. I am sickened by this crap!

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 5 · [Follow Post](#) · June 13 at 10:31pm**Brian O'Shea** · Harvard University

Done. No more WSJ until further notice.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 4 · June 13 at 10:34pm**Tolly Lewin** · Vassar College

he's been wrong on a lot of issues. Ignore him.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · [Follow Post](#) · June 13 at 9:46pm**Hilary Howes** · [Follow](#) · Creative Director at Encore Decor

Please stop this man. He is an embarrassment to faithful Catholics who believe in dignity for all.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 3 · [Follow Post](#) · June 13 at 9:24pm**Robert Riddle**

ugh

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · June 13 at 9:45pm**Carrie Chandler**

I read this editorial. It sickened me. Oddly, there had acutally been a trans-friendly article by a WSJ columnist some months back. The article elicited a torrent of negative comments by readers, except for those of another lady and me.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · [Follow Post](#) · June 13 at 9:20pm**Gwen Fry** · Works at Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas

Thank you Kate and everyone at GLAAD for standing up for the dignity of every human being.



Reply · Like · 4 · Follow Post · June 13 at 8:09pm



Lex Moran-Solero · Top Commenter

Keep up the good work, GLAAD. This quack should have his medical license revoked.

Reply · Like · 4 · Follow Post · June 13 at 7:22pm



Leah Peters · Top Commenter

The man is in his 80's and retired. He has been an enemy of the trans community since the 70's. In police lingo he has a rap sheet longer than your arm. A conservative Catholic ideologue bent on oppressing others, he is responsible for the deaths of thousands of trans people. No punishment is good enough for this vile man.

Reply · Like · 2 · June 14 at 6:11pm



Lex Moran-Solero · Top Commenter

Leah Peters - I agree with you. Never heard of this quack before this.

Reply · Like · June 14 at 7:26pm

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