

# [***Vanderbilt Hospital Under Civil Rights Investigation Over Releasing Transgender Patient Records To Tennessee AG***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68XJ-7G61-JBCM-F1SF-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

August 11, 2023 Friday

Copyright 2023 Forbes LLC All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 665 words

**Byline:** William Skipworth, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** The hospital is now under federal investigation for complying with a Republican attorney general s request to turn over records.

**Body**

**Topline**

Vanderbilt University Medical Center is under investigation from the Department of Health and Human Services after it provided medical records of patients to Tennessee s Republican attorney general, the hospital told**Forbes** the latest escalation in a saga that has placed the hospital into the middle of the state s culture war over transgender health care.

<figure>

<figcaption>

Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee is pictured on July 16, 2013. (AP Photo/Mark Humphrey, File)

Copyright 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

VUMC spokesperson John Howser told**Forbes** via email we have been contacted by and are working with the Office of Civil Rights, but declined to comment further as it is an ongoing investigation.

The news comes after thehospital turned over recordson more than 100 patients from its transgender clinic and elsewhere in the hospital to Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti s office in June as part of a medical billing fraud investigation, a move that sparked privacy concerns amid a political environment increasingly hostile toward the transgender community.

Additionally, the medical records of state workers, the adult children and spouses of state workers and patients of the state s Medicaid program TennCare some of whom weren t patients at transgender clinic were also shared,the Associated Press reported.

It also comes two weeks after the hospital was sued by two of those 100 patients who allege that VUMC should have removed any personally identifying information from the records before they were turned over, especially because it knew Tennessee officials were hostile toward transgender people,the Associated Press reported.

**Key Background**

VUMC s pediatric transgender clinic was forced to suspend operations after a law banning gender-affirming care for minors passed in the Tennessee state legislature was signed by Republican Gov. Bill Lee in March. The clinic first found itself at the center of a divisive debate over transgender care in September 2022, when videos surfaced of VUMC doctors allegedly touting transgender surgeries as huge money makers and telling any employees with a religious objection to providing transgender care that they should quit. When it was operating, the transgender clinic offered surgery to an average of five minors per year, none of whom received genital procedures and all of whom were at least 16 years old and had parental consent the hospital has said. After the release of these videos, right-wing figures like Matt Walsh, the controversial conservative internet personality who originally published the videos, leveled sharp attacks against the hospital. In response to the videos and conservative backlash, Skrmetti said his office planned to investigate VUMC.

**News Peg**

The debate over transgender care in the U.S. has become an increasingly vitriolic issue in American ***politics***. Tennessee is among 19 states that have passed bans or restrictions on transgender health care in 2023 alone, according toa listcompiled by**Forbes** others being Louisiana, North Carolina, Missouri, Texas, Nebraska, Florida, Oklahoma, Montana, North Dakota, Indiana, Idaho, West Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, Iowa, Mississippi, South Dakota and Utah. That s in addition to three other states Alabama, Arizona and Arkansas that passed such legislation in 2021 and 2022. This type of legislation has become a rallying cry for the GOP, which has become increasingly hostile to transgender health care, despite consensus from most major medical associations that the care is beneficial and necessary.

**Further Reading**

Tennessee hospital faces civil rights investigation over release of transgender health records (The Associated Press)

Vanderbilt Hospital Turns Over Transgender Clinic Records To GOP Attorney General In Investigation(Forbes)

Louisiana Restricts Gender-Affirming Care After Overriding Veto Here Are All The States With Similar Bans Or Restrictions(Forbes)

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2023

**End of Document**