



Promoting, protecting, and restoring health and well-being

August 3rd, 2018

Dear Members of the Group Insurance Board,

As an employee of University of Wisconsin-Madison (University Health Services – Violence Prevention), I am writing this letter to urge you to vote to remove the exclusion of procedures, services, and supplies related to surgery and sex hormones associated with gender-affirming medical care for the plan year 2019.

All major clinical and health policy organizations in the United States have issued policy statements declaring that procedures, services, and supplies related to surgery and sex hormones associated with gender affirmation are medically necessary and thus should be included in private and public health insurance plans. These organizations include the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, among others. Additionally, a large body of empirical research in the biomedical, epidemiological, and social science literature has demonstrated the connection between access to these medically necessary services and improved mental and physical health outcomes, including psychological health and quality of life.

Working in the public health and prevention fields, believing in the possibility of positive social change is both a professional and personal requisite. I am inspired by the resiliency of transgender communities and feel hopeful that we will one day live in a world in which transgender identity is not a variable in whether someone has access to safety and affirmation in their community or to appropriate services in their medical care. As someone who is not transgender, I have been humbled by the challenges faced by my transgender friends and colleagues. Minimally, we all deserve physical and mental health care that meets our needs.

Thank you for your time and, in advance, for prioritizing the needs of your members. It is imperative for the health of employee members for gender affirming services to be covered in the plan 2019 and in subsequent years. In the violence prevention field, we know more than most that positive social change takes each and every one of us using our individual positions of influence to advocate for equity and compassion. I am hopeful that you will utilize your statuses as members of this board to do exactly this, by voting to remove the exclusion of procedures, services, and supplies related to surgery and sex hormones associated with gender reassignment at the August 22nd meeting.

Sincerely,

Nola Pastor (she/her)

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