

January 23, 2022



Rep. Athena Hollins
471 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Hollins:

On behalf of the Hennepin Healthcare Pediatric Gender & Sexual Health Clinic (PGSHC) and the Adult Gender & Sexual Health Clinic (AGSHC) department at Hennepin Healthcare downtown Minneapolis, we are proud to support your bill, House File 16, which would prohibit mental health practitioners and professionals from providing conversion therapy to vulnerable adults or people under the age of 18.

There is a substantial body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence demonstrating that a supportive social environment (i.e. one that affirms a young person's gender and/or sexual identity, irrespective of any medical treatment) is **protective** against the adverse mental health outcomes that otherwise disproportionately afflict this segment of the population. It is clinically inappropriate for any behavioral health professional to have a prescriptive goal related to gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation of a child's or adolescent's gender identity or gender expression.

Psychological practices attempting to change a person's gender identity to be more aligned with their sex assigned at birth are now considered unethical by nearly all worldwide behavioral health organizations including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association for Children's Behavioral Health and more because they can lead to lasting damage to a child or adolescent's social and emotional health and wellbeing.

As physicians, psychologists, nurses, and advocates caring for our Minnesota LGBTQ community, we attest that our patients often share their pain and trauma from mistreatment. Those who are not white, cisgender, and heterosexual deserve protection from attempts to instill shame in them as youth for their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Thank you again for authoring this important legislation and please feel free to reach out to our government affairs and advocacy team: Susie Emmert at Susie.Emmert@hcmcd.org or Tara Erickson at Tara@TGEconsultingmn.com.

Sincerely,

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