



American Psychoanalytic Association Urges Trump Administration to Reconsider Proposed Policy to Narrowly Define Gender

New York – October 24, 2018 – The American Psychoanalytic Association (APsAA) is calling on the Trump Administration to reject a proposed policy spearheaded by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that would potentially eradicate federal recognition of the estimated 1.4 million Americans who identify as a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth. According to a leaked memo, the proposed policy would adopt a narrow definition of gender as determined “on a biological basis that is clear, grounded in science, objective and administrable.”

“Unfortunately, the HHS definition ignores the fact that for decades both science and medicine agree that gender is composed of multiple layers including genetic, hormonal, anatomical, social and psychological characteristics. In humans, indeed across species, these characteristics do not always synchronize,” said Lee Jaffe, PhD, president of the Association. “Genders do not conform to a simple binary model.”

The mission of HHS is “to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans.” Excluding transgender people from civil rights protections serves the opposite purpose.

As a leading organization of mental health professionals, APsAA opposes and deplors all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Discrimination, bias and prejudice have serious negative consequences on one’s mental health and overall well-being. Specifically, research has linked discrimination against LGBTQ people to increased risk of depression, anxiety and substance use. Studies show that lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are up to six times more likely to attempt suicide; 41 percent of transgender people report having made a suicide attempt.

“We know that discrimination can have serious health consequences,” said Lee Jaffe. “But studies also show that when laws and policies are passed to reverse discrimination and support civil rights, that overall health improves. We urge President Trump to reject this harmful and misguided proposal.”

Since 1991, APsAA has issued numerous position statements supporting LGBTQ people regarding discrimination in military service, marriage equality, parenting, efforts to change sexual orientation and gender identity, and bullying and harassment. For a link to our position statements, please visit www.apsa.org/position-statements.

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