



June 1, 2022

The Honorable Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 923 (Wiener) – Support

Dear Dr. Wood:

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality (GLMA) is proud to support SB 923 (Wiener), which would significantly improve access to gender affirming care for transgender, gender non-conforming, and/or intersex (TGI) people.

As you know, GLMA—previously known as the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association—is a national association of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) healthcare professionals and their allies whose mission is to ensure health equity for LGBTQ and all sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals and equality for LGBTQ healthcare professionals. Founded and incorporated in California in 1981 as the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights, GLMA employs the expertise of our medical and health professional members in education, policy and advocacy, patient education and referrals, and the promotion of research to improve the health and well-being of LGBTQ people. Given GLMA’s California origins, traditionally around 20% of GLMA members have been based in California and nearly 40% of its presidents have hailed from the state.

SB 923 would require health plans to require TGI cultural competency training for contracted providers, their staff, and the staff of health plans. It would also ensure that plan provider directories identify providers who offer gender affirming services.

Despite representing a significant portion of the State’s population, TGI people are not receiving the health care they need. Too often, TGI people encounter discrimination and difficulty accessing health care. The National Center for Transgender Equality reported that one-third of all transgender individuals who had seen a health care professional in 2014 had at least one negative experience related to being transgender, with higher rates for transgender people of color and people with disabilities. These negative experiences include being refused treatment, verbally

harassed, physically or sexually assaulted, or having to teach the provider about transgender people in order to receive appropriate care.¹

Fear of discrimination resulted in 28% of transgender individuals postponing or not receiving necessary medical care. In 2019, 44% of TGI people who were surveyed in the #Out4MentalHealth Community survey reported traveling farther than 30 minutes to see a primary care provider.² TGI people have trouble finding providers to provide routine care, and finding providers who can provide gender affirming surgeries within their health plan can be even harder.

These access issues exacerbate existing health disparities among TGI Californians. Compared with the general population, TGI people are more likely to experience chronic health conditions and also experience higher rates of health concerns related to HIV/AIDS, substance use, mental illness, and sexual and physical violence, as well as higher prevalence and earlier onset of disabilities.

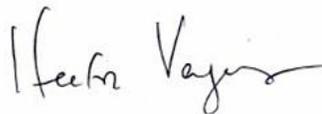
As part of its 40+ year history, GLMA has advocated for training of health professionals and students to address the significant and well-documented health disparities affecting LGBTQ populations and for policies to ensure LGBTQ patients receive clinically and culturally competent care. We have advocated for similar training requirements in other jurisdictions and continue present the GLMA Annual Conference on LGBTQ Health on an annual basis to ensure healthcare professionals of all disciplines can access continuing education in LGBTQ health.

For these reasons, GLMA strongly supports SB 923 to ensure that California's TGI residents can get the health care they need.

Sincerely,



Nick Grant, PhD
GLMA President
San Diego, CA



Hector Vargas, JD
GLMA Executive Director
Washington, DC

¹ The National Center for Transgender Equality, "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey". Accessed at: <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>.

² Walker, P. M., Scanlan, N., McAllister-Wallner, A., Taylor, M., O'Brien, R., Parra, L., Israel, T., & Esopo, K. (2019). Surveying the road to equity: The annual state of LGBTQ communities, 2019. #Out4MentalHealth Project. Accessed at: <https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Surveying-the-Road-to-Equity-2019-State-of-LGBTQ-Communities-Report.pdf>