

HEALTH BENEFITS

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
✓ Jeana Frazzini	Basic Rights Oregon 310 SW 4th #130 97204	jeana@basicrights.org
✓ Dr. Leigh Dolin	"	"
✓ Rob Wheaton, AFSCME	"	"
✓ Rowan Griffith	"	"
✓ Kelsey Groot	2591 SW Kucyus Lane W-Mad, OR 97201	kelsey@kucyus.com
<del>Patricia Day TenEyck</del>	<del>499 NE Emerson, Pdx 97211</del>	<del>pteneycck@portland.oregon.gov</del>
✓ CHARLES ELONG	420 N.E. MASON ST, 97211	—
✓ Frank Dixon	310 SW 4th Ave #730 97204	—
✓ Bill Michtom	731 SW Salmon 97205	wmichtom@gmail.com
✓ Ray Crider	1638 SE Tacoma St, Portland OR 97202	—
✓ Promise King (Promise King)	320 SW 8th #415 Pdx 97202	promise@depts.hawaii.gov

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NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
✓ Stephanie Jahnke	14141 SE Cedar Ave Milwaukie, OR 97267	jahnkes@pdx.ode
✓ Heather Fercho	4611 NE Prescott PDX 97218	heather @ sisters dot com us
✓ Emily Newberry	4311 SE 37th Ave, #14 Portland 97202	emily6146@gmail.com
✓ DAVE BENSON PDX COA	1111 SW SEASONS PDX 97204	Dave.benson@portlandoregon.gov
✓ Adrian Wolmark	5819 WE 10th Ave PDX 97211	Awolmark@ucum.edu

**Adrien Wolmark, Ph.D., LCSW**  
**Testimony in Favor of Transgender-Inclusive Health Care**  
*Portland City Council – June 8, 2011*

My name is Dr. Adrien Wolmark, Ph.D., LCSW. I've been working with transgender clients across the U.S. for the past two decades. Currently I work as Director of Counseling Services at NCNM (National College of Natural Medicine.) Throughout my time a mental health professional, I've consistently worked with transgender patients who were unable to access the care they needed because of insurance exclusions.

When I began working with transgender people in the early 1990s, few medical resources existed. And even though there are far more resources today, insurance policies have not caught up and continue to exclude critical care. Being denied access to this care has deep and negative impacts on my transgender clients. They experience suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety, and difficulties in every area of their lives. But when my clients have the care they need, they are more effective employees and community members.

In 2008, the American Psychological Association resolved that transition-related care is medically necessary and ought to be covered by insurance. In their resolution the APA Council of Representatives wrote:

"APA recognizes the efficacy, benefit and medical necessity of gender transition treatments for appropriately evaluated individuals and calls upon public and private insurers to cover these medically necessary treatments;

...APA supports access to appropriate treatment in institutional settings for people of all gender identities and expressions; including access to appropriate health care services including gender transition therapies."

With more than 154,000 members, the APA is the largest association of psychologists worldwide. Additionally, the National Association of Social Workers has voiced support for transgender people.

From two decades of professional experience to affirmation from large and well-respected associations, it's clear that health care for transgender people is medically necessary. I encourage you to support this ordinance. Thank you.



**Testimony in Support of  
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare**  
*Jeana Frazzini, Basic Rights Oregon*

Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jeana Frazzini, and I serve as the Executive Director of Basic Rights Oregon, the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Oregonians experience equality.

**I am here today to testify in support of transgender-inclusive health care, and to urge your yes vote on the ordinance before you.**

We all know someone who has been denied medically necessary care by an insurance company working to protect its bottom line. It's unfair, painful, and downright dangerous when it happens. Many people in Oregon experience discrimination in health care, but members of Oregon's transgender community face health care discrimination at a systematic and unparalleled level.

The American Medical Association has identified transgender health care as being medically necessary. Yet many transgender Oregonians are routinely denied the ability to purchase health insurance or are denied coverage for basic, medically-necessary care solely because they are transgender. Without health insurance, many transgender people have no access to health care and have nowhere to turn if they develop health problems.

Many insurance companies refuse to provide insurance to transgender people based on their transgender status or by specifically excluding transgender-related services. Nearly all insurance plans categorically exclude coverage for transgender-related medical treatment, even when the same treatment (such as mental health care or hormone replacement therapy) is covered for non-transgender people.

Additionally, transgender people are often discriminated against based on their gender. For example, women experiencing menopause are frequently prescribed estrogen and other hormones covered by their insurance, but transgender women are often denied similar prescription hormones solely because of how they identify. In a tragic example from the private sector, a transgender person who identified as male with his insurance company and later developed uterine cancer was denied payment for his cancer treatment, because his insurance plan did not acknowledge his illness due to his gender identity.

These types of discrimination are all too common and can lead to serious – even life-threatening – conditions.

But today, you have an opportunity to make a big difference in real people's lives. The proposal before you would end discriminatory practices based on gender identity, and end the exclusion of medically necessary care for transgender city employees.

Already, the City and County of San Francisco, our own Multnomah County, and fully 22% of Fortune 100 companies provide fair and inclusive health care for their transgender employees. Surely, if Kraft Foods, Coca-Cola, and Bank of America consider this good business, it is not too progressive for the city of Portland.

These and many other businesses believe that providing all their employees with the medically-necessary care they need to be healthy and productive is not just good for employees and their families, and not just good for business, it is the right thing to do.

Ultimately, this ordinance affirms what we all know: that decisions about health care should be made between doctors and patients, and that all Oregonians should be able to access the care they need. Excluding an individual group from healthcare is wrong and must come to an end.

Again, on behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, I urge you to pass this ordinance and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.





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**OREGON AFSCME**

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June 7, 2011

Mayor Sam Adams  
City of Portland  
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 340  
Portland, OR 97204

**RE: TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE**

Dear Mayor Adams:

I write in support of the City of Portland's proposal to extend transgender-inclusive health care to City employees.

AFSCME has a long and proud history of fighting discrimination in any form. The 24,000 members of Oregon AFSCME Council 75 are honored to continue that tradition by enthusiastically supporting the City of Portland's proposal to extend transgender-inclusive health care to City employees.

Excluding an individual group from healthcare is wrong and discriminatory and must come to an end as we strive to create a healthcare system where every Oregonian can access the care they need to live healthy and productive lives.

Currently, City health insurance plans specifically exclude transgender-related health care services. Indeed, nearly all insurance plans categorically exclude coverage for transgender-related medical treatment, even when that treatment (such as mental health care or hormone replacement therapy) is covered for non-transgender people.

This means that transgender City employees, including AFSCME members, are denied coverage for basic, medically-necessary care solely because of their gender identity. This situation lowers employee morale and makes for an unwelcoming work environment.

For these reasons and more AFSCME Council 75 supports the proposal to extend transgender-inclusive benefits to City employees as part of the CityCore plan.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Allen".

Ken Allen  
Executive Director  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75

**Testimony in Favor of Transgender-Inclusive Health Care**

*From an anonymous City of Portland employee*

*June 8, 2011*

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear my statement this morning. I wish that I could be here in person to present my testimony, but I'm unable to break away from work.

I have been a City employee for nearly 10 years working in the Bureau of Environmental Services. I also happen to be transgender. I physically transitioned while on-the-job several years ago and before I get into the issue of health benefits specifically, I have to say that my personal experience was, overall, a very positive one. City staff and fellow co-workers have always been incredibly kind and supportive and respectful.

As a City employee, I have a benefits package that specifically excludes medically necessary care for transgender people. This has impacted me in two ways. First, I was unable to access the necessary treatment for my situation. As a result, I spent years saving up money for the needed surgeries and I continue to pay out-of-pocket for the required medications and hormones. Making things more difficult, I was prevented from using our flexible health spending account due to similar exclusions in the federal tax system. The other impact is that I often can't access existing, routine wellness benefits that my co-workers enjoy due to the issue of gendered medical coding. For example, I have to pay out-of-pocket for simple blood testing to check hormone levels.

It is important to note that trans-related care is a treatment process that involves the support and approval of a team of medical professionals. I can also tell you that these services are absolutely vital to maintain a healthy, productive life. I am lucky enough that I was in a position to attain this care on my own, as so many others struggle to do. My ability to get this care enabled me to thrive as a person and function more effectively in my job. But not every transgender city employee is this lucky. And that's why it is so important to pass this ordinance to add transgender benefits to the CityCore plan.

I do not feel in any way that it is the City's intent to foster discrimination based on gender identity. Rather, this is an institutionalized disparity that is unfortunately all too common.

On behalf of my fellow transgender employees and others that experience painful discrimination because of entrenched business practices, I am asking that you vote in favor of an inclusive, equitable benefits package.

Thank you for your hard work and for continuing to foster a vibrant, supportive work environment. I truly believe that our ability to live fully and pursue a healthful path makes us better employees and a collectively stronger workforce.

**Dr. Leigh Dolin, MD**  
**Testimony in Favor of Transgender-Inclusive Health Care**  
*Portland City Council – June 8, 2011*

My name is Leigh Dolin. I'm a past president of the Oregon Medical Association, and a board certified internist. I've practiced medicine in Oregon for the last thirty years, and for fifteen of those, I took care of transgender patients.

Medical care for transgender patients isn't complicated. Gender identity is inherent to who each of us are—including transgender people. When someone is born with a malformed heart valve, there is no question that we cover the treatment necessary to care for that person. Similarly, there should be no question that when someone is born transgender, we provide the care they need. There are clear standards of care for treatment of a legitimate diagnosis – Gender Identity Disorder, or Gender Dysphoria, are recognized medical terms and diagnoses. In fact, the American Medical Association has passed a resolution declaring transition-related care to be medically necessary. In the resolution, they resolved that "our American Medical Association support public and private health insurance coverage for treatment of gender identity disorder in adolescents and adults."

While caring for transgender patients is straightforward, the discrimination transgender people face is very complex. Because of pervasive misconceptions about what it means to be transgender, many patients have had a difficult time maintaining relationships with their families, friends, and partners, and withstanding the discrimination they faced in society at large.

As a doctor, one of the most difficult issues I faced was in ensuring that the care my transgender patients needed was covered by insurance. Coverage of Gender Identity Disorder is excluded from the vast majority of insurance plans, so I had tremendous difficulty provide necessary treatment to my patients within the confines of this exclusion. I can provide a non-transgender woman with hormone replacement therapy, but a transgender woman is prevented from receiving a similar prescription. We can provide a non-transgender woman with a mastectomy, but these exclusions prevent transgender men from receiving the same procedure. No insurance provider that I worked with would cover recommended surgical procedures. Again, as a physician, it is only appropriate for me to determine, in consultation with my patient, what is medically necessary and medically necessary treatment should not be excluded from coverage.

I thank you for taking on this critically important issue, and I ask you to end this insurance discrimination, and allow doctors to provide the care our patients—and workers at the City of Portland—need. Thank you.



184055

**Parsons, Susan**

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**From:** Parsons, Susan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 8:31 AM  
**To:** Adams, Sam; Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Fritz; Leonard, Randy; Saltzman, Dan  
**Subject:** FW: Proposal for trans-inclusive health care benefits

**Sue Parsons**

Assistant Council Clerk  
City of Portland  
503.823.4085  
Susan.Parsons@portlandoregon.gov

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**From:** Monique Bennett [mailto:monique66mb@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 10:27 PM  
**To:** Parsons, Susan  
**Subject:** Proposal for trans-inclusive health care benefits

I would like to voice my opinion in email to you along with others that have on Mayor Sam Adams Website. City tax payers should not be required to pay for someone to have elective or sexual reassignment surgery. Transgender reassignment surgery is considered an option to the individual and is not necessary. Therefore, the individual needs to be responsible for their own actions and decisions which would include paying for transgender reassignment surgery themselves. For an example, if I wanted to have cosmetic surgery as an option, I would not expect the tax payers to pay for it.

It is unfair that the tax payers do not have a right to vote on this proposal. It is not right for only the City Council to vote on this without involving your tax-payers!!! There are many roads and bridges that have necessary needs to reconstruct rather than a human having an elective surgery at the tax payer's expense. We need to put our tax money where it is seriously needed!!!!!! I don't even understand how this even came up as an proposal. It makes no sense to have taxpayers pay for somebody to have a sex change because they want to.

Regards,

mb

6/7/2011