



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®



THE PLASTIC SURGERY
FOUNDATION®

Executive Office

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May 2, 2019

The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 20319

RE: Line-Item Veto H.F. 766

Dear Governor Reynolds:

I am writing on behalf of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), urging you to line-item veto the Senate amendment to Division XX of the Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill, which would prohibit the state from providing gender-affirming surgical procedures to transgender Iowans. ASPS is the largest association of plastic surgeons in the world, representing more than 7,000 members and 93 percent of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States – including 34 board certified plastic surgeons in Iowa. Our mission is to advance quality care for plastic surgery patients, including those patients experiencing gender dysphoria, a condition in which a person experiences severe distress due to a disconnect between how they feel and their anatomic characteristics.

As surgeons who provide care for transgender individuals, our members know firsthand what will happen should this provision become law. Gender-affirming surgeries will be unattainable for many transgender people who need them, depriving them of lasting concordance with their gendered self and enhanced psychological wellbeing and overall health. Care of individuals with gender dysphoria requires a multidisciplinary approach that may include mental health professionals, primary care physicians, endocrinologists and plastic surgeons. The breadth of the process demands comprehensive coverage from third party payers, and it is well within the scope of procedures that programs like Iowa Medicaid should be ensuring access to. In fact, the multidisciplinary approach to gender confirmation allows for a program like Iowa Medicaid to grant patients access to the counseling and hormonal therapy services that all underage gender confirmation candidates should complete prior to undergoing actual surgical reconstruction.

ASPS believes that the legislature's amendment blocking transition-related care is a dramatic step in the wrong direction that will undo all the progress that has been recently made in the state to ensure transgender Iowans have quality health care. We support the Iowa Supreme Court's unanimous decision in *Good and Beal v. Iowa Department of Human Services*, which overruled the state's prohibition of Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming surgery.¹ Additionally, we agree with the Court that the Iowa Administrative Code rule 441-78(4) violates both the equal protection clause of the Iowa Constitution and the Iowa Civil Rights Act. Therefore, we have serious concerns with the legislature's attempt to circumvent the Court's ruling by adopting an amendment that would ban **all** state funding for gender-affirming surgery or transition-related care.

¹ <https://www.iowacourts.gov/courtcases/4816/embed/SupremeCourtOpinion>

For the reasons listed above, we urge you to use your line-item veto authority to remove the amendment in the underlying appropriations bill to better protect transgender community members in Iowa. Thank you for your consideration of our position on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Hermes, Director of Advocacy and Relations, at phermes@plasticsurgery.org or (847) 228-3331 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Matarasso, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Matarasso, MD, FACS
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons