



**Legislative Department
Seattle City Council
Memorandum**

Date: May 12, 2011

To: The Health Care Committee (HC2)

cc: Seattle LGBT Commission
Seattle Office for Civil Rights

From: Councilmember Bruce A. Harrell, Chair of the Energy, Technology and Civil Rights Committee
Councilmember Sally J. Clark
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

Subject: Transgender Health Care Exclusions

On March 23rd, 2011, representatives from the LGBT Commission, Commission for People with disAbilities, Human Rights Commission, Women's Commission and the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board, sent us a memorandum describing the current transgender exclusions in the health care plans offered to City of Seattle employees. The Commission representatives encouraged the city to remove these exclusions and "provide coverage of gender affirming, surgical, hormonal, psychological and medical care for its valued transgender employees."

The purpose of this memorandum is to encourage the Health Care Committee (HC2) to consider removing such exclusions as discussions, negotiations and policy considerations are made relative to the finalization of the benefits contained in our current four medical plans.

As we all know, the health coverage offered to City employees is critically important. As we continue to contain our costs of health coverage, we believe it is equally important to consider the values, purpose and actions contemplated by our city's commitment to social justice and fairness to all employees. It has long been recognized in our city that individuals who identify as a part of the transgender community are respected and productive employees. We believe that our support for all employees should not be based on whether an individual has identified themselves as a member of the transgender community. Our actions as a city, including the negotiation of benefits in health coverage packages, should recognize this important commitment. It is one of the City Council's goals to pass laws and implement policies that protect the rights, legal benefits and privileges of all people, irrespective of gender identity and expression. This commitment extends itself to full access to employment, housing, education, as well as health care. We have also made it clear that we oppose all forms of public and private discrimination when such discrimination is based on the actual or perceived gender identity and expression of individuals. That being the case, we believe that the request to consider the removal of transgender specific insurance plan exclusions for our employees is a topic that should be considered and evaluated during your ongoing discussions.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important subject.

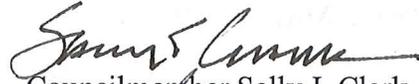
Sincerely,



Councilmember Bruce A. Harrell, Chair
Energy, Technology and Civil Rights Committee



Councilmember Tom Rasmussen



Councilmember Sally J. Clark



Councilmember Mike O'Brien