

Craig, Sondra

From: Stephen Pavela <slpavela@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 11:26 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Statement for La Crosse City Council meeting Thursday, June 9, 2022
Attachments: To La Crosse Common Council.docx

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LA CROSSE GUILD CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

A Private Association of the Faithful in the Diocese of La Crosse

Dear Members of the La Crosse City Common Council:

Please review the attached statement of the La Crosse Guild of the Catholic Medical Association addressed to all members of the La Crosse City Common Council concerning the proposed Ordinance to create Sec. 32-191 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse prohibiting Conversion Therapy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephen Pavela, MD
President



LA CROSSE GUILD CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

A Private Association of the Faithful in the Diocese of La Crosse

June 8, 2022

Members of the Common Council
City of La Crosse
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to you as President of the La Crosse Guild of the Catholic Medical Association regarding the proposed Ordinance to create Sec. 32-191 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse prohibiting Conversion Therapy.

The La Crosse Guild consists of physicians and other healthcare professions from both Gundersen Healthcare and Mayo/Franciscan Healthcare Systems that serve the greater La Crosse area.

For many reasons we are opposed to the above cited ordinance, particularly due to its inclusion of the care of persons with gender dysphoria.

It is not true, as the proposed ordinance states, that there is agreement in the healthcare profession on the appropriate care of persons who have gender dysphoria. Even though local healthcare institutions may publicly state that they advocate for a particular approach to this medical problem, many of their physicians and employees disagree with such an approach. We disagree for the simple reason that ***the scientific evidence is not convincing that one treatment approach is beneficial in the long term.*** For the City Council to take a strong stand on either side at this point is ideologic rather than scientific and clearly inappropriate.

Please consider the following facts:

Left naturally without any therapy, all medical studies agree that approximately 85% of children with gender dysphoria will eventually align their identity with their biologic sex. *Note: Very few medical interventions in any field can claim an 85% success rate.* Would simply informing children and their parents of this well-known fact be considered a type of counseling and against the proposed ordinance?

The counseling approach to gender dysphoria is not known as “conversion therapy” as the ordinance states, but instead “reparative therapy”, that is, a realignment of gender identity with biologic sex. The term “conversion therapy” is an attempt to conflate counseling for gender dysphoria with counseling for same-sex attraction. In this case, using “conversion therapy” for gender dysphoria is not an appropriate term, but a confusing one.

To date there are only a very few short-term, low quality scientific studies on the outcomes of the treatment for gender dysphoria. There are no quality long-term studies. Good medical care is not done based on poor quality, short-term studies. Counselors should be able to point this out to those with gender dysphoria and urge caution before their patients choose potentially permanent and life changing therapies.

By passing this ordinance, the City Council would be taking a side in the ongoing scientific debate on the best way to treat children with gender dysphoria. Such an action would be entirely premature and not in the interest of children and families in the La Crosse area.

The La Crosse Guild strongly urges you to vote “no” on the proposed Ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Pavela, MD
President
La Crosse Guild of the CMA