



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

November 24, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

The American Medical Association (AMA) understands that you are considering the creation of an Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Health. The Office would coordinate the work across agencies concerning LGBT health issues. The AMA has a great deal of policy supporting the urgent need to eliminate health care disparities. In addition, we recognize that significant health care disparities exist for the LGBT population. The AMA's Council on Science and the Public Health (CSAPH) has done a considerable amount of work related to LGBT health issues. In 2008, CSAPH's Report 9, "Optimizing Care for Gay Men and Lesbians," found:

Improvements are still needed to address disparities in health care for gay men and lesbians. Gay men and lesbians are disproportionately at risk for societal discrimination and violent hate crimes, STDs, a variety of mental health conditions, substance use, and certain cancers. Problems are encountered with access to quality care and counseling pertinent to actual lifestyle behaviors.

While the AMA does not generally get involved in Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) organizational issues, we do wholeheartedly agree that LGBT health issues need to be addressed. The creation of an Office of LGBT Health would be one mechanism to try to ensure that the medical problems confronting the LGBT community are being addressed in a coordinated fashion across all of the HHS agencies. It would also demonstrate to the public that the Obama Administration takes LGBT health issues seriously.

The AMA looks forward to continue working with you and your staff to eliminate health care disparities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. A vertical red line is positioned to the right of the signature.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA