

## Physicians seek to expand LGBTQ access to family and medical leave

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The AMA House of Delegates (HOD) this week took several actions aimed at bolstering rights and protections for LGBTQ patients.

In a move aimed at bolstering the share of LGBTQ workers eligible for the considerable health benefits of federal and state family-and-medical-leave policies, the HOD adopted new policy to:

- Advocate that Family and Medical Leave Act policies include any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

“Physicians understand the day-to-day challenges and rewards for individuals who are helping to care for a loved one who needs help,” said AMA Immediate Past Chair Patrice A. Harris, MD. “The new AMA policy signals that physicians support the need and benefit of policies for family and medical leave that are inclusive of LGBTQ workers.”

Delegates at the 2018 AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago also moved to help improve the safety of transgender prisoners.

“The problem facing the safety and health of transgender prisoners is severe and well-documented,” Dr. Harris said. “Transgender prisoners are disproportionately the victims of sexual assault, suffering higher rates of sexual assault than general population inmates. The new AMA policy acknowledges that the increased rate of violence largely stems from transgender prisoners being housed based on their birth sex, and not according to their affirmed gender.”

The newly adopted policy states that the AMA supports:

- The ability of transgender prisoners to be placed in facilities, if they so choose, that are reflective of their affirmed gender status, regardless of the prisoner’s genitalia, chromosomal

make-up, hormonal treatment, or non-, pre-, or post-operative status

| That the facilities housing transgender prisoners shall not be a form of administrative segregation or solitary confinement.

The AMA also modified existing policy to:

| Revise all relevant and active policies to use the terms “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer” to replace “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender” where such text appears.

According to the resolution the HOD adopted, the “word ‘queer’ includes anyone who does not associate with typical classifications of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.” Rather, such people “have nonbinary or gender-expansive identities.”

The AMA Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Issues was renamed in 2016, adding the “Q” to its moniker.

Read more news coverage from the 2018 AMA Annual Meeting.