

## **Open Letter to Baystate Hospital from GLAD, New England Transgender Pride, and Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition**

May 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to let you know about a very troubling situation that has been on-going for some time now at Baystate Hospital. Two of the doctors affiliated with the hospital, Drs. Steuber and Johnson, have been providing surgical services to members of the transgender community but not providing surgical letters that are sufficient for many of their female-to-male (“FTM”) transgender patients to get the legal document changes that we need.

This has had a very serious effect on people’s lives and despite efforts to explain the importance of these letters to the doctors providing the surgical services, Drs. Steuber and Johnson have refused to change their policies. We are writing to ask you to get involved with us to help educate these doctors about the importance of providing full and complete care to their transgender patients which includes their providing us with full, accurate, and legally sufficient documentation. We are also writing because we believe it is essential that members of the community know about this situation and do not unknowingly schedule surgeries with these doctors with the expectation of receiving full and complete documentation.

The situation primarily affects FTMs who have top surgery with these doctors. As you know, top surgery is essential for many FTMs to complete our process of transitioning from female to male. For many of us, it is the exclusive surgery that is medically necessary and alone completes our process of transition. As you may also know, many government agencies require a surgical letter in order to change the gender marker including on our driver’s licenses, birth certificates, and social security records. In many states, that letter must state that the surgery was for purposes of sex reassignment and that it completes the process of transition for the patient. For many of us, that is certainly the case for the top surgeries we must undergo. Despite all of this, Drs. Steuber and Johnson refuse to issue letters to their patients that are consistent with our medical and legal needs.

We have every right to expect that complete patient care includes the surgical letter we need to complete our transition and to live our lives consistent with our gender identity having completed that course of medical care.

If you wish to support efforts to educate Drs. Steuber and Johnson about the importance of this issue to our community, please consider sending them a letter explaining your concerns and the importance of these concerns to your life.

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