

Honourable Ronald Liepert  
Minister of Health  
#323 Legislative Building  
10800 – 97 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Liepert,

I am writing to confirm our union's support for a strong, public health care system accessible to all Canadians.

In particular, I am writing on behalf of the largest private sector union in Canada to express our disagreement with your government's recent decision to de-list sex reassignment surgeries for transsexuals.

Universality does not mean treatment for some, and not for others. Universality means that medically necessary treatment is available for all who need it. The Canada Health Act does not allow for discrimination on the basis of prohibited human rights grounds.

Our union has grappled with the needs of our transsexual members. And this is what we know: that all people deserve respect, dignity, safety and security. For those of our members who transition at work, it is our duty and our privilege to represent their needs. Governments must do the same.

Health care professionals agree: SRS is recognized as medically necessary, appropriate treatment. Not all trans people opt for sex reassignment surgeries. But for those that do, the associated costs are very, very minimal in the grand scheme of health care spending. De-listing sex reassignment surgeries is not only discriminatory, it is petty politics, preying on the vulnerable and wrongly assuming they have no allies.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and avoid a long and drawn out human rights challenge.

Sincerely,

Ken Lewenza

cc: Brian Mason, Leader, Alberta NDP  
Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta  
David Swann, Leader, Alberta Liberal Party  
Todd Romanow, CAW National Representative, Edmonton  
Helen Kennedy, Egale Canada