

Dr. James M. Cantor

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Hon. Ron Liepert
Minister of Health and Wellness
#323 Legislature Building
10800–97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

5 May 2009

Dear Mr. Liepert:

I write in response to media reports that Alberta plans to delist sex reassignment surgery as a benefit of Alberta's health care system. I believe that health care is a basic right of every Canadian, and I believe that that includes transsexuals. I believe that Canadians have the right to appropriate health care for relieving the distress associated with major depression and with surviving trauma, and I believe that Canadians have the right to appropriate health care for the distress associated with transsexualism.

No type of psychotherapy has been effective in relieving what can be lifelong anguish from *gender dysphoria*, the psychiatric term for extreme discontent with the sex one is born as. Research conducted throughout the world, however, has repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of surgical sex reassignment in relieving that distress in medically indicated cases.

No one chooses to have gender dysphoria. The only "choices" confronting transsexual individuals are whether to endure a lifetime of frustration and misery, to kill themselves, or to risk—and often lose—their families, friends, and job in hopes of finding a happier life as their new sex. To remove the final option from these individuals and their physicians is to remove the *universal* from universal health care.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. James M. Cantor
Psychologist

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