



**WPATH** WORLD PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATION for  
TRANSGENDER HEALTH

Re: 2015 WPATH Statement on Identity Recognition

*WPATH already opposes surgery or sterilization as requirements to change legal gender, per WPATH's Identity Recognition Statement, 2010. However, some governments erect many other legal barriers preventing trans people having congruent identity documents. Some of these barriers involve health professionals directly, e.g., examining people and filling out paperwork for court proceedings. These legal barriers are harmful to trans people's health because they make social transition more difficult, put congruent identity documents out of the reach of many, and even contribute to trans people's vulnerability to discrimination and violence. These laws are at odds with WPATH's perspectives expressed in SOC 7 and in our letters advising governments at those governments' request.*

*The statement, dated January 19, 2015, written by the WPATH Public Policy Committee and approved by the WPATH Board of Directors, is this Association's recommendation, grounded in our clinical experience as health and legal professionals.*

Jamison Green, PhD  
WPATH President

### **WPATH Statement on Legal Recognition of Gender Identity**

January 19, 2015

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) recognizes the right of all people to legal identity recognition and to identity documents consonant with their gender identity. Further, for optimal physical and mental health, all persons must enjoy the right to freely express their gender identity, whether or not that identity conforms to the expectations of others. Legally recognized documents matching self-identity are essential to the ability of all people to find employment, to navigate everyday transactions, to obtain health care, and to travel safely; transgender, transsexual, or gender-nonconforming status should not preclude individuals from enjoying the legal recognition all citizens expect and deserve. Barriers to legal recognition for transgender and transsexual individuals may harm physical and mental health. WPATH continues to oppose surgery or sterilization requirements to change legal sex or gender markers. No particular medical, surgical, or mental health treatment or diagnosis is an adequate marker for anyone's gender identity, so these should not be requirements for legal gender change. WPATH Standard of Care 7 recognizes that there is a spectrum of gender identities, and that choices of identity limited to Male or Female may be inadequate to reflect all gender identities: an option of X or Other (as examples) may be advisable. Marital status and parental status should not affect legal recognition of gender change, and appropriate legal gender recognition should be available to transgender youth. The right to legal recognition of gender extends to those incarcerated or institutionalized. Court hearings create financial and logistical barriers to legal gender change, and may also violate personal privacy rights or needs.

Therefore, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health urges governments to eliminate unnecessary barriers, and to institute simple and accessible administrative procedures for transgender people to obtain legal recognition of gender, consonant with each individual's identity, when gender markers on identity documents are considered necessary.