



DATE: May 12, 2017

TO: Members of the Senate Commerce Committee

FROM: Sarah Lechner, Vice President, Policy Development and Government Affairs

CC: Julius Bailey and Alison Accettola, Democratic Committee Aides
Laurine Purola, Republican Committee Aide
Philip R. Gennace, OLS Committee Aide

RE: A.4568/S.3017 - Prohibits health insurers, SHBP, SEHBP, University Correctional Health Care, and Medicaid from discriminating in providing coverage and services based on gender identity

On behalf of RWJBarnabas Health, New Jersey's largest integrated health care delivery system, I write to offer our **support for S.3017 (Vitale/Ruiz) and A.4568Aca (Vainieri Huttle/Eustace)**, which would prohibit certain insurance companies from discriminating in coverage and services based on gender identity.

RWJBarnabas Health is transforming to a health care model focused not only on treating individuals when they are sick but to provide services and interventions – including preventative care and social services – to improve the overall health of our diverse populations. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset is leading the way in providing health care services for the LGBTQIA community. The hospital recently became the first in New Jersey to offer specialized primary care services for the LGBTQIA community when it opened the PROUD Family Health at RWJ Somerset Family Practice. PROUD Family Health provides services tailored to meet the unique health care needs of the LGBTQIA community in a safe, supportive environment.

PROUD Family Health traces its roots to a community support group designed for family members of transgender individuals and developed after the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment demonstrated the gaps in care for the LGBTQIA community. The community support group, in conjunction with Garden State Equality and the Pride Center of NJ assisted in the development of this clinic. Additionally, our partnership led to the establishment of cultural-competency training for the entire staff, with a particular focus on the LGBTQIA community, because we know that our LGBTQIA patients will utilize services beyond primary care services and our entire staff must be attuned to their health care needs.

RWJBarnabas Health believes that this bill is another necessary step to ensuring that the entire health care system – both providers and payers – are ensuring the delivery of high-quality, culturally-competent and affordable care for all of our communities. RWJBarnabas Health is, therefore, pleased to support this legislation.

Please do not hesitate to me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or XXX@rwjbh.org if you have any questions.