



- REQUESTING AND SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF WISCONSIN, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, CITIES AND VILLAGES IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY TO REGULATE CONVERSION THERAPY AND PROHIBIT PAID CONVERSION THERAPY BY MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18-

WHEREAS, contemporary science recognizes that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is part of the natural spectrum of human identity and is not a disease, disorder or illness; and;

WHEREAS, "conversion therapy" is defined as any practices or treatments offered or rendered to consumers for a fee, including psychological counseling, that seeks to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender; and

WHEREAS, conversion therapy does not include counseling that provides assistance to a person undergoing gender transition, or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of a person or facilitates a person's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development, including sexual-orientation-neutral interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices, as long as such counseling does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, conversion therapy has been rejected by every mainstream medical and mental health organization, including the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Counselor Association, American School Health Association, National Association of Social Workers and the Pan American Health Organization; and

WHEREAS, this resolution is adopted to promote the health, safety and welfare of the people of the County of Eau Claire, especially the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, and to protect them against the exposure to serious harms caused by conversion therapy; and

WHEREAS, it is well documented that the prevailing opinion of the medical and psychological community is that conversion therapy has not been shown to be effective and that it creates a potential risk of serious harm to those who experience it; and

WHEREAS, the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act, which bans conversion therapy nationwide, has been introduced in the 114th United States Congress and the 115th United States Congress. 14 states and 44 counties, municipalities and communities, including Madison & Milwaukee in Wisconsin, have passed legislation making the practice of conversion therapy for minors illegal, with six additional states proposing similar legislation which is pending; and

WHEREAS, in the recently completed Wisconsin legislative session, Assembly Bills 349 and 261 seeking to prohibit mental health providers from engaging in conversion therapy of minors in Wisconsin were introduced. However, neither of these bills made it out of committee and conversion therapy remains unregulated by the State of Wisconsin; and

"WHEREAS, Eau Claire Healthy Communities has prioritized Mental Health as a top priority in 2018. Data from Eau Claire County and State of WI Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) done in 2017 indicates 10% of sample of high school 10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> graders that were surveyed from 5 school districts indicated that they identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. 69% of those that identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual indicated that they felt sad/hopeless in the past 12 months vs. 24% of those that identified as heterosexual/straight. State YRBS data (no local data available) indicates that 41% of youth surveyed that are LGBT have considered suicide vs.16.4% overall.

WHEREAS, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department has as its mission "Keeping people in all Eau Claire City/County communities safe and healthy". On August 22<sup>nd</sup> the Eau Claire City-County Board of Health passed a resolution stating "BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health encourages stakeholders in Eau Claire County and in the State of Wisconsin to explore best practices and regulations related to preventing harm associated with conversion therapy."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors requests and supports the efforts of the State of Wisconsin, the Federal Government, cities and villages in Eau Claire County to regulate conversion therapy and support bills or ordinances introduced in the Senates or Assembly's and local cities and villages that would regulate and prohibit paid conversion therapy by mental health professionals to persons under the age of 18.

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, that elected representatives at the state, federal and local level representing Eau Claire County receive copies of this resolution. In addition, Eau Claire County shall provide this resolution to the Wisconsin Counties Association, requesting their advocacy to regulate conversion therapy and prohibit paid conversion therapy by mental health professionals to persons under the age of 18.

ADOPTED: September 18, 2018

Janet K. Loomis  
County Clerk