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Jersey City To Become 1st City in New Jersey to Offer Trans-Inclusive Health Benefits

Expansion of healthcare coverage continues Jersey City's record of outstanding leadership on LGBT equality

JERSEY CITY – Today, Mayor Steven Fulop announced that Jersey City would be expanding the health care it offers city employees to include coverage for transgender medical care and related procedures, such as gender affirmation surgery. Jersey City will become the first large city in the state to offer such coverage – and one of only a handful across the country.

“Government has a responsibility to be a legitimizing force, to pull people in the direction of what is right, especially on LGBT issues” said Mayor Steven Fulop, “Today, we’re doing that in Jersey City: We’re making sure that our transgender neighbors get the care they need.”

Jersey City joins a small but growing list of American cities – including San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Austin – to ensure transgender employees have equal access to care.

Nationwide, two in ten transgender Americans are denied care because of who they are. One in three face significant delays getting necessary medical attention. This lack of access to care can have serious negative consequences, including depression and suicide. An analysis last year by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law found that 41 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals had attempted suicide. Gender affirmation treatment has been shown to reduce suicide by around 75 percent.

“Jersey City is doing what every municipality in New Jersey *must* do: provide medically necessary transition-related care to its employees,” said Andrea Bowen, an activist and the Executive Director of Garden State Equality, “Jersey City is leading the way in showing how to improve the lives of transgender people, and Garden State Equality is honored to have worked with Mayor Fulop and his staff on this great reform.”

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“The American Medical Association, the US Dept of HHS, and all of mainstream medicine support ending discrimination against transgender people,” said Barbra Siperstein, Director of the Gender Rights Advocacy Association of New Jersey. “As a native of Jersey City, on behalf of the Gender Rights Advocacy Association of NJ, I take particular pride in congratulating Mayor Steven Fulop and the City of Jersey City for taking the leadership in being the first New Jersey municipality to provide medically necessary transition related care for its employees.”

The city’s health care providers estimate the cost of expanding coverage for transgender care to be very small: roughly one tenth of one percent of the current cost of healthcare for the city.

This step continues Jersey City’s record of outstanding leadership on LGBT equality. Last year, Jersey City was one of only 38 cities in the nation to receive a perfect score from the Human Rights Campaign’s Municipal Equality Index – and the only city in New Jersey to earn that score. Jersey City received a perfect score in 2013 as well. Moreover, last year Jersey City was named the 8th most LGBT-friendly city in the United States by the financial website Nerdwallet.

All media inquiries should be directed to Ryan Jacobs, Communications Director for Mayor Steven M. Fulop. ///