



JUN 21 2019

The Honourable Cliff Cullen, M.L.A.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Government of Manitoba  
104 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Cullen:

We are writing to urge you to take action to end the shameful practice of conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is a cruel exercise that can lead to life-long trauma. It has no scientific basis. The provincial, territorial, municipal and federal governments all have roles to play to protect Canadians from the harms associated with this practice. We are considering *Criminal Code* reform concerning conversion therapy, and are asking you to do more within your jurisdiction.

Professional bodies like the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Psychological Association and the Canadian Association of Social Workers have condemned therapies with the goal of converting an individual's sexual orientation. The World Health Organization has stated that conversion therapy has "no medical indication and represent[s] a severe threat to the health and human rights of the affected persons." The American Psychological Association's Task Force on the Appropriate Therapeutic Response to Sexual Orientation has indicated that, in relation to minors specifically, it is concerned that conversion therapy can increase self-stigma and distress in children and adolescents.

We are concerned about the harmful effect of the message that someone's sexual orientation is abnormal, and that it can and should be changed. Research tells us that therapy or practices promoting that message have the potential to harm the individual receiving it. We are also mindful that these practices are damaging to the LGBTQ and two-spirit communities more generally.

There is a movement across Canada to restrict or condemn practices that seek to change sexual orientation. Addressing the availability of conversion therapy is a complex issue. We believe that a multi-faceted response is required. No one jurisdiction can end this dangerous practice alone.

A number of provinces and municipalities have already taken steps to denounce or prohibit conversion therapy, including a public position statement, a motion adopted at their legislative assembly, and legislation prohibiting its provision to minors. In particular, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island have acted to discourage or restrict conversion therapy from taking place within their respective jurisdictions. Legislation has been introduced in British Columbia that would do the same. We commend these efforts, which communicate the important message that conversion therapy is harmful. At the same time, we believe that more remains to be done, and are concerned that a number of jurisdictions have not yet taken steps to end or condemn the practice.

At the federal level, existing *Criminal Code* offences may apply in some instances of conversion therapy. For example, kidnapping, forcible confinement, and assault may apply where a person is forcibly compelled to undergo conversion therapy. The fraud offence may apply where fees are charged for conversion therapy services, since the practice has been roundly discredited by medical and psychological associations.

However, existing *Criminal Code* offences may not capture the full range of circumstances in which conversion therapy occurs. For this reason, we are actively examining potential *Criminal Code* reforms to better prevent, punish, and deter this discredited and dangerous practice. The federal government is committed to doing everything within its jurisdiction to combat conversion therapy.

Canadians are proud of our country's diversity and inclusion. We believe that all Canadians should be safe to be themselves, and to express their sexual orientation and gender identity. We unequivocally denounce conversion therapy, and will be assessing what can be done at the federal level to ensure that LGBTQ and two-spirit people are not subjected to this misguided and destructive practice. We strongly encourage you to take action to discourage and end conversion "therapy" within your jurisdiction.

Respectfully,



The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., Q.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health



Randy Boissonnault, M.P.  
Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on LGBTQ2 Issues



JUN 21 2019

The Honourable Cameron Friesen, M.L.A.  
Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living  
Province of Manitoba  
Room 302, Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Friesen:

We are writing to urge you to take action to end the shameful practice of conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is a cruel exercise that can lead to life-long trauma. It has no scientific basis. The provincial, territorial, municipal and federal governments all have roles to play to protect Canadians from the harms associated with this practice. We are considering *Criminal Code* reform concerning conversion therapy, and are asking you to do more within your jurisdiction.

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We are concerned about the harmful effect of the message that someone's sexual orientation is abnormal, and that it can and should be changed. Research tells us that therapy or practices promoting that message have the potential to harm the individual receiving it. We are also mindful that these practices are damaging to the LGBTQ and two-spirit communities more generally.

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