

Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
286 Water St.  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

February 27, 2020

Re: Gender Marker On Birth Record Rule, 10-146 CMR Chapter 16

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule change regarding gender markers on birth records.

NASW-Maine Chapter is committed to advancing professional social work practice and promoting human rights, social and economic justice, and unimpeded access to services for everyone. We are the largest professional social work organization in the state with 800 members. Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health service providers and Maine currently has over 5000 active social workers.

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. NASW asserts that discrimination and prejudice directed against any individuals on the basis of gender identity or gender expression, whether actual or perceived, are damaging to the social, emotional, psychological, physical, and economic well-being of the affected individuals, as well as society as a whole.

As a profession committed to social justice, we recognize the importance of protecting individuals from discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and lack of appropriate identity documents. Challenges that people face when they are unable to provide identification reflecting their gender identity may include denial of access to employment, public accommodations, education, appropriate treatment in gender-segregated facilities matching self-identification, familial status, appropriate medical care and mental health care coverage as well as a myriad of safety concerns.

We support efforts to remove barriers to update current gender identity markers, allowing for the greatest autonomy that can be afforded an individual in updating their documentation. Additionally, we support a parent's ability to defer a binary gender designation at birth to allow for a child to later clarify, as they choose, their gender marker when they are at a developmental age to understand this.

NASW-Maine supports the proposed rule change as it is written. We applaud the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention for the efforts made to limit discrimination as well as improve the efficacy of identification and the promotion of consistency across state records.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this rule change.  
Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, NASW- Maine LGBTQ Advocacy Committee