

June 15, 2020

TO: Daily Trojan, Annenberg Media

FR: Sarah Van Orman, Chief Health Officer



CC: USG, GSG, Student Affairs, Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Academic Deans, President's Cabinet

RE: Finalized Rule 1557 of the ACA (Affordable Care Act)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources finalized a rule on June 12, 2020 regarding Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that removes “gender identity” and “gender expression” from the protections against discrimination “on the basis of sex.” This action effectively reverses federal protection against discrimination in healthcare and in health insurance coverage that was explicitly inclusive of transgender men, transgender women, gender nonbinary and other members of the LGBTQ community. The rule also eliminated protection against discrimination for terminations of pregnancy.

As a health care organization, and as part of a world-renowned academic medical center, we would like to affirm to our patients that this change in federal rules announced on Friday afternoon will not diminish any access, care, services, or support from USC Student Health. Although most insurance plans carried by California residents, including the Student Health Insurance Plan and Medi-Cal Managed Care plans, will not be affected by the new rule, we encourage you to verify other coverage. We firmly believe that all patients deserve to be treated with respect, sensitivity, and understanding for their individual identity and context. We also recognize the devastating impacts of disparities among communities when it comes to access to health care. Patient-centered care is the model we adhere to; working with each individual to provide access to the highest quality health care is absolutely our goal. Every patient has the right to affirm their identity and be treated with respect and support in the process of seeking health care.

We will continue to live the values that are part of our vision statement:

*“We engage diverse partners across our campus community. We serve the whole student through a comprehensive model of care.*

*We achieve health equity through access to student-centered services that address the social determinants of health within our diverse populations.”*

Every day, in our professional roles, these values will continue to guide us as we support the health and well-being of our patients, the USC student community.

