



Ending Conversion Efforts

On National Coming Out Day, an Unprecedented Stand Against LGBTQ+ Conversion Efforts With an Aim to Protect More Americans

For First Time, Leading U.S. Healthcare Provider Associations Jointly Denounce Attempts to Change People's Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

WASHINGTON — Oct. 11, 2023— Twenty-eight major U.S. medical and psychological professional associations, representing more than 1.3 million healthcare providers, have joined together to end so-called “conversion therapy” because such efforts are unscientific, ineffective and put individuals at significant risk of harm.

Signatories to the [United States Joint Statement](#) aimed at ending “conversion therapy” include the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association and American Academy of Pediatrics. This is the first time that so many U.S. medical and mental health associations have agreed to jointly protect the health of LGBTQ+ Americans and they’ve done so on a day (Oct. 11) dedicated to supporting and recognizing those who have come out as LGBTQ+.

USJS leaders say an onslaught of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation has ignited their campaign to recognize that a person is not mentally ill nor developmentally delayed because they experience same-sex attractions or transgender, nonbinary, or diverse gender identities or expressions.

The USJS updates some of the signatory associations’ existing anti-conversion statements by adding a shared framework for more actions. These include: informing the public about the research on conversion efforts and the risks; making healthcare professionals aware of the ethical issues surrounding conversion efforts; and providing greater ethical support to clients in distress over their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The USJS increases the impact of these individual statements by bringing together these 28 associations in a rare and unique collaboration.

Statement as a Foundation for Legal Protection

USJS organizers see the statement as a powerful tool that policymakers can use as leverage as they seek to pass laws prohibiting so-called “conversion therapy” and eliminate the myth that LGBTQ+ individuals can be “cured.” Currently, 22 states, the District of Columbia, and over 115 municipalities have banned such unscientific and harmful practices, and five more states and the territory of Puerto Rico have restricted the use of conversion efforts.

U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) says, “So-called ‘conversion therapy’ is a sham that is dangerous to members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Major medical organizations have found that conversion therapy has no basis in science and is entirely illegitimate. I was proud to author the country’s first ban on

conversion therapy when I was in the California statehouse because it is a harmful and fraudulent practice based on junk science. I recently reintroduced the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act, which would place a federal ban on this hateful practice, and I am committed to seeing it signed into law. Everyone deserves dignity, respect and affirmation regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. It's time to end conversion therapy once and for all."

James Guay, M.A., L.M.F.T., Co-Chair, Born Perfect Advisory Committee, says, "As a psychotherapist and a survivor of conversion efforts, I can't help but reflect on my own experiences as a teenager. If only there had been a joint statement like the USJS, it might have spared me months of conversion attempts and the subsequent years of damage that this did. The USJS serves as a beacon of awareness and education, shedding light on the devastating consequences of so-called 'conversion therapy.' My own journey has taught me that these practices not only fail to achieve their misguided goals but also inflict lasting emotional and psychological scars.

"It is my hope that through initiatives like the USJS, we can educate the public and therapists alike, dispelling the misguided notion that conversion attempts have any merit. Therapy is meant to heal trauma, not cause it."

Additional Benefit: Stopping Conversion Efforts Can Save Healthcare Dollars

Beyond the psychological and physical benefits of ending so-called "conversion therapy," such bans offer the potential for healthcare savings. Research in the journal [JAMA Pediatrics](#) found that activity to change people's sexual orientation and gender identities costs the country an estimated \$9.23 billion each year.

Guy Albert, Ph.D., USJS co-founder and co-director, says, "This statement conclusively shows that the U.S. medical and psychological community firmly rejects 'conversion therapy' as somehow protected 'speech-based therapy.' This fake therapy is not the expression of a viewpoint—it's dangerous and harmful. We all support the emergence of authentic self-acceptance and identity development in sexual and gender minorities. "

Jim Walker, M.A., L.M.F.T., USJS co-founder and co-director, says, "The USJS is an educational framework for partnering associations to generate education against conversion efforts and for LGBTQ-affirming healthcare for years to come. It can also be used legislatively and legally as evidence that the major mental health and medical provider associations stand against conversion efforts and for affirming care. The USJS aims to foster greater acceptance, approval and love for patients struggling to find their authentic selves. Our goal is to increase the patient's growth towards a more loving embrace of self from within and from the wider world."

The associations partnering with the USJS are:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Associates
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy's Queer and Trans Advocacy Network
- American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
- American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists
- American College of Physicians
- American Counseling Association
- American Medical Association
- American Medical Student Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychoanalytic Association
- American Psychological Association
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
- Association of Black Psychologists
- Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Addiction Professionals and their Allies
- Association of LGBTQ Psychiatrists
- Association of Psychology Training Clinics
- Clinical Social Work Association
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LBGTQ Equality
- LBGT Physician Associates Caucus
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Latinx Psychological Association
- Society of Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities
- United States Professional Association for Transgender Health

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About the United States Joint Statement

The United States Joint Statement is a grassroots initiative and is possible because of the collaboration of many champions within the partnering associations and because of the generous funding of several individual donors and the membership of [Gaylesta: The Psychotherapist Association for Gender & Sexual Diversity](#). Learn more at usjs.org.

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