



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

July 28, 2011

Robert Sloan, President
Sibley Memorial Hospital
5255 Loughboro Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Robert A. Malson, Esq., President
District of Columbia Hospital Association
1152 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Sloan and Mr. Malson:

We write to request your immediate attention in correcting an unacceptable, discriminatory practice in the treatment of individuals in same-sex relationships. Specifically, the practice at Sibley Memorial Hospital of requiring married same-sex couples to prove the legitimacy of their relationship, a burden not placed on opposite-sex couples, before they can obtain their newborn's birth certificate.

Our offices were recently contacted by a mother who had, weeks prior, given birth to a child at Sibley Memorial Hospital, but was now experiencing difficulty in obtaining her child's birth certificate. In what should be a joyous time, the mother and her spouse experienced weeks of frustration in attempting to acquire the birth certificate. According to hospital staff, the delay was because their paperwork had been "set aside" since, as a same-sex couple they had requested the parent/parent form over the mother/father form. However, this reason was only recently communicated to the parents, as was the sudden requirement that they produce a marriage certificate to verify their marriage. Moreover, the parents were told opposite-sex married couples were presumed married, and so the hospital requires no additional information or documentation from them.

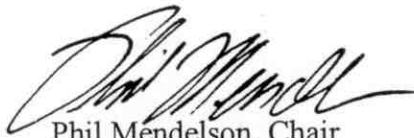
This requirement, whether isolated to this incident or an aspect of hospital policy, is wrong, discriminatory, and antithetical to the District's laws providing equal rights and equal dignity to all residents. The District has been resolute in its commitment to true parity, and has worked meticulously to ensure our laws provide equal rights and equal responsibilities for same-sex couples as are afforded to opposite sex couples. Any distinction in the treatment of gay and straight relationships is contrary to law and fundamental fairness. This incident at Sibley

demands immediate corrective action: remedying the situation for the affected individuals, correcting the current hospital policy, and providing training to hospital staff.

Further, the potential that this being replicated in other area hospitals necessitates the District of Columbia Hospital Association also take action to eradicate any similar discrimination by hospitals in the District.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter; we request you act promptly to resolve it and provide a response to our offices describing your efforts.

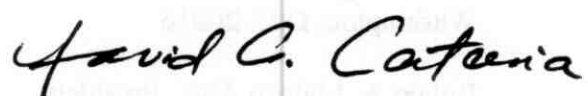
Sincerely,



Phil Mendelson, Chair
Committee on the Judiciary



Muriel Bowser, Chair
Committee on Government
Operations



David Catania, Chair
Committee on Health

cc: Dr. Mohammad N. Akhter, Director, DC Department of Health
Jeff Richardson, Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs