



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trump's new rule would roll back civil rights protections in healthcare law

Nondiscrimination protections under the ACA are at risk

ALBUQUERQUE—In a move that will especially harm trans people, the LGBTQ+ community, patients who speak languages other than English, and people who need access to abortion services, the Trump administration proposed rolling back enforcement of nondiscrimination protections under the Affordable Care Act. New Mexico advocates who champion access to healthcare [urge](#) New Mexicans to publicly oppose Trump's latest threat to healthcare accessibility.

The ACA's landmark nondiscrimination provision, known as Section 1557 or the Health Care Rights Law, protects patients from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability. Comments on proposed changes to Section 1557 must be submitted with the Federal Register by August 13, 2019.

"Discrimination has no place in health care," said William Townley, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty Healthcare Attorney. "Rolling back Section 1557 would allow discrimination and stereotyping to override patient care. This will endanger the health and lives of many New Mexicans and create needless confusion for providers and patients alike. We encourage individuals and groups to submit public comments with the Federal Register voicing opposition to the rollback of these important legal protections."

"A patient's health and wellbeing should always come first," said Adrian N. Carver, Equality New Mexico Executive Director. "Giving healthcare professionals a license to discriminate against queer and transgender people is unacceptable. Rules that allow providers to ignore standard medical best practices and instead put their personal beliefs before patient health has the potential to gravely harm thousands of people and their families' health. Our community must submit comment on these rules because, if

enacted, these regulations threaten to completely upend the careful balance of religious freedom and other important human rights and instead grant providers a license to put their personal views before the healthcare needs of the patient.”

The Trump administration is proposing rules that would reinterpret Section 1557 by:

- exempting a broad number of healthcare programs and entities from having to comply with Section 1557’s nondiscrimination provisions;
- eliminating nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ persons from regulations;
- ending provisions that ensure people who speak languages other than English receive critical notices in the language they speak;
- removing protections against health plan designs that discriminate against people with serious or chronic health conditions.

"In addition to erasing the gender identity of individuals who identify outside of the binary choices of male or female, the proposed rule would gravely harm access to healthcare. The rule would let hospitals and clinics refuse to provide abortions based on religious or conscience concerns, even when there are no other providers in the area that could provide care,” said Terrelene Massey, Southwest Women's Law Center Executive Director. “In a state such as New Mexico, which is largely rural, people do not always have a choice for where to go. In Santa Fe County, for example, the main provider of healthcare services is Catholic affiliated. Finding a medical provider without religious or conscience concerns would require a person to travel great distances and likely pay additional costs for using a provider out of their insurance network. The proposed Section 1557 changes could result in great bodily harm or even death to some, simply because of where they happen to live.”

Individuals can submit comments on proposed changes to Section 1557 at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/14/2019-11512/nondiscrimination-in-health-and-health-education-programs-or-activities>

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[The New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty](#) is dedicated to advancing economic and social justice through education, advocacy, and litigation. We work with low-income New Mexicans to improve living conditions, increase opportunities, and protect the rights of people living in poverty.

[Equality New Mexico](#) is the state’s oldest and largest LGBTQ+ advocacy, education, and outreach organization. We’re working to make oppression obsolete by improving outcomes for LGBTQ2S+ New Mexicans at the intersection of marginalization through advancing public policy in the areas of Health, Education, the Economy, Civic Engagement, and Justice.

The [Southwest Women's Law Center](#)'s mission is to create opportunities for women to realize their full economic and personal potential by: eliminating gender bias, discrimination and harassment; lifting women and their families out of poverty; and ensuring that all women have full control over their reproductive lives through access to comprehensive reproductive health services and information. Our primary services include providing legal and policy advocacy to advance opportunities for girls and women in New Mexico in the areas of health care, reproductive justice, equal pay, ensuring economic security for survivors of domestic violence and ensuring that girls have equal access to athletics or sports programs without discrimination. Our geographic focus is the State of New Mexico.