

TESTIMONY OF JAMES TAYLOR PhD, CHIEF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER (UPMC)

Good Afternoon, Chairwoman Baker and Chairwoman Tartaglione and Members of the Labor and Industry Committee. My name is James Taylor and I am pleased to represent the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and UPMC Health Plan to discuss the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity employment discrimination and to urge the passage of SB 1306 to ensure fair and equal protections under the law regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. I joined UPMC in March of this year as its new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer after serving in a similar position for another large healthcare institution – Carolinas HealthCare System – headquartered in Charlotte, NC.

UPMC has more than 60,000 employees working within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania making us the largest non-government employer. We have approximately 3,700 trained physicians in virtually every medical specialty, over 12,500 nurses spread over more than 20 hospitals and provider units and we have thousands more physician assistants, nurse practitioners, every kind of technician that exists in the health care field and thousands of administrators and service employees. At all levels our people are our number one resource and recruitment and retention of the best and brightest will always be our most pressing need. In fact, recently UPMC announced that we will increase minimum starting wages to \$15/hour by 2021 for our core Pittsburgh facilities with average service worker pay to exceed \$15 per hour by 2019.

Our staff has always been the key to our success as a national leader in providing cutting edge healthcare and ground breaking healthcare research in conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh. You may be aware that UPMC is always at the top of the rankings when rated by *US News and World Report* and many other rating organizations. Most recently UPMC was ranked 12th in nation in the *US News and World Report* listing of best hospitals, second in Pennsylvania and first in Western Pennsylvania. UPMC received top ten rankings in six medical specialties and our Children's Hospital was ranked 7th in the nation.

UPMC International uses our clinical, operational and management expertise to support partnerships to provide cancer care, transplant services, emergency room care, technology and hospital management support in eleven countries around the world. UPMC can provide in-house care in over 20 languages and is prepared to provide care with translation assistance in over 170 languages. Last year we spoke 6,400 hours to patients in languages as diverse as Uzbek, Kirundi, Burmese and Kinya. UPMC provides medical video interpretation for overseas consultations in 24 languages.

This can only be accomplished with a diverse workforce welcoming every race, creed, nationality and sexual orientation. We also serve patients from all over the world and every background who come to see our top specialists and to be cared for in our top hospitals. For these very reasons our board and our leadership decided in 2013 to make “Dignity and Respect” a core UPMC value and competency to be evaluated on employee performance reviews at all levels.

In 2008 Dignity and Respect was launched as an internal campaign on how we treat others—patients, families, customers, and each other. Built in our program in 2008 was the creation of the Center for Engagement and Inclusion making inclusion, dignity, respect and cultural awareness the core components of the employee, health plan member, patient and community experience.

Dignity and respect is embedded into our selection process, on-boarding and training programs, and channels of recognition. I could spend hours detailing all that encompasses “engagement and inclusion” as it is woven in the very fabric of our culture. You can find our most recent Annual Report on our activities attached with my testimony. Throughout UPMC, sexual orientation and gender identity are included in our patient care, visitation and employment non-discrimination policies.

Some specific activities we are undertaking include but are not limited to:

- PRIDE Health, one of our employee resource groups, focuses specifically on attracting and retaining LGBT medical students, residents, and physicians. Focus groups, networking, mentorship, and community building are specific areas that PRIDE Health delivers on.
- Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of UPMC has received for the second time the Health Equality Index certification through the Human Rights Campaign and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC has received the certification this year for the first time.
- Our upcoming plan is to expand UPMC locations participating in the Human Rights Campaign Health Equality Index.
- Partnering with organizations like Persad--one of the most experienced LGBT counseling centers--to provide specific trainings to our employees regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Specific actions include "how to close the gap in LGBT health disparities" training and the introductory video on LGBT health.
- Assessment and implementation of training resources as part of our SafeZone initiatives with Persad ensure that we address health disparities and create an environment that is welcoming and caring for the LGBT community. The SafeZone initiative promotes awareness of LGBT community issues, needs, and challenges with accessing healthcare while also building a network of internal LGBT allies and champions.
- Establishing a LGBT taskforce with the purpose of bringing together various LGBT organizations, community members and UPMC representatives for the purpose of ensuring equal access and equitable healthcare.
- Creation of gender transition guidelines that provide the workforce with information to support an employee through a gender transition process.
- Our transgender employees are able to utilize their preferred name on identification badges, correspondence materials, and employee records.

UPMC has been a strong advocate for passage of SB 1306 and SB 1307 urging our employees to write supportive letters and signing on in support with other organizations. We have been an active collaborator and financial supporter of the “PA Competes” organization, a coalition of more than 1,000 businesses, directed at the passage of SB 1306 and 1307. As members of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce we were pleased to press for its support of this legislation also.

The UPMC message to you today is that our inclusive culture is essential to our ability to recruit and retain the very best in every field of health care delivery and to create a diverse talent pipeline throughout our workforce. We believe that revising Pennsylvania law to ensure fair and equal protections under the law is critical to sending the message that Pennsylvania is open and fair and a place of opportunity for all to earn a living and to provide for themselves and their families with no fear of discrimination.

UPMC competes with the best healthcare institutions in the world and our goal is to find and keep world class talent. These well-educated, exceptionally talented and diverse individuals have many options to locate themselves and their families. In our experience they want to live in a community and a state that is inclusive, diverse and welcoming to all races, religions, creed and sexual orientations. Beyond recruitment and retention, we also encourage and support these individuals as they create new scientific and healthcare breakthroughs and find new ways to save lives and make lives better. In some cases they will become entrepreneurs and start new businesses. We, along with the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon and other institutions are supporting such innovation and we want them to succeed in Pennsylvania.

In conclusion, I am here on behalf of UPMC and its workforce to urge the passage of SB 1306 along with SB 1307 to advance Pennsylvania as a welcoming inclusive place for all individuals to live, work, raise families and to find a rewarding life. Thank you for your time.