

June 22, 2021

University of California Board of Regents
Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Michael V. Drake
President, University of California
University of California Office of the President
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

RE: UC policy relating to policy-based restrictions on health care

To the Regents and President of the University of California:

The CFT writes to express its deep concern that University of California Health continues to defend, and seeks to perpetuate and expand, contracts that tie the hands of University of California clinicians and students, preventing them from providing fundamental health care to their patients. The University of California Board of Regents must draw a firm line to prevent policy-based restrictions on UC employees and trainees and ensure that they can treat all patients with essential reproductive and gender-affirming care.

UC Health is a crucial public resource. The fourth-largest healthcare provider in the state, it plays a central role in caring for Californians, who count on UC Health hospitals and clinics to provide high-quality, evidence-based care, and trains more than fifty percent of California's medical students. As a public institution, UC has a duty to provide comprehensive care that is free from discrimination. Further, as a national leader in promoting life-saving reproductive and LGBTQ-inclusive health care, UC must uphold California's values.

All six UC Health Centers in California have already entered into contracts that impose harmful restrictions on care. For example, these contracts with other health care facilities prevent UC personnel and trainees from providing: contraception, including emergency contraception for sexual assault victims; abortion, defined to include treating ectopic pregnancy; fertility treatments such as IVF; and sterilization, defined to include gender-affirming care.

The University of California has long positioned itself as a strong defender of evidence-based, inclusive, and bias-free health care. Now more than ever, UC needs to hold to these values as the national landscape becomes increasingly dire. This year has seen an unprecedented number of bills sweeping state legislatures that would curtail the rights of LGBTQ+ people, particularly trans and non-binary youth. Twenty-one anti-LGBTQ+ bills were signed into law.

In this context, the University of California's decision as to whether it will continue to participate in denials of care will be closely watched and have strong reverberations both inside California and nationally. We strongly believe that, as a public entity with an obligation to provide care that is evidence-based, free of discrimination, and not restricted by religious doctrine, UC must draw a firm line. We urge you to adopt a policy that would empower UC Health providers and immediately prohibit any expansion of policy-based restrictions on UC clinicians and students. We further urge that, within three years, you close out or modify existing contracts to eliminate the existing restrictions on UC-provided care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Freitas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "F".

cc: University of California Office of the President
University of California Board of Regents