

NEW YORK
CITY BAR

MARIA CILENTI
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
Phone: (212) 382-6655
Fax: (212) 398-6634
mcilenti@nycbar.org

April 23, 2014

Dr. Mary Bassett
Commissioner
New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013-4090

Dear Dr. Bassett:

Congratulations on your appointment as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The City Bar looks forward to working with you on the health and welfare issues that we know are so important to you.

The City Bar is an independent organization and professional home for over 24,000 lawyers and law students dedicated to addressing legal and public policy issues in ways that promote law reform, ethics and the fair and effective administration of justice. In May 2013, the City Bar issued the enclosed report, *Policy Recommendations for New York City's Next Mayor*.¹ As you'll see from the report, we address a number of health law issues that we hope will be considered – to the extent they are not already being considered - by the new administration. While we recognize that you are already well aware of the issues we discuss in our report, we take this opportunity to highlight one particular recommendation: that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene revise its outdated birth certificate policy in regards to gender designation. This recommendation was conveyed to the Mayor in a transition letter from our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Committee, which is also enclosed for your reference. Our Committee has been advocating for this issue at both the state and local levels, arguing that the requirement that transgender individuals undergo “convertive surgery” in order to correct the gender designation on their birth certificates is contrary to contemporary medical standards of care, onerous and cost prohibitive.²

We would welcome the opportunity to schedule a time for you or an appropriate representative from your Department to meet with our LGBT Rights Committee to discuss this issue. Please feel free to contact me so that we can discuss further details and schedule a time that works for you. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,


Maria Cilenti

¹ Available online at <http://www.nycbar.org/images/stories/pdfs/mayoralreport04302013.pdf>.

² A copy of the City Bar's latest report on this issue at the state level is enclosed for your reference.