

Ministry of Health

No.: 4132/BYT-PC

Re: Rectifying the medical examining
and treatment for homosexual,
bisexual and transgender patients.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Independence – Freedom - Happiness

Hanoi, August 03, 2022

To: - The Departments of Health at the Provinces and Centrally-run Cities
- The Medical Establishments directly run by the Ministry of Health
- The Medical Establishments of other Ministries and fields.

The Ministry of Health received the report that, at present, some medical examination and treatment establishments as well as some medical doctors self-claimed that they can cure homosexuality completely, while the American Psychiatric Association and the World Health Organization (WHO) have confirmed that homosexuality is entirely not an illness, therefore homosexuality cannot be “cured” nor need to be “cured” and cannot be converted in anyway.

On May 17, 1990, the WHO officially removed homosexuality from the list of mental illness. Since 1994, homosexuality was no longer considered an illness, nor listed in DSM 5 (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). The World Health Organization (WHO) has also established that “homosexuality is not an illness”, but (to describe) the sexual orientation of those who are attracted to people of the same gender. Homosexuality and transgender have been removed from the chapter on Mental and Behavioral Disorder, and in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) in 1990 and 2019 respectively.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health request the Heads of the Units, who are entrusted with the authority to lead the medical examination and treatment establishments, to instruct such medical examination and treatment establishments throughout the country to:

1. Enhance information propagation and dissemination so that the medical doctors, staff and patients at the medical examination and treatment establishments have a correct understanding about homosexual, bisexual and transgender persons.
2. While administering medical examination or treatment for the homosexual, bisexual and transgender patients, gender equality and respect must be ensured to avoid discrimination and prejudices against these groups.
3. Not to consider homosexual, bisexual and transgender an illness.

4. Not to interfere nor force treatment upon these groups (of patients) – if any, it must be in the form of psychological assistance and performed only by those who have the knowledge of sexual identity.
5. To enhance the works of internal review and inspection towards the medical examination and treatment establishments and practitioners to ensure compliance with the professional codes in medical services according to the law.

Above are the instructions of the Ministry of Health in view of rectifying the situation of forced examining and treatment towards the homosexual, bisexual and transgender persons (patients). The concerned units and organization are requested to observe and follow seriously.

By order of the Minister of Health

On behalf of the Director of Department of Legislation

Vice Director

Dinh Thi Thu Thuy

Sent to:

- As above
- The Acting Minister of Health (to report)
- Vice Minister Nguyen Thi Lien Huong (to report)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (to cooperate)
- Ministry of Public Security (to cooperate)
- The medical establishments of other Ministries and fields (to cooperate)
- The Department of Medical Examination and Treatment Management (to cooperate)
- Filing