

Intersex Resolution

Resolution to Protect Intersex Children from Unwanted Surgery, Secrecy and Shame

Move to adopt the following Resolution to Protect Intersex Children from Unwanted Surgery, Secrecy and Shame:

WHEREAS, Common estimates are that at least one in every 2000 children is born with notably atypical sex anatomy; and

WHEREAS, Before they are old enough to provide informed consent, intersex children are frequently subjected to invasive surgical and hormonal procedures to make their bodies more closely approximate what doctors consider “normal”; and

WHEREAS, These children are frequently subjected to medically unnecessary display by medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, Parents of intersex children are seldom provided with the full and accurate information about the child’s condition and risks involved in these procedures necessary to make an informed decision nor with referrals to supportive information and resources; and

WHEREAS, Intersex children and adults are frequently not given full and accurate information about their own condition and medical history; and

WHEREAS, Many intersex people grow up feeling hurt, isolated and ashamed due to these violations of their bodily integrity and their systematic erasure; and

WHEREAS, In recent years many intersex people have come forth to report that these medical interventions have been the source of physical, emotional, and sexual harm;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the American Counseling Association supports the rights of children too young to consent to be protected from unnecessary medical displays and from medical procedures including surgical and hormonal interventions which influence the sexual appearance of their bodies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Counseling Association supports the rights of people old enough to make an informed choice to elect or refuse medical procedures including surgical and hormonal interventions which influence the sexual appearance and/or functioning of their bodies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Counseling Association supports intersex advocacy groups in their struggle to end secrecy, shame and unwanted genital surgeries on children except in cases where there are genuine health reasons requiring medical intervention; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That the American Counseling Association urges the medical community to work collaboratively with patient advocacy groups to establish and adopt a patient-centered treatment protocol under which full and accurate information is disclosed to patients and/or their parents and under which patients and/or their parents are offered comprehensive and supportive resources and information, including referrals to qualified counselors and support groups.

Human Rights Committee
Passed

Passed by ACA Gov Council. April 1, 2004