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## **Statement in Support of a Ban on Conversion Therapy**

In 2018, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) issued a statement endorsing the Canadian Psychological Association's position in opposition to conversion therapy. This statement strongly condemned all forms of intervention intended to alter a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression with the goal of promotion of heterosexuality. As an affiliate of CASW, the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW) has strongly supported the position taken by our national Association and other social work organizations in banning the practice of conversion therapy. As such, SASW supports the bylaw proposed by Regina city council to ban conversion therapy in that municipality.

Social work is founded on a long-standing commitment to respect the inherent dignity and individual worth of all persons, to uphold human rights, and uphold each person's right to self-determination. Conversion therapy contradicts these core values and principles contained in our *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Of primary concern when discussing conversion therapy is that it is based on understandings of sexual, romantic, and gender identity that have been rejected by all major health and mental health professions, including the CASW and the National Association of Social Workers in the US. Alongside these professions, SASW affirms its support for our national Association's position that sexual and romantic orientations other than heterosexual are not mental disorders, and thus there is no need for a 'cure.' And, as with all societal prejudices, bias against individuals based on actual or perceived sexual or romantic orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression negatively affects wellbeing – particularly mental health – contributing to an enduring sense of stigma and self-criticism through the internalization of such prejudice.

We urge Regina City Council – and other governments across the province – to adopt a by-law banning conversion therapy, as many other jurisdictions in Canada have done.

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