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ON 3656 N.
HALSTED



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Debra Minghi | Director of Public Relations | 773-661-0918 | dminghi@centeronhalsted.org

**Why American Academy of Pediatrics Conference in Chicago Should Celebrate All Children
Center on Halsted: “It’s Time for the AAP to Provide Intersex Kids the Same Protections as LGBTQ Youth”**

CHICAGO (September 14, 2017) – Center on Halsted announced that this weekend the American Academy of Pediatrics, a nationwide network of nearly 70,000 pediatricians, will host its [annual conference](#) in Chicago. Kim Fountain, Chief Operating Officer at Center on Halsted states, “It’s time for the AAP to provide Intersex kids the same protections as LGBTQ youth.” The AAP has been an important voice in securing the health and rights of [LGBTQ youth](#), and Center on Halsted welcomes their members to our city. Earlier this summer, the Center was proud to host a groundbreaking event when Human Rights Watch and interACT launched the first-ever research report on intersex youth in the United States. The AAP welcomed [the report](#) and reiterated their commitment to “helping children to have a healthy and happy life.” Now, we’re asking them for a more specific promise – safeguard intersex children’s autonomy so they are not harmed by well-intentioned yet misinformed doctors.

Intersex people, whose chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, and/or genitals don’t match up with what we consider typically male or female, make up nearly two percent of the population. One of the reasons we hear so little about intersex people is that, based on a now-invalidated medical theory popularized in the 1960s, doctors often perform surgery on them in infancy that attempts to erase their intersex characteristics. They generally say the goal is to make it easier for kids to grow up “normal.” But as the report we [launched at the Center](#) on July 25th showed, the results are often catastrophic, the supposed benefits are largely unproven, and there are rarely urgent health considerations requiring immediate, irreversible intervention. One of the many risks of surgery is deciding the wrong gender, but there is also incontinence, sterilization, loss of sexual sensation, scarring, and psychological trauma.

Kim Fountain shares, “As leaders in the LGBTQ community, we know all too well how important it is to have healthcare providers who respect our rights, are competent and responsive to our needs, and stand up for us. Some in the intersex community are LGBTQ, while others are not. Regardless of that overlap, the history of marginalization and invisibility is one we can all understand—and work to erode.”

Center on Halsted, Human Rights Watch, and interACT are joined by the [United Nations](#), the [World Health Organization](#), Amnesty International, every [major LGBT legal organization](#) in the US, three former [US Surgeons General](#), and all [intersex-led organizations](#) around the world in calling for an end to medically unnecessary, non-consensual surgeries on intersex kids. The American Medical Association Board of Trustees this year [recommended](#) respect for intersex children’s rights to autonomy and informed consent.

It is time for the AAP to live up to its motto—“dedicated to the health of all children”—and resolve to end medically unnecessary, non-consensual surgeries on intersex kids. This is similar to what our LGBTQ community has asked of the medical community: Provide us care that we want, inform us of the possible outcomes and risks, and do not propose treatments to change us to fit your definitions of “normal.” We are all fine just the way we are—and if we desire a change, we will ask for it.

Kim Fountain added, “We want to celebrate the doctors who care for our community and our children—not question whether their care is misleading us. The AAP should join the growing momentum to end these high-risk cosmetic operations on young kids—and uphold the right of everyone to make their own treatment decisions.”

For Media Inquiries, please contact:

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ABOUT CENTER ON HALSTED

Center on Halsted is the most comprehensive community center in Chicagoland dedicated to building and strengthening the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community. Directly servicing and impacting the lives of approximately 45,000 LGBTQ individuals a year, more than 1,400 community members of all ages walk through the doors every day to participate in the diverse public programs and social services. Center on Halsted offers youth and senior programming, behavior health services, HIV testing, anti-violence work, and educational programming including cooking and GED classes. For every dollar donated to Center on Halsted, nearly 75¢ are spent directly on providing these community programs and services. Additionally, thousands of individuals join us in basketball, volleyball, hockey, performance, art, and music. Center on Halsted is located in the heart of Chicago's Lakeview Neighborhood. For more information, visit www.centeronhalsted.org or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).