



HIV/AIDS in Prison Project

Catholic Charities of the East Bay

433 Jefferson Street, Oakland, California 94607, 510/834-5657, ext. 3150, Fax 510/451-6998

July 26, 1996

James Gomez, Director
Fax No. (916) 327-1988
Dr. Nadim Khoury, Chief Medical Director
Fax No. (916) 327-0545
California Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 942883
Sacramento, Ca. 94283

Dear Director Gomez and Dr. Khoury:

We are writing out of deep concern about the recent decision of the Chief Medical Officer of Unit 4 at CMF- Vacaville to deny the transgender community housed in this unit access to the only clinical mental health support group appropriate to their needs.

It is generally recognized among the HIV prevention and education community that peer support and the ability to discuss one's fears, problems, and triumphs over difficulties, in the presence of those with whom one can identify, is beyond a doubt the most successful means of teaching both prevention and coping skills.

In that light we strongly urge you to investigate this situation and take all necessary measures to ensure that the prisoners on Unit 4 are allowed to attend the only on-going mental health support group for transgender prisoners at CMF- Vacaville. Past misunderstandings between the parties involved should be set aside so that the needs of the transgender prison community are met.

We would appreciate a response from you in the near future regarding your resolution of this problem.

Sincerely,



Judy Greenspan, Director
Loren Jones, Assistant

cc: CDC AIDS Advisory Council