

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

WHITMAN-WALKER CLINIC, INC., *et al.*,

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, *et al.*,

*Defendants.*

Case No. 1:20-cv-01630

**DECLARATION OF ELENA ROSE VERA,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRANS LIFELINE**

I, Elena Rose Vera, declare as follows:

1. I am the Executive Director of Trans Lifeline.
2. I am submitting this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Motion for a Preliminary Injunction to prevent the revised regulation under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act ("ACA"), published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") on June 19, 2020 (the "Revised Rule"), from taking effect.
3. Founded in 2014 as a peer-support crisis hotline, Trans Lifeline is a peer support and crisis hotline 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to transgender people in crisis. It is the first transgender-specific crisis hotline in the United States or Canada. It is also the only hotline whose operators are all transgender or nonbinary. Currently, the organization operates thanks to the assistance of almost 100 volunteers in addition to a small number of paid staff. Our operators have logged thousands of hours of often life-saving talk time with trans people in our community, and, with new volunteers signing up all the time, our capacity is only growing.

4. Trans Lifeline's hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is the key component of the organization and helps to connect transgender people to the community, support, and resources they need to survive and thrive. Each month the hotline receives on average 4,506 calls from all over the country, as well as Canada.

5. On July 1, 2020, the hotline began providing our 24/7 peer support and crisis helpline service in Spanish due to receiving 23 times more calls from transgender Spanish speakers in 2019 as compared to 2018. The hotline also recorded a 146% spike in calls from transgender immigrants and a 386% increase in calls from Latinx transgender people during that same time.

6. Since HHS announced the finalization of the Revised Rule on June 12, 2020, the hotline has seen a remarkable increase in calls, up from 155 in a typical day in the first five-and-a-half months of 2020, to 534 calls per day between June 12, 2020 and June 19, 2020.

7. Of the calls received between June 12, 2020 and June 19, 2020, callers brought up the Revised Rule approximately 10% of the time. This increase strongly suggests widespread concerns about the implications of the Revised Rule for the transgender community.

8. In addition, for the month of June 2020, we received 200% more calls than the previous month, even when taking into account that the last few months have been unusual as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also received approximately 400% more first time callers than the previous month. And from May to June, calls in which the caller noted they "cannot access medical treatment" increased by over 85%.

9. Where appropriate, Trans Lifeline operators refer callers to public services to address their concerns. For example, operators may refer callers to state agencies that address

discrimination complaints. Callers in need of health care services might be referred to state agencies for coverage and services, such as state Medicaid offices, if income eligible.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated this 8th day of July 2020.

  
Elena Rose Vera