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CONTACT: Michael Silverman  
t: 646.862.9396 | c: 917.292.1495  
msilverman@transgenderlegal.org

## **Transgender Advocacy Group Assails Bush Administration's Harmful Last-Minute Health Care Regulation**

### **Regulation Could Lead to Discrimination Against Transgender People Seeking Health Care**

With just over a month left in George W. Bush's term as President, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a new regulation on Dec. 18 that could seriously undermine the ability of transgender people to get basic health care. The regulation allows doctors and other health care providers to refuse to provide care to patients based on religious and moral beliefs. While HHS claims this will protect health care providers from discrimination due to their beliefs, in fact it is transgender people, who already experience tremendous discrimination when accessing even the most basic health care, who may experience a surge in discriminatory denials of health care.

"Transgender people already experience tremendous hostility and discrimination in the health care setting," Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund [TLDEF] executive director Michael Silverman said. "We oppose HHS' new regulation and call upon President-elect Obama and the new administration to rescind this policy as soon as they take office. Senators Hillary Clinton and Patty Murray have already introduced legislation designed to block HHS from moving forward with the rule and we applaud them for doing so."

TLDEF works to improve access to care for transgender people through its Access to Health Care Program and community organizing project, the Transgender Health Initiative of New York. Health Initiative members are currently working with representatives of the New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation in an effort to improve access to care for transgender people at New York City's public hospitals.

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression, and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, community organizing and public policy efforts.