FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, November 19, 2012
Contact: David Miree, Esq., Policy and Communications
Phone: 415.252-2502

******** PRESS RELEASE ********

San Francisco Human Rights Commission Director Calls Removal of Transgender Related Exclusions from Healthy San Francisco Program a Historic Milestone Toward Equality for City’s Trans-Community

Theresa Sparks, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) offered the following statement on the San Francisco Health Commission’s vote to remove transgender exclusions from Healthy San Francisco, the city’s health care access program:

“I would like to commend the City’s Health Commission, Department of Public Health and District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener for their contribution in advancing equity in healthcare and healthcare access for the City’s Transgender Community. I’m also proud of the work of the HRC staff whose advocacy helped to spearhead the initial dialogue regarding removal of the exclusions. The HRC (Agency) looks forward to working in partnership with DPH to ensure that transgender people in San Francisco are afforded the same level and quality of healthcare that otherwise would not have been possible in light of the discriminatory nature of the exclusions. This is a groundbreaking advancement toward equality for the Trans-community and the LGBT community at large in San Francisco. Along with the vital efforts of the Transgender Law Center, the HEALTH Council, and State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, the primary author of the health access ordinance, this victory has fostered a renewed confidence that San Francisco embraces and supports its Trans-community while also re-affirming the City’s commitment to the inclusion of all its diverse communities when providing services and programs geared toward improving the quality of life its residents.”

As a result of District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener’s call for action on this matter, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in July to recommend that the exclusions be removed. San Francisco will be the first city in the nation to enact this type of comprehensive healthcare for its uninsured transgender residents.

******

Various studies have concluded that receiving medically necessary transition related treatment results in a dramatic drop in suicidality, an overall improvement in mental health, a reduction in HIV infection, a decline in substance abuse rates, and an increase in socioeconomic status for transgender people. Healthy SF is a locally designated and funded healthcare access program for uninsured adults. Although certain healthcare services are provided to transgender people under the program-some specific medically necessary and transitional related services were excluded. This action by the San Francisco Health Commission, the governing and policy-making body of the Department of Public Health (DPH) has resulted in the removal of the exclusions which should take effect in a few months and will result in Healthy SF providing a limited scope of transition-related care.

HRC works to provide leadership and advocacy to secure, protect and promote human rights for all people. The Human Rights Commission was established in 1964 by City Ordinance and became a Charter Commission in 1990.