



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 28, 2020

**WHO:** [Intersex Justice Project](#) (IJP)  
[interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth](#) (interACT)

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Sean Saifa Wall, IJP Co-Founder  
[contact@seansaifa.com](mailto:contact@seansaifa.com), (646) 241-5974

Pidgeon Pagonis, IJP Co-Founder  
[hi@pid.ge](mailto:hi@pid.ge), (202) 743-4366

**TARGETED BY INTERSEX JUSTICE PROJECT'S  
#ENDINTERSEXSURGERY CAMPAIGN, FIRST U.S. HOSPITAL  
PROMISES ACTION TO STOP GENITAL SURGERIES ON INTERSEX  
INFANTS—ADVOCACY GROUPS CALL FOR FURTHER CHANGE**

*Join Intersex Justice Project, Illinois state Representative Kelly Cassidy, interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth, Human Rights Watch, and Brave Space Alliance for a [digital press conference](#) this Thursday, July 30th at 10 PST / 1 EST.*

Chicago, IL—Following a three-year public protest campaign by Intersex Justice Project which included [a petition that garnered over 45,000 signatures](#), Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago quietly posted [a first-of-its-kind public apology](#) Tuesday for harming intersex youth. The statement responds to IJP's #EndIntersexSurgery campaign and promises to act quickly on several demands.

After decades of advocacy and activism, internal pressure from Lurie staff initiated by Dr. Ellie Kim, and a [public call-out](#) by transgender celebrities spearheaded by *POSE* star Indya Moore, Lurie becomes the first U.S.-based hospital to commit to ending the practice of unnecessary genital surgeries on intersex children. Surgeries to change the appearance or sexual function of an infant's genitals—such as reducing a clitoris, moving a working urethra, removing functional testes, and

creating or extending a vagina—have been [condemned by every major human rights organization](#) to consider the issue.

Since their first public protest in Boston in 1996, intersex activists in the United States have been calling on the medical community to put an end to genital “normalizing” surgeries, and to leave intersex people their own choices about their bodies. Intersex Justice Project’s historic victory continues this legacy, centering the voices of Black and Brown intersex activists. While Lurie’s statement recognizes the harm of infant surgeries and commits to doing better, the next step is reparations—IJP further demands free medical care that does not position intersex variations as problems to be fixed. This includes providing hormones and psychological support for intersex young people and their parents.

“This is a historic day that builds upon decades of work. We refuse to stop until all intersex children are protected from state-sanctioned violence,” says **Sean Saifa Wall, co-founder of IJP**. “The goal of the #EndIntersexSurgery campaign has always been to create a domino effect. Lurie’s example sets the tone for other hospitals to leave intersex people their own choices about their bodies. But we’re not done,” says **Pidgeon Pagonis, co-founder of IJP**.

Intersex activists note that Lurie’s statement hints at exempting a large group of people from discussions on the ethics of early genital surgeries—those with a variation called [Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia](#), one of the most common medical terms linked to intersex genital differences. Further, the statement commits to adding only one intersex-identified individual to decisionmaking in their clinic—meaning that up until now, *no intersex people have been continuously consulted and/or compensated for providing feedback in the operation of a medical clinic meant to serve their own communities*. IJP further demands that Lurie hire *at least* two intersex people with backgrounds in intersex human rights advocacy.

interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth, the nation’s oldest and largest policy organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of intersex young people, celebrates this victory and the all-too-often unrecognized work of intersex activists of color. interACT joins IJP’s call for hospitals across the country to respond to continued public demands for accountability and justice. Resources are already available for medical providers to provide sensitive, non-discriminatory care to intersex patients, such as the nation’s first [intersex-affirming hospital policy guide](#), a collaboration of interACT and Lambda Legal, and interACT’s [What We Wish Our Doctors Knew](#) brochure, a creation of interACT: Youth, the world’s largest cohort of young intersex activists. Individuals or groups looking for medical and/or policy guidance should contact [info@interactadvocates.org](mailto:info@interactadvocates.org) for additional opportunities, including connections to interACT’s Medical Advisory Group.