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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 16, 2021

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PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES ADOPTS POLICY FROM SF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO ALLOW PATIENTS UNDERGOING MEDICAL TREATMENT TO USE PHOTO ON FILE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Shortly before the start of the Shelter-in-Place orders last year, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a [resolution](#) urging the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to adopt a policy to allow patients whose physical characteristics were changed due to medical treatment to use the existing photo on file for driver licenses and identification cards.

Prior to the pandemic, the DMV's policy required people to take a new photo after a number of years to renew their driver's license or identification card. Patients whose physical characteristics were changed due to chemotherapy or other demanding medical treatments, were still required to go into the DMV to take a new photo documenting their hair loss or other physical change.

"Forcing someone to relive their struggle with cancer long after their recovery every time they look at their own driver's license photo is incredibly insensitive," said Board President Supervisor Shamann Walton. "The psychological trauma from such an intense illness can be extremely powerful, and we have a responsibility to do everything we can to lighten that load. With the countless germs and viruses present at the DMV from other patrons, that is the last place we should be asking our immunocompromised population to go, risking potentially life-threatening infections especially during a pandemic. I'm glad that the California DMV has adopted this policy for their driver license and ID renewals for individuals undergoing medical treatment."

During the course of the pandemic and Stay-At-Home orders, many seniors and immunocompromised individuals were unable to renew their driver licenses or identification cards. In October, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that allowed older Californians to renew their driver's licenses by mail, allowing them to skip a trip to a DMV office during the pandemic. His previous orders also gave Californians age 70 and older



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extensions on license renewals but did not address the photo policy for individuals undergoing medical treatment that causes physical changes.

“My patients often remark to me that while they can cope on a day to day basis with the nausea or debilitating fatigue, looking in the mirror becomes a traumatizing experience during chemotherapy treatments,” said Ilana Brosh, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for Hematology, Oncology, and Supportive Care in San Francisco, “Many patients tell me they simply choose not to look in the mirror for several months as they cannot tolerate seeing "that extremely sick person" staring back at them. It is too emotionally devastating. I’m extremely grateful that this brand new DMV policy will now allow a previous picture to be used during the license renewal process for those who received a diagnosis of cancer and must endure difficult treatment. My patients will no longer have to constantly be reminded of this traumatic period every time they need to show their license.”

Effective immediately, the Department of Motor Vehicles will allow applicants to request a renewal of their driver’s license or identification card using their photo on file, if available, due to a medical condition. The applicant must complete a Transmittal Form (DL 11) or submit a letter documenting the request. The request must contain: the applicant’s name, applicant’s DL/ID number, a statement requesting to use their prior photo due to a medical condition, and either a return address, phone number, or email. Access the Transmittal Form (DL 11) [here](#), on the second page under the heading “Utility Form.”

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