

Attorneys for the Rights of the Child

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Attorneys for the Rights of the Child Preparing Response to Today's Draft Circumcision Regulation Released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); CDC Ignoring Medical Evidence and Growing International Opposition

Berkeley, CA – The human rights organization Attorneys for the Rights of the Child (ARC) (www.arclaw.org) is preparing a response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding its release earlier today of a draft of proposed circumcision guidelines (<http://arclaw.org/news/cdc-releases-draft-first-ever-federal-guidelines-male-circumcision-public-commenting-period-ope>).

J. Steven Svoboda, ARC's Executive Director, commented today, "Sadly, the CDC has chosen to ignore the medical evidence to try to justify an outmoded and painful cultural—not medical—practice. In these days of constantly mounting medical costs and ever scarcer resources, we simply cannot afford to continue supporting and performing a harmful and antiquated procedure."

Regarding the CDC's claim that circumcision's benefits outweigh the risks, Svoboda commented, "The CDC omitted the functions of the amputated tissue. If the CDC advocates for cutting off a body part, shouldn't we know what that body part does?"

Svoboda commented, "If circumcision is as desirable as the CDC suggests, why are European countries moving towards banning it, why are their males healthier than Americans, and why does the CDC not come out and recommend it?" By the CDC's own admission, Americans are increasingly choosing to leave their sons intact, as circumcision rates have plunged in recent years.

Svoboda added, "A recent study concluded that the literature favoring circumcision contains considerable gaps, lacks rigor and is largely not applicable to North America." Studies of HIV in adult males in Africa suffer from methodological and statistical errors and even if valid, given vast differences in health conditions and modes of transmission, the results can hardly be applied to justify infant male circumcision in the United States. "Doctors cannot ethically remove tissue from babies without consent, based on speculation about their possible sexual behavior decades later," Svoboda added.

"Male circumcision," Svoboda said, "violates a child's right to bodily integrity, not to mention numerous civil and criminal statutes." Malpractice awards are mounting up; a list of seventy such cases were released by ARC, the largest amount to 22.8 million dollars.

Attorneys for the Rights of the Child is a non-profit organization founded in 1997 to protect children from unnecessary medical procedures to which they do not consent.