# Providing Transgender Affirming Care
## Tip Sheet

Promoting a diverse environment that includes gender affirming health services is ethically important and could be good for business.[1] By prioritizing inclusivity, you create a safe and welcoming environment for transgender and gender-nonbinary individuals, which increases patient satisfaction, promotes positive word-of-mouth, and improves health outcomes within the community.

Although not an exhaustive list, this document, created by the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC) under the leadership of subject matter expert Queen Victoria Ortega, provides promising practices for promoting transgender affirming care. For additional information, please contact PCDC at hip@pcdc.org.

## 1. Create a Welcoming Environment

**Display images, posters, signage, and symbols that welcome and affirm transgender and gender-diverse individuals:**

- Gender-neutral restroom signs.
- A diverse group of people holding hands.
- A transgender pride flag.
- A transgender person interacting with a healthcare provider.
- Testimonials from transgender patients.
- Statistics on the positive impact of gender affirming care.

**Develop marketing materials that highlight commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and community-centered care**:

- Include images of diverse staff and patients.
- Use imagery and symbols representing transgender and gender non-binary communities.
- Engage transgender and gender non-binary voices in developing and/or providing feedback on marketing materials.

**Language**

- Use gender-neutral and inclusive language in all communication materials.
- Ask patients for affirmed names and pronouns (a name chosen by an individual to use instead of their legal first name)[2] during intake and continue to use them consistently.

**Patient Bill of Rights**

- Develop a patient bill of rights that explicitly includes transgender and gender-diverse individuals, outlining their rights to respectful and affirming care. For an example, click here.[3]
- Include information about confidentiality, informed consent, non-discrimination, and the right to be addressed by one's affirmed name and pronouns.

## 2. Enhance Cultural Responsiveness

**Establish a Transgender Community Advisory Council.[4]**

- Gather input from transgender individuals and community organizations.
- Engage council members in discussions about health center policies, services, and initiatives to ensure they align with community needs.
- Foster an ongoing partnership with the council to maintain a community-centered approach and continually improve services.

**Create a tool to assess organizational readiness to provide transgender affirming care.[5]**

- Focus on policies, staff training, cultural competence, and facility accessibility.
- Use evaluation results to identify areas for improvement and guide implementation of transgender-inclusive practices.
- Seek technical assistance and/or training to enhance knowledge and skills working with transgender and gender non-binary populations.

## 3. Training and Continuing Education

**Hire persons with lived experience to enhance organizational knowledge and skills for working with transgender and gender non-binary individuals.**

**Provide comprehensive staff training on transgender cultural responsiveness, sensitivity, and healthcare needs to include:**

- Strategies for fostering understanding of the unique healthcare needs and challenges of transgender patients.
- Specialized clinical training focused on insurance and coverage, transgender healthcare, hormone therapy, surgical options, and mental health considerations.
- Assisting patients in navigating insurance-related challenges.
- Educational resources to learn appropriate terminology and use respectful language when discussing transgender health. For examples, click here.[6]
- Communication skills training.
- Confidentiality training.
- Implicit bias training.
- EMR system training.
- Policy and procedures training that aligns with trans-affirming practices.
- Confidentiality regarding patients' transition related care.

## 3. Systems Change

### Develop Policies and Procedures About:

Confidentiality regarding patients' transition-related care.

Prescription writing and prior authorizations.

Billing procedures specific to the needs of transgender individuals.

Surgical and specialty referrals.

### Electronic Medical Records (EMR)

- Work with your EMR vendor to create fields needed to be inclusive of transgender and nonbinary patients, such as the patient's self-identified gender and pronouns.

- Provide space for patients to provide their legal and affirmed names, respecting their identity.

**Primary Care Development Corporation**

To implement any of these strategies or to obtain more information about Gender Affirming Care, please reach out to Primary Care Development Corporation at hip@pcdc.org.

### Endnotes

1  Sakpal, M. (2019, Sept. 20). Diversity and inclusion build high-performance teams. Gartner.
   https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/diversity-and-inclusion-build-high-performance-teams.

2  Santa Monica College, Preferred/affirmed first name. (2023). https://www.smc.edu/admission-aid/policies/preferred-name.php#:~:text=A%20
   preferred%2Faffirmed%20first%20name%20is%20a%20name%20chosen%20by,select%20college%20systems%20and%20documents.

3  Fenway Health. (2023, March 16). Patient rights and responsibilities.
   https://fenwayhealth.org/info/services/patient-rights-responsibilities/

4  Spencer, Anna. (2019, Dec. 17). Center for Health Care Strategies. Convening a consumer advisory board: best practices for convening a
   community advisory board. https://www.chcs.org/convening-a-consumer-advisory-board/

5  Willging C., Sturm R., Sklar M., Kano M., Davies S., & Eckstrand K. (2021) LGBTQ primary care toolkit: A guide for primary care clinics to
   improve services for sexual and gender minority (SGM) patients. Albuquerque, NM: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.

6  Gay and Media Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). (accessed 2023, October 10). GLADD Media Reference Guide.
   https://glaad.org/reference/

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