



Transgender Care in the Medical Home

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AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS (AHEC) PROGRAM



Program Overview: Transgender Care seeks to enhance the capacity of primary care providers and care coordinators to treat and manage the care of transgender youth and adults. The curriculum will focus on common and complex issues of transgender patient population based on the Gender Affirming Medical Home

Program participants will have the opportunity to present challenging patient cases for discussion with a multidisciplinary panel of transgender providers from UVM Medical Center and the Transgender clinic at the Community Health Center of Burlington. The panel consists of psychiatrists, social workers and pediatricians and a surgeon. Instructional presentations and case discussions will stimulate rich conversation and create an environment of group learning. Recommendations to the case presenters will incorporate the most appropriate, best-practice protocols and evidence-based resources. This format has been shown to improve providers' knowledge while building their skills to care for transgender patients across the lifespan. The program is offered at no-cost through the generous support of and the Vermont AHEC Network.

Intended Audience: A cohort of primary care providers and affiliated care coordinators from across Vermont and Northern New England who provide care to transgender youth and adults or who want to improve competence in providing primary care to their transgender patients. *(continued on page 2)*

Transgender Care in the Medical Home *(continued from page 1)*

Learning objectives:

- Improve skills to more accurately treat transgender and non-binary youth living with complex family, medical and social concerns
- Increased understanding of Gender Affirming Primary Care
- Learn how to manage common side effects and conditions
- Identify resource supports for transgender youth, adults and families
- Improved knowledge of community resources available for transgender patients
- Improve skills to help patients and families navigate the gender-affirmation journey

Transgender Care in the Medical Home: this 8-session series is scheduled to start on June 20 and run monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 12 pm to 1 pm. Project ECHO is offered at no cost to participants and the program enables participants to earn Continuing Medical Education credits for each learning session attended.

More information about this Project ECHO series, and others, will be posted at www.vtahec.org once materials are available.

Advancing Excellence in Transgender Health: A Core Course for the Whole Care Team

In September 2018, members of the Transgender Youth Program attended the *Advancing Excellence in Transgender Health: A Core Course for the Whole Care Team* hosted by the Fenway Institute in Boston. This two-day conference focused on providing advanced education regarding trans health for each member of the team. The Fenway Institute is a leading provider of trans health care in the United States with specialists across the spectrum.

The team at the Transgender Youth Program were also joined by staff from the Community Health Center of Burlington, South Burlington Family Practice and Planned Parenthood. By having representation across these organizations, it allowed us to bring knowledge back to our respective agencies and increase our collaborative efforts to provide the highest quality of trans health care to the state of Vermont.

The Transgender Youth Program is continually evolving our practices, and the knowledge we gained from the Fenway Institute continues to propel us towards providing excellent trans health care.

Update from UVMHC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

As part of the 2019 Epic Electronic Health Record Upgrade, there will be a new capability to collect sexual orientation and gender identity information on all patients. Collecting this information is key to identifying and reducing potential health disparities among our LGBTQ patient population. To understand the needs of our patients and communities, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Department recently hosted focus groups in November and December with Outright Vermont, UVMHC's Patient & Family Advisory Council, and the Transgender Youth Program. The purpose of these focus groups was to gather information that will be invaluable for our staff, and our patients on how to respectfully collect patient information in a culturally-sensitive way. Planning for the upgrade will continue throughout the spring and summer.

For more details on this initiative and/or questions, please contact Stephen Graves, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager at stephen.graves@uvmhealth.org.



Staff Profile: Candace Bedard, RN, BSN

Pronouns: she/her

Position: Transgender Youth Program Nurse Coordinator

How did you first get involved with the Transgender Youth Program?

The first doctor, Dr. Drawdy, one day asked me if I would work with her when the TYP was established. I said yes, but pretty much had no knowledge about what it means to be transgender or gender fluid or any of a number of other things regarding gender identity. Man, have I learned a lot in the past 2-plus years, much of it from kids and families.

What's your favorite memory of working with TYP?

There are so many favorite memories that I wouldn't be able to narrow it down. I will say, however, that I have seen some pretty awesome hairstyles and hair colors on kids as expression of their identity.

How long have you worked at UVM Medical Center and what different positions have you held?

I have worked in pediatrics for almost 40 years. I worked on the inpatient unit for 30 years, where I was involved in a number of different committees in support of patients, families and staff. I loved working with the sickest, most complicated patients and their families, yet also loved every other aspect of the job. Near the end of that time, I was part of the team who helped design, train, staff and implement our electronic health record (EHR) In 2009, I started working in Pediatric Endocrinology (relating to hormones), an outpatient clinic, where the goal is to keep kids healthy and out of the hospital. I teach parents how to give their children a variety of oral, nasal and injectable hormone medications. I set up specialized testing for some of the kids, which help in diagnosing certain conditions. I spend a lot of time on the phone with parents to give info, answer questions and address concerns.

What else do you currently do at UVM Medical Center?

The majority of my job is Pediatric Endocrinology, with roughly three quarters of my hours dedicated to that and roughly one quarter dedicated to the TYP.

What's one thing you wish every patient and family knew about TYP?

The only time that TYP staff are all together is on clinic days. Otherwise we all work in different buildings of this ginormous institution. Much communication is by phone, e-mail or EHR messaging.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I am an avid reader. I try to balance out "trashy" novels with books from which I can learn something about a person, time or place.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself?

In my late teens/early 20's I was a licensed pyrotechnician (fireworks), back when the fuses were lit by flares, not electronically.



Rainbow Connection: An Evening with the Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council and Outright Vermont!

Thursday, February 21st 6 - 8 pm
Garden Atrium Café at UVM Medical Center

Join Us for an Evening of Information, Connection and Making Buttons!

The University of Vermont Children's Hospital's Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council, along with our friends at Outright Vermont, are hosting a 'meet and greet' night for trans youth and their families! Come hear about the supportive programs offered in our community, connect with folks, and make a pronoun button! Heck yeah!





Patient Advisor Perspective

By Leah Genzlinger

My name is Leah Genzlinger. I became a parent advisor just over a year ago after I attended the Translating Identity Conference (TIC) with my sister at UVM and we happened upon the Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council (TYPAC) table. I had been looking for a way to get involved and provide more support for my sister, her daughter and all trans kids and caregivers out there.

I remember taking my niece on one of her first shopping trips in the girls section. This was before she had transitioned, so she was just starting to build her wardrobe of dresses. The smile on her face while she was trying on those Hello Kitty dresses is something that I will always remember. She glowed later that day as she twirled around showing them to her mom. I want her to know that I will always be there for her, I will always have her back, and I will do what I can to help make her journey a little bit easier. Being a parent advisor allows me to not just do this for my niece but also do what I can to help all trans kids on their journey.

Become a Patient/Family Advisor

Want to make a difference in the development of the Transgender Youth Program? The Transgender Youth Program is seeking patient/family advisors to bring the patient and family voice and perspective to all aspects of planning and decision making at UVM Medical Center. Our patient/family advisors become part of our team on committees and workgroups designed to improve patient care. If you are interested in learning more or to become a patient/family advisor please email charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org

“Caregivers of Trans Youth” Facebook Page

Want to get connected to other caregivers of trans youth? Consider joining the Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council’s closed Facebook group for caregivers. It is our hope that this social media platform supports parents and caregivers of trans youth in connecting with one another. We encourage you to ask questions, share stories and revel in the successes and challenges that come with all the light and joy of raising children. (Please speak to the youth in your care about joining this group to honor their confidentiality!) Please [click on this link](#) to request to join the group.

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

The Department for Children and Families is currently seeking trans- and queer-affirming families throughout Vermont to foster youth of all ages. Many of these LGBTQ youth have experienced significant trauma and need safe, stable homes with caring adults to help them heal. Might that adult be you? Consider becoming a foster parent. You will be supported through trainings and education, peer support, stipends and professional services. To learn more, please visit dcf.vermont.gov/foster.

Or call your local Family Services District Office. Find the number here: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact-us/>

Frequently Asked Questions

In this section, we'll tackle one question *in* each newsletter. If you have any questions, please always feel free to reach out to the Transgender Youth Program by phone at 802-847-3811.

Why does it take so long to get my medication started?

There are a lot of reasons why it may take a while for your medication to start. Medications prescribed for puberty suppression or gender affirmation are specialty medications and controlled substances. This means that the medications are not always readily available at your pharmacy and require prior authorization from your insurance. Here are some common reasons that it may take over a month to begin your medication regimen:

We are awaiting signed consents or a supportive letter from your therapist.

We cannot move forward with any prescriptions for medications without signed consent from all custodial parents and a supportive letter from your therapist.

What can I do to speed this up?

- Send in your signed consents as soon as they are signed.
- Be in contact with your therapist and get them to send their supportive letter directly to the program as soon as possible.
- If you do not yet have a therapist, work to identify a therapist as soon as possible. You can always ask Theresa to assist in finding a therapist with openings who is the right fit for you.

We need to receive prior authorization from your insurance company.

All insurance companies require prior authorization for gender-affirming care. Each insurance company and plan has their own individual process for providing prior authorization. Once we have received all necessary documentation, we will request prior authorization from your insurance company.

What can I do to speed this up?

Sometimes the insurance company sends correspondence directly to you first. If you receive correspondence from your insurance company regarding prior authorization, please call our office and inform us.

The prescription needs to be filled by a specialty pharmacy.

Some of the medications we prescribe need to be filled by specialty pharmacies. This is determined by each individual pharmacy and insurance company on a case-by-case basis. We do not know which pharmacy or insurance plans will require medications to be filled by a specialty pharmacy.

What can I do to speed this up?

Make sure your pharmacy has all your necessary information, including insurance information, phone number and address.

The prescription needs to be mailed to either your doctor's office or you directly.

If your medication is being filled by a specialty pharmacy, the medication often needs to be mailed to either you or your primary care office. The Transgender Youth Program will have already contacted your primary care office to determine where they prefer the medication be shipped. They will have provided this information to the specialty pharmacy and you, as well. The specialty pharmacy may call you directly to confirm shipping information prior to shipping the medication. They will not ship the medication until they have spoken directly to someone who can receive the shipment.

What can I do to speed this up?

If you are contacted by the pharmacy, please make sure you speak with someone about the correct shipping directions.

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued from page 6)*

Why does it take so long to get my medication started? (continued)

Other less common reasons:

- Your insurance doesn't cover the medication.
- Not all insurance companies cover gender-affirming care. Make sure to speak with your insurance about coverage of care. We will work to appeal any denials of medication coverage, but this can often be a lengthy process.
- Your primary care doctor's office may have specific policies regarding administering a specialty medication.
- When it comes to puberty blockers, each individual primary care office has different policies on how medications are ordered and administered. We work closely with each primary care office to ensure a smooth process, but we respect that each office has their own predetermined policies we may have to follow.

Scheduling

The staff at the Transgender Youth Program are all part-time with other jobs at the UVM Medical Center. As a specialty service, it can take time to have you scheduled in for a training for self-administration of gender-affirming care, including puberty blockers and testosterone injections.

Something new!

We are always learning new things when it comes to medications, insurances and pharmacies. There is no one size fits all, and we often run into issues we have never encountered before.

And now, some takeaways...

It is important to all of us at the Transgender Youth Program that our patients are receiving care in a timely manner. We understand that it is never easy to have to wait to begin a new medication regimen. We appreciate our patients' understanding and patience throughout this process.

If you have any questions about your medications or beginning a new gender-affirming medication, please feel free to call us at 802-847-3811.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **The Transgender Youth Program staff are all part-time with other jobs throughout the medical center.** Each of our team members wear several hats throughout the day and dedicate only a portion of their hours directly to the Transgender Youth Program. Since our staff wear these different hats, we are not always available to respond to your needs and requests right away. Although we strive to respond to all of your needs as quickly as possible, please allow for a few days for our team to respond to your inquiries.
- **The Transgender Youth Program only sees patients for two half days per month.** Our clinic dates are typically the first Monday afternoon and third Wednesday morning of every month. We work to see as many patients as possible during that time period. If you need to cancel an appointment, please give as much advance notice as possible, as we can often fill these appointment times. If you do cancel or miss your appointment, it may take several months for us to be able to reschedule your appointment.
- **It is customary to provide 48-72-hour advance notice when you need a prescription refill?** It may take us a few days to receive your refill request and to refill your prescription. By giving advance notice, you reduce the likelihood of gaps in coverage. Additionally, gender-affirming medications are not always kept in stock at the pharmacy and may require 1-2 days to be shipped and received by the pharmacy.
- **You can reach the staff at the Transgender Youth Program via the Gender Line at 802-847-3811 or the UVM Medical Center [MyHealth Online](#) portal.** Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

TRANSGENDER YOUTH PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find health information, or for convenient and secure access to your medical record through MyHealth Online, please visit UVMHealth.org or call us at (844) 886-4325.

If you are interested in learning more, or to become a patient/family advisor, please email Theresa.Emery@UVMHealth.org or Charlotte.Safran@UVMHealth.org

TRANSGENDER YOUTH PROGRAM

111 Colchester Avenue
Main Campus
East Pavilion, Level 4
Burlington, VT 05401

CLINIC HOURS

1st Monday of each month, 1-5 pm
3rd Wednesday of each month, 9-12 am

PHONE

(802) 847-3811

FAX

(802) 847-5364

Support Groups

- Trans Parent Group meets the first Monday of each month at Outright.
6:30 - 8 pm
<http://www.outrightvt.org/trans-parents/>
- Queer Care Group meets the second Monday of each month at Outright.
6:30 - 8 pm
<http://www.outrightvt.org/queer-care/>
- Trans Group meets the last Tuesday of each month at Outright.
4:30 - 6 pm
<http://www.outrightvt.org/trans-group/>
- Gender Creative Kids Group meets the second Sunday of each month at Outright.
2 - 4 pm
<http://www.outrightvt.org/gender-creative-kids/>
- Check out the OutrightVT [event calendar](#) for ongoing events like Trans Parent Group and Queer Care Group (for parents/ caregivers of trans and queer youth).

IN THE NEWS



Highlighting articles that focus on the resilience, determination and progress made by transgender individuals and their allies, both locally and nationally.

- [Vt. School Unveils Gender-Neutral Locker Room](#)
- [CDC Report: Nearly 2 Percent of High Schoolers Are Transgender](#)
- [Young Trans Children Know Who They Are](#)
- [New York Passes Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act & Protections Against Conversion Therapy](#)
- [How to talk to transgender youth, according to experts and their parents](#)
- [Ms., Mr. or Mx.? Nonbinary teachers embrace gender-neutral honorific](#)
- [D.C. Public Schools to Include Third 'Non-Binary' Option for Students](#)