

# GENDER AND SEXUALITY DEVELOPMENT CLINIC 2017 ANNUAL UPDATE



**Dear Friends,**

The Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic (GSD) has seen exciting growth over the past three years and we are honored to share our second annual report. As a collaboration among the divisions of Adolescent Medicine and Endocrinology, Behavioral Health, and Social Work and Family Services at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, we provide comprehensive medical care and psychosocial support for gender-expansive and transgender children and adolescents, and their families. As we get ready to celebrate our 4th birthday, we are thrilled to share that we have cared for over 700 families. This summer was our "Summer of International Support" as we met with families from Germany, Saudi Arabia, and the Virgin Islands. While our weekly and monthly reach typically includes families from PA, NJ, DE and NY, we are honored to support youth and their families from near and far.



**Innovative Multidisciplinary Medical Care** The clinic team has over 10 staff members--a mental health gender specialist, a social worker, adolescent medicine specialists, an endocrinologist, a gynecologist, a psychiatrist, an intake coordinator, nurses, a school educator, and an insurance specialist. Our medical care includes providing puberty blockers, gender-affirming hormone treatment, and referrals for fertility preservation and gender-affirming surgeries when determined to be most ideal based on the patient and family needs. This year we completed 700 visits with approximately 4-6 new referrals per week.



**Support Services** We have multiple groups that meet once a month to provide support to parents, teens, children and siblings within the clinic and are free to all. Throughout this year, we heard that families wanted this support to grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, and friends. In response to this, CHOP awarded us a Cares Grant to pilot an Extended Family Support Group. With a generous donation from a family, we were also able to offer our second annual Legal Clinic Day in November which provided assistance for 15 families in completing much needed name changes.



**Education and Training** As we look back on three amazing years of collaborating with and listening to families and community leaders, we have identified two critical areas for our education and training efforts: supporting pediatricians and school staff. To date, over 300 medical providers have been trained in providing competent care throughout the CHOP network. The Hospital is developing new policies that will govern care for transgender patients, families, and guests – among the first in the nation for a pediatric hospital. Further, our clinic educator has provided school trainings to over 1500 educators. And, thanks to a generous donation from a local family foundation, trainings will double to include more schools in NJ, DE and Western PA.



**Innovative Research** We believe that research is critical to improving the health and well-being of transgender children and youth. To date the clinic has received more than 10 federal, foundation, and local grants and institutional support was provided to develop a registry to follow long-term medical and psychosocial outcomes for our patients. Together with collaborators, we are studying a broad range of issues including pediatrician competence in providing care to LGBT youth, health insurance and policy impact on access to gender-affirming care, options for fertility preservation, and understanding genetic diversity of gender expression. We have presented our findings at over 15 national meetings and published more than 30 peer-reviewed manuscripts, book chapters, blogs, and op-eds.

While there have been many challenges this year, support from families, community partners, and the Hospital has been more critical than ever in continuing our program's mission. We hope you will join us in celebrating the amazing youth we care for, our accomplishments and the wonderful staff who do this work every day, and night. We look forward to another year of supporting youth across the gender identity spectrum to be their happiest and healthiest selves.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nadia Dowshen'.

**Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP**

Co-Director, Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic  
Craig-Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Perelman School of Medicine at the  
University of Pennsylvania

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Hawkins'.

**Linda Hawkins, PhD, LPC**

Co-Director, Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic  
Department of Social Work and Family Services

# STATE-OF-THE-ART MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE

The GSD Clinic continues to provide the highest quality patient and family care. Our care model includes first meeting with our mental health gender specialist who offers psychosocial assessment and connections to support services as needed including within clinic/hospital resources as well as referrals to community partners for on-going therapy. Additionally, our medical team works with local primary care clinicians to provide a supportive medical home. The medical provider team has expanded in the last year from two to three physicians, added a nurse practitioner and we now have multiple physicians in training who are working with these leaders to become the next generation of competent providers for transgender children and youth.

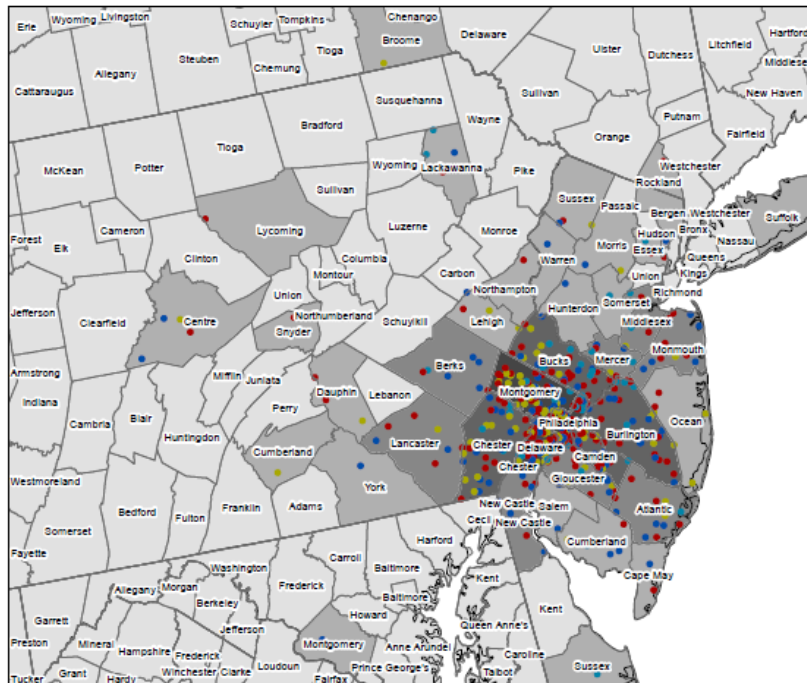
“ Full of acceptance and warmth, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Gender Clinic opened their arms wide, welcoming me the moment I walked in. I was greeted by lively faces and bright eyes, creating a comfortable environment. Most people strive to find a space that is accepting and open to all types of people, and the Gender Clinic has been and will always be there for me throughout my journey. Every person I've met played a major part in changing my life dramatically by building my confidence, aiding my health needs, and providing me with the resources to become the person who I was always meant to be. ”

- Amelia (patient)



This year we completed 700 clinic visits with approximately 4-6 new referrals per week

## Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic Caseload



In 2014, when we opened the Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic, we were among the first handful of pediatric hospitals to have a multidisciplinary clinic and continue to be leaders in the field. During our first years, the [Human Rights Campaign designated CHOP as a leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality](#) in part due to our clinics work and services, and we continue to draw patients and care providers who want to learn about our model from across the region. The clinic leaders, Drs. Hawkins and Dowshen, are sharing what we've learned to help other hospitals and clinics throughout the nation as they build services to support children across the map.

As many families come to CHOP from a great distance, we assess the landscape in our patients' communities and partner with local professionals to provide mentorship and support in order to improve access to the best care for children and families. Thankfully, we have been able to build many new alliances to support families across Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

# IMPROVING HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS AND POLICY TO SUPPORT TRANSGENDER YOUTH

When our patients seek care in other departments and facilities throughout our large hospital network, we often hear concerns about how their gender identity is addressed or not addressed by providers and other clinic or hospital staff. Thus, throughout the hospital and care network we have been working diligently to implement a series of new policies and tools to improve gender-affirming care network wide which include—(1) [Transgender Identity Smartform](#), (2) [Preferred Name Policy](#), and (3) the [Caring for Transgender & Gender Non-Binary Patients, Families, & Guests Policy](#).

## Transgender Identity Smartform

A smartform is a clinical workflow tool based in an electronic medical record (EMR) designed to effectively capture data regarding patient information or clinical visits. At CHOP, we now have a Transgender Identity Smartform where care providers are able to indicate the patient's sex assigned at birth, gender identity, preferred pronouns, anatomy inventory and any gender-affirming medications or procedures. Once that form is complete, providers across the network have access to this important identity and medical information so they can provide the best care to their patients.

**Transgender Identity**

Directions: Click here to read directions on using this SmartForm  
Requests to have the patient's preferred name added to the chart and header must be made to registration staff.

Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex Assigned at Birth:  Female  Male  Unknown  Uncertain  Intersex

Gender Identity:  Female  Male  Transgender Female / Male-to-Female  Transgender Male / Female-to-Male  Other  Choose not to disclose  Gender Non-Binary, Gender Non-Conforming  Gender Queer

Preferred Pronoun:  he, him, his  she, her, hers  they, them, theirs  ey, em, eirs  ve, ver, vis  xe, xem, zyr, zyrs  ze(zie), hir, hirs  ze(zie), zir, zirs  the patient  other pronoun

Transition Summary (optional)

Organ Inventory:  Penis  Testes  Prostate  Breasts  Vagina  Cervix  Uterus  Ovaries

Treatments and Procedures:

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaginoplasty, colon graft	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction thyrochondroplasty
<input type="checkbox"/> Menstrual Suppression	<input type="checkbox"/> Phalloplasty, free flap	<input type="checkbox"/> Laryngeal feminization surgery
<input type="checkbox"/> Puberty suppression with implant	<input type="checkbox"/> Metoidioplasty	<input type="checkbox"/> Soft tissue filler injections
<input type="checkbox"/> Puberty suppression without implant	<input type="checkbox"/> Scrotoplasty	<input type="checkbox"/> Bilateral total reduction mammoplasty
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-sex hormone therapy, current user	<input type="checkbox"/> Urethroplasty	<input type="checkbox"/> Voice surgery
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-sex hormone therapy, past user	<input type="checkbox"/> Scalp advancement	<input type="checkbox"/> Other unlisted surgical procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Vaginoplasty, penile inversion	<input type="checkbox"/> Forehead reconstruction	

Consider updating Surgical History, if applicable. [Jump to History](#)

Close

## Preferred Name Policy



In addition to the smartform, CHOP has instituted a preferred name policy where patients are able to indicate their preferred name at the time of registration. The preferred name appears under the patient's legal name in the patient header in the EMR. Additionally, when patients have visits within the CHOP network there is now also a preferred name column in the patient schedule view that makes this information more easily accessible to providers before they even open the patient's chart. While there are still limitations, (e.g., the legal name still appears on lab orders visit summaries and billing documents) we are constantly working to build solutions to assure the best possible healthcare experiences for our patients.

## Caring for Transgender & Gender Non-Binary Patients, Families, & Guests Policy



Several years of feedback and guidance from our patients and families has resulted in what will be the first collection of policies and procedures for providing hospital network-wide care for transgender patients, families, and guests. The policies and procedures will address the best practice for supporting gender expansive and transgender folks in all areas of care, from the first intake call to the interactions with providers and the logistics of room assignments when hospitalized. The goal will be to provide the most competent, seamless, and supportive care possible. These policies and procedures are slated to roll out in January of 2018 with trainings to follow.

“*Around the middle of my eighth grade year I began visiting Dr. Linda Hawkins at CHOP. I was really nervous about the whole ordeal; I saw a therapist once before, but it didn't go very well. I really liked Linda when I first met her, and I had an overall positive outlook on how therapy would be. I was finally opening up about my identity as a trans man. I struggled all of my life with this feeling that being a girl wasn't for me, but I had no other way to describe it. It wasn't even that I rejected feminine things, but when someone said I was a girl something just didn't sit right. I finally figured out that even if someone was born a girl, they could still be a boy! To help my parents understand my situation, I came to CHOP for help.*



*I have now been on testosterone for over a year. My voice was the main source of my dysphoria; I hated hearing my voice and now I absolutely love to hear my voice. Everyone who knew me before I started testosterone is amazed with how I sound now. I'm even growing a little bit of facial hair. I was able to see Dr. Dowshen for my menstruation cessation medication and testosterone! The clinic was also helpful in helping me come out to my family, referring me to the UPenn Law Clinic for my name change, and opening the bathrooms at Central Bucks South High School to transgender students. Without the resources at CHOP, I think I would still feel very lost and frustrated. I'm so very grateful to have had the opportunity to go to the Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic.*”

- Gabe (patient)

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Education and Training

We are strongly committed to supporting the health, well-being, and success of our patients in the various settings where they spend their lives. Our team has prioritized and concentrated our efforts in two areas: (1) **increasing transgender competent healthcare** and (2) **creating more supportive school environments**. In addition to providing the highest quality care for our patients at the CHOP Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic, we also want to share what we have learned with as many youth-serving professionals as possible.

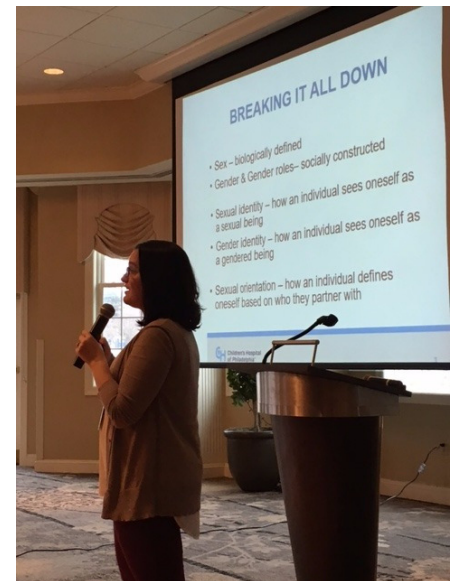
Many pediatricians have shared with us that when they learn they have a transgender child or youth in their practice, they want to do more to ensure the best care experience for the patient and their family. As a result we have provided training to pediatricians and other healthcare providers, both locally and nationally. This year alone we conducted trainings for over 500 care providers both within and outside of the CHOP Care Network.

In addition to facing challenges in healthcare, gender-expansive youth face high rates of bullying and harassment which often lead to missed educational opportunities. Recently, we received a grant from a local family foundation to formalize our curriculum and track outcomes for our *Safe Schools* program. Through our *Safe Schools* program we work with individual schools and school districts to provide trainings to administrators, staff, and teachers to improve the classroom environment for transgender students. We believe that when school leadership commits to the support and inclusion of transgender students, we see reduced depression and anxiety, and youth are more likely to remain in school. As education is a primary predictor of health and well-being in adulthood, it is critical to ensure that transgender children stay in school and remain engaged with the community.

Since the GSD Clinic opened, each year we receive 40-50 requests for school trainings and the requests for in-depth assistance continue to rise. Trainings for school administrators and staff include information on:

- ➔ **Understanding gender identity in the context of child development**
- ➔ **Establishing trans-inclusive policies**
- ➔ **Identifying ways to reduce gender-categorized classroom activities and projects**
- ➔ **Clarifying what bullying and harassment looks and sounds like for transgender students**
- ➔ **Establishing accountability plans that will reward students and teachers who put a stop to harassment**

**This year we completed 33 trainings in 15 schools.**



Staff who have received our trainings report increased ability to support transgender students and improvement in overall acceptance for gender diversity in the school environment. Additionally, families tell us they are comforted by staff and students knowing how to be supportive of transgender students, and increased accountability in the school community.

“*The Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic at CHOP has been an invaluable resource for our faculty, staff, and parents. By collaborating with them, we have created a more inclusive and caring community for all of our students and their families. Staff from the clinic met individually with administrators and counselors. They conducted several informative workshops for our teachers, and they also offered evening and morning workshops for our parent community. In addition to offering these educational opportunities, they also were willing to meet one-on-one with our administrators and counselors. They even helped us assess our physical space with a thorough walkthrough of our classrooms and facilities, and we then made changes based on their insightful recommendations. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with them, and we are extremely grateful that we have access to their expertise and guidance.*”

- Philadelphia School Counselor

# SPECIAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Beyond the walls of clinic we know that the young people we care for can face many challenges in their communities and they often feel that they are going through these experiences alone. In response to these concerns, we have continued to grow our therapeutic support groups in collaboration with the Mazzoni Center. These groups meet monthly with separate groups for children (5 – 14 years old), adolescents (15-20 years old), siblings of all ages, and parents. Each group is facilitated by trained specialists under the leadership of Erica Smith, MEd.

**This year we had 12 support groups, averaging 40 parents, 20 teens, 15 littles, and 8 siblings every month.** The teen group also collaborated with the support the University of Pennsylvania to develop a writing group that met after every support group. Thanks to amazing support and donations, the 12 youth who completed their writing experience will have their writing formally produced and published. With the support of new grants from CHOP Cares and Philadelphia FIGHT, next year we are pleased to add two new groups: (1) for older youth who no longer have the support of their families and (2) for extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, etc.). The extended family group will meet quarterly and culminate in a holiday gathering in 2018 where families will have the opportunity to meet with a professional photographer for new family photos.



## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Our patients experience a broad range of challenges due to their gender identity such as wanting to change their names, or access bathrooms, locker rooms or sports teams based on their affirmed gender. In many cases legal support is needed to accomplish these goals. To address these needs we held our **second annual legal clinic day** for our patients and families. We partnered with lawyers from Jerner & Palmer, Temple University, and the legal and medical teams at the Mazzoni Center to provide pro bono services, legal advice, and assistance with preparing documents for identity updates and other needs. At this clinic, we were able to provide legal services in-person to 15 families. **Thanks to a generous financial donation** from a family within the clinic, all families had their legal filing fees covered to achieve the desired legal name and gender marker changes for their children.



Additionally, the University of Pennsylvania Student Legal Clinic developed a guide for families about the process of a legal name change, which we have shared at clinic appointments and will post to our new website as a resource for others to use locally and nationally.

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

We believe that research is critical to improving health outcomes for our patients. Unfortunately, limited data exist regarding health care access and outcomes for gender-expansive youth. In order to address this knowledge gap, we have begun several studies at the CHOP Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic.

## **Pediatric Primary Care Provider Knowledge, Experiences, & Comfort in Caring For Gender-Expansive Youth**

Healthcare providers, particularly pediatric primary care providers, play an essential role in the healthy development of transgender and gender-expansive youth and will often be the first or only point of contact for a child in the healthcare system. Unfortunately, the care received by transgender children and adolescents is often insufficient and met with stigma and discrimination. Little is known about the preparation and readiness of pediatricians to meet the needs of this population. Thus, the objective of this project was to understand the knowledge, experiences, and comfort of pediatric primary care providers in working with transgender and gender-expansive youth. We conducted a cross-sectional survey of 161 pediatric primary care providers employed in two pediatric hospital care networks and in the City Health Department clinics in Philadelphia. Participants from the hospital network practices were recruited via email invitation and those at the City Health Centers were recruited in-person. Findings from this study will be presented at the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine 2018 National Annual Meeting.

After conducting the survey, and based on identified needs, Dr. Nadia Dowshen led a Continuing Education Session (CME) for the pediatricians in all city health department clinics. This study was a collaboration between Dr. Nadia Dowshen of the CHOP Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic and Dr. Sara Kinsman, Director of Maternal, Child, and Family Health at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

## **Attitudes Towards Fertility Preservation Among Transgender Youth and Their Parents**

While fertility preservation is one among several options when considering becoming a parent, it is an important issue to address with transgender youth and their families. The primary objective of this study is to better understand the opinions and attitudes surrounding fertility preservation in transgender youth and their parents. The study involves a 15-minute electronic survey that is administered to patients and their parents/legal guardians. The survey items include questions on the importance of preserving fertility for transgender patients and their families, factors that may contribute to their decision including their knowledge of the risks of hormone treatment, timing of therapy, options for treatment, previous education about the topic, how fertility relates to their gender identity and how they would like to learn more about the topic.



Rebecca Persky, MD, the study's lead investigator, is a recent CHOP pediatric residency graduate and is pursuing fellowship in Pediatric Endocrinology at the National Institutes of Health/ Children's National Medical Center combined program. Rebecca is interested in providing care for transgender and gender-expansive youth and focusing her research on the effects of sex hormones on biologic fertility.

# STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

**Stanton Jacinto, BFA**, joined the GSD Clinic in September 2017 as a social work intern. Prior to his work at CHOP and graduate studies at Penn, Stanton was a New York-based freelance dance artist and volunteered as an Arts mentor for Free Arts NYC, a community-based organization serving NYC youth through creativity and art.

As a social work intern, Stanton participates in intake and assessment sessions, communicates with outside therapists and mental health providers, vets and provides referrals competent in transgender and gender-expansive care, and serves as an advocate and means of support to young individuals and their families. In addition to his role at the GSD Clinic, Stanton is also a social work intern on the Inpatient Adolescent Medicine Unit, student research assistant at the Policy Lab, and Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH) Fellow at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Stanton received his BFA in Dance and Minor in Sociology from New York University. Currently, Stanton is a second-year MSW student at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice, with an interest in LGBTQ-health and ethical implications experienced among gender and sexual minority adolescents and young adults.



“ My experience at the Gender Clinic thus far has been an incredible opportunity for clinical maturity and growth. Working alongside young individuals who are insightful, articulate, genuine, and willing to share their unique journeys motivates me in continuing to work towards clinical and macro-level skills of social work by practicing and advocating for care delivery that is both inclusive and affirming of transgender and gender-expansive youth and their systems of support. ”

**Benjamin Jerner, JD**, is the managing partner and a founder of Jerner & Palmer, P.C. He has practiced law in Philadelphia for over 20 years, concentrating his practice on estate planning, probate and estate administration, adoption and legal issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients. Since 2014, Ben has been providing legal services to GSD Clinic patients either through direct referrals or as an integral participant of the legal clinics held at CHOP. Over the past year, Ben has served 14 gender clinic youth and families.

Ben is a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the National LGBT Bar Association, the National LGBT Bar Association's Family Law Institute, and the Mazzone Center's Legal Advisory Board. Additionally, he has served on the boards of directors of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Committee on the Legal Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men, the Gay and Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia and the National LGBT Bar Association.



“ It has been a privilege to assist CHOP Gender Clinic families with legal name changes and changes to identity documents for their children. There are few experiences in the practice of law that can match the moment when a child receives a legal name that affirms the child's true gender. And it has been a pleasure to work with the gender clinic's incredibly professional and caring staff. ”

# HOW YOU CAN HELP US

Tell one new person about the Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic at CHOP

With your financial support, we can expand the Clinic's services and research capabilities, allowing us to serve even more children and their families. To learn how you can make a difference, you can visit:

[www.chop.edu/gender](http://www.chop.edu/gender) to make a donation online.

**CONTACT: 267-426-5980**

**email:** [genderclinic@email.chop.edu](mailto:genderclinic@email.chop.edu)

**website:** [chop.edu/gender](http://chop.edu/gender)

## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS!



Community Scholars-In-Residence Program  
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Division of Endocrinology

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