

Patient Care Tips & Reminders

Gender and sexual orientation are not the same thing. A patient may identify as trans-masculine, but have a heterosexual sexual orientation or the patient may be trans-feminine and identify as homosexual.

If you use the wrong name or pronouns with a patient, genuinely apologize and continue to provide quality care. Patients do not care how much you know until they feel how much you care about them.

Some patients are not able to have gender confirmation surgery or utilize hormone replacement therapy due to other health concerns, insurance, or costs.



There are many professional and patient level resources available.

Professionals

APA Division 44, Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity

www.APA.org/pubs/journals/sgd

GLMA - Gay & Lesbian Medical Association

<http://www.glma.org/>

W-PATH World Professional Association for Transgender Health

<https://www.wpath.org>

Fenway Institute for LGBTQ Healthcare

<https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/>

Many of the professional associations have patient handouts and other resources are available at your local PFLAG chapter.

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In Healthcare Y'All Means All

Best Practices for Appalachian Healthcare Providers Working With Special Populations

Reducing Stigma

The focus of this brochure is to provide Appalachian healthcare providers basic information and tools to provide better care to their clients that are People Living with HIV & AIDS and also their transgender clients. Healthcare providers can reduce stigma experienced by patients by creating an empathetic and welcoming environment. This starts with training of licensed healthcare providers, unlicensed assistive personnel, and administrative support staff. The welcoming environment starts at the front door of the provider office and includes the reception staff.

Special Populations

People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHA)

Patients living with HIV and AIDS should receive the same level of quality care received as other patients. Patient HIV status should only be revealed to other healthcare providers that are in a need to know to provide patient care or with written authorization for the patient. When talking about a patient with HIV make sure to put the patient first.

Example: “My patient John Doe is a person living with HIV”, or “my patient John Doe has HIV”. Do **NOT** say “John Doe, my AIDS patient”.

The transmission of HIV requires contact with blood or body fluids that contain the virus or infected cells.

HIV is transmitted by blood, seminal, vaginal fluid or breast milk. In healthcare settings blood borne pathogens may be transmitted by needlesticks or other sharp injuries.

Blood and body fluids of infected individuals are contagious. Any body fluid that is mixed with blood is also contagious.

Casual contact and most patient contact will NOT result in an HIV exposure incident. Casual physical contact such as handshakes, hugs, or even a physical assessment will not create an exposure incident. Healthcare workers are much more likely to contract HCV than HIV or any other blood-borne pathogen.

If a patient discloses that they are a person living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA), thank them for the disclosure and for trusting you as a healthcare professional.

Appropriate questions to ask include:

- ◊ Do you need help getting your HIV medicine?
- ◊ Do you have a Ryan White Medical Case Manager?
- ◊ Do you have any other health problems secondary to your HIV?
- ◊ Do you want me to coordinate healthcare services with your HIV care provider?

Transgender and Non-Binary Clients

Gender is thought of more as a spectrum by professionals in mental health and gender studies. Clients may identify as transgender, non-binary, male, female, intersex, or gender queer. Clients may express their gender in ways that are new to some healthcare providers.

The terms used to describe patient gender has evolved over the years. In the past catch all terms like “transvestite”, “transgendered”, or “queer” were used to cover everything.

Patients should be addressed by their preferred name and pronouns. This may mean a simple post-it note on the face sheet of a paper chart, or an update to the electronic health record.

Even if clients have a different name on their government documents and insurance it is imperative to use their preferred name and pronouns.

Terms for Providers

Gender Identity: refers to one’s internal understanding of one’s own gender or the gender with which a person identifies.

Gender Expression: a term used to describe people’s outward presentation of their gender.

Non-binary and Genderqueer: catch all category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine.

Transgender: an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.

