
Ensuring Providers Have the Knowledge and Support Needed to Care for Transgender Youth

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Like most young people, transgender and gender-expansive youth often have a pediatric primary care provider (PCP) who is their first or only point of contact in the health care system. Unfortunately, many of these providers feel they do not have the training or experience needed to manage the unique health care needs of this population. Insufficient preparation for all health care staff—from receptionists to nurses to physicians—can lead to frustrating encounters for patients, which can discourage transgender and gender-expansive youth and their families from seeking needed care. Primary care should be a safe space for youth, but unprepared providers can actually cause youth to disengage from the health system and may worsen health outcomes. While many clinicians have found ways to create supportive environments for transgender and gender-expansive youth, many others still experience challenges that impede their education, experience and ability to adequately care for this population.

This policy brief outlines these barriers, the resulting hardships for patients and families, and recommendations informed by PolicyLab research and best practices developed by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic that providers, health systems and medical educators can use to improve quality of care.

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