

GENDER & SEXUALITY DEVELOPMENT CLINIC

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Children's Hospital
of Philadelphia®**

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Dear Friends,

Each year, we sit down to write this opening letter and it gives us a great opportunity to take pause and reflect on all that has happened over the last incredible twelve months. While this can feel like just another task on our to-do list, it is really remarkable to take this time to celebrate the accomplishments of the amazing children, youth and families we serve, as well as honor the successes of the clinic and our team. This has surely been our best year yet!

We continue to grow the size of our program, now serving nearing 1,400 families in total, and we are particularly excited as we plan the expansion of our clinic to New Jersey. This year has included building more partnerships with therapists, schools and support groups than ever before. We have also completed more trainings, collaborations and mentorship meetings with medical providers throughout the region as well as across the United States. This investment in the medical providers throughout our region assures that transgender youth and their families will be able to receive the best healthcare possible much closer to home. As of this year, we are now providing support and mentorship to children's hospitals in San Diego, CA, and St. Petersburg, Florida. Our former medical trainees are also now assuming clinical leadership roles of programs for transgender youth in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Maine and Vermont. We are so proud of those we have partnered with and were privileged to present our mentoring model at the annual US Professional Association of Transgender Health Conference, which was greatly received.


What truly keeps us going is the accomplishments of the children and youth we are able to meet. We celebrate the high school graduations, the first romance, the first job, the first birthday card that reads "to my grandson," the students saying they feel good at school, the plays performed, the sports seasons completed, the prom kings and queens, as well as the change in the world that each youth is creating in their own amazing way. One of the most remarkable things is how many of our youth are becoming advocates to support other trans and gender diverse children and adolescents facing similar challenges. It is our great privilege to support these young people and watch them be happy, healthy, and make the world a better place.

As we look to 2020, we are honored to continue this challenging and fulfilling work in partnership with all of you.

Thank you for your never-ending support.



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*



Linda Hawkins, PhD, MSEd, LPC
*Co-Director, Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic
Department of Social Work and Family Services*

STATE-OF-THE-ART MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE



CHOP SPECIALTY CARE SITE VOORHEES, NEW JERSEY

Over the past 6 years, our clinic has supported over 1,300 families; in meeting with each and every family we realized that over one-third were coming to us from New Jersey. As our client base began to grow we heard more often from families that traveling from New Jersey was challenging and difficult to manage. In order to best meet the needs of all of our families, we are excited to announce that the Gender Clinic team will start seeing patients and families at the CHOP Specialty Care Site in Voorhees, NJ, starting January 2020. The team there will include: Wilma Rossi, MD, MBE, pediatric endocrinologist, Charles Zimbrick-Rogers, MD, adolescent medicine, and Nazneen Meacham, MA, LPC, family support specialist. ■



Our new clinic staff, from top:

Nazneen Meacham, MA, LPC, Family Support Specialist

Charles Zimbrick-Rogers, MD, attending physician, Division of Adolescent Medicine

LEADER IN LGBTQ HEALTH

In 2019, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) designated CHOP as a leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality. HRC uses their LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Index, based on four criteria, to evaluate healthcare facilities' policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors, and employees. Once again, CHOP has maintained its high standards, receiving high marks in the categories of non-discrimination and staff training, patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and patient and community engagement. Linda Hawkins, PhD, MEd, LPC, also continues to serve on the Committee for Transgender Pediatric Care hosted by the HRC that identifies best practice in medical and mental health care for transgender and gender expansive children and youth. ■

1,000+ STAFF
TRAININGS
COMPLETED FOR
CHOP EMPLOYEES
THIS YEAR



RECOGNIZE THIS BUILDING?

CHOP's Buerger Center for Advanced Pediatric Care is pictured on the Healthcare Equality Index's LGBTQ homepage. Visit at: HRC.ORG/HEI.

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS & POLICY TO SUPPORT TRANSGENDER YOUTH

IN OCTOBER 2019,
A PACKAGE OF
BILLS PASSED CITY
COUNCIL THAT WILL
EXPAND UPON PRIOR
WORK WITH THE
PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL
DISTRICT TO ENSURE
NON-DISCRIMINATION
FOR TRANSGENDER
YOUTH AT THEIR
SCHOOL.

LOCAL LEGISLATION UPDATE

In partnership with CHOP's research center, PolicyLab, clinic co-directors Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP, and Linda Hawkins, PhD, MEd, LPC, supported three new bills introduced by Philadelphia City Councilperson Helen Gym to expand protections for transgender and gender-diverse people in the city. Dowshen and Hawkins contributed testimony to a hearing based on the experiences of serving youth in our clinic, and provided a letter of support detailing why these policy changes were important for the city's youth. The first bill prohibits youth-serving organizations from discriminating against transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming youth and ensures them equal access and requires that those who work directly with youth undergo comprehensive training so they know how to prevent discrimination. The second bill requires City Hall to have at least one gender-neutral bathroom on each floor, and requires at least one gender-neutral restroom in every city-owned building. In October, the package of bills passed city council. These new bills expand upon prior work with the Philadelphia School District to ensure non-discrimination for transgender youth at school—a place where they spend so much of their time. Expanding these protections to other spaces, such as youth-serving organizations and public restrooms, represents an important step to improving the emotional and physical well-being of transgender youth and is an example for other cities and jurisdictions to follow. ■

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CHALLENGES TO GENDER-AFFIRMING HEALTHCARE

A recent federal proposal could dramatically limit the access to and quality of health insurance for millions of children across the country. In particular, this proposal could further harm youth who already experience worse health



Tabling event at Rutgers University for the LGBTQIA Youth Summit

outcomes than the general population, including LGBTQ-identifying youth. The Trump administration's proposal would make "substantial revisions" to its regulations implementing Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. Among other restrictions, the proposed rule would:

- Eliminate the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity
- Remove the provision preventing health insurers from varying benefits in ways that discriminate against people living with HIV or LGBTQ individuals

Research has demonstrated how harmful scaling back these protections could be for children and teens. For example, even under the current law, our work shows the challenges that transgender youth and their families face when trying to obtain insurance coverage for evidence-based services that can prevent poor mental and physical health outcomes. In April, ahead of the public comment period closing for this proposal, Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP, and fellow PolicyLab researcher, Katherine Yun MD, MHS, authored a blog post for PolicyLab outlining the dangers of this new proposal and encouraging others to submit formal comments to federal leaders. ■

NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS TO TEACH LGBTQ HISTORY

Recently, New Jersey became the second state in the nation to adopt a law that requires schools to teach about LGBTQ history. With the opening of our new clinic in NJ and her role as education coordinator, Samantha King, MSW, MEd, will be supporting the implementation of this new law as she does her work with schools across the state. This is an exciting step towards LGBTQ inclusivity and will ensure that transgender and gender-expansive youth see themselves reflected in what they learn at school. ■

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

OVER 55

SCHOOL TRAININGS TOOK
PLACE IN THE 2019 YEAR.

OVER 200 FAMILIES,
YOUTH, FRIENDS, AND
EMPLOYEES MARCHED IN THE
PHILADELPHIA PRIDE PARADE
IN JUNE, 2019, WITH CHOP.



Samantha King, MSW, MEd, education coordinator and an intake specialist at the Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic at CHOP, co-presenting with Todd Snovel, MA, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs, for teachers and counselors for Lebanon County.

PA MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING GRANT

This year, our team partnered with the PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse to provide education to mental health providers on how to better support their transgender clients and create gender inclusive agencies. Linda Hawkins, PhD, MEd, LPC, and Samantha King, MSW, MEd, education coordinator, provided a mix of webinars and in-person trainings for providers throughout the state. In total: 3 webinars and several in-person trainings were hosted in Harrisburg, Scranton, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. In total, 296 mental health providers attended in-person sessions and 600 providers attended the webinar sessions. ■



296 MENTAL HEALTH
PROVIDERS ATTENDED
IN-PERSON SESSIONS AND
600 PROVIDERS ATTENDED
THE WEBINAR SESSIONS.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT

Originally from North Carolina, **Celena Morrison**, (advocate, CHOP affiliate), has resided in Philadelphia for approximately 12 years. Providing support, education, and building sisterhood throughout the community is a passion of hers and she is devoted to making a difference in her community. Her advocacy work is driven by her desire to always be of service. She served as former Community Engagement Specialist of the Mazzoni Center for several years, providing education and support resources for the transgender community. She worked as a Recovery Specialist at a program of Resources for Human Development called Morris Home. Celena also serves as a Support Specialist for the Pediatric & Adolescent Comprehensive Transgender Services program (PACTS), a collaboration between CHOP and Mazzoni Center. She is the current Director of Programs at the William Way LGBT Community Center. Celena has created and facilitated several workshops for Mazzoni Center's Sisterly L.O.V.E. (Leading Others Via Education) program, which includes an Intergenerational Dialogue workshop, Professional Etiquette, and Keeping Our Sisters Safe. She has presented at some of the largest US conferences and continues to educate other organizations on how to better engage the transgender and POC communities. Celena has helped educate communities, businesses, agency boards, colleges, non-profit organizations, and religious establishments — just to name a few. Celena joined the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations in 2018 and was honored



Celena Morrison

as one of Philadelphia Pride's 2019 Grand Marshalls. In 2020, she will continue working with TransWork. TransWork is an inclusive program designed to meet employment needs, entrepreneurship aspirations, and employers' hiring goals as it pertains to transgender and GNC folks. Celena is especially important to our Gender Clinic family – you will find her once a month helping to host our family support and social groups. Her positive spirit and energy is an important part of our community! ■

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

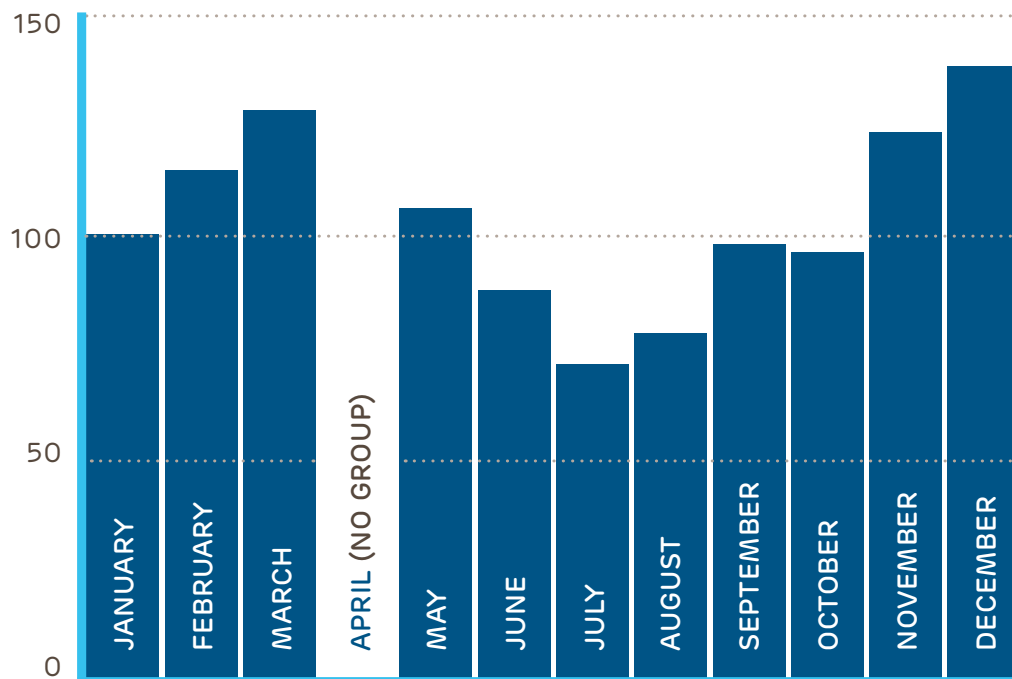
YOUTH & FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Our support group is continuing to thrive. We are now supporting over 100 participants per month. Last year, we created a group for extended family—including grandparents, aunts, and uncles. This started once quarterly, and by popular demand, this year has expanded to a monthly support group! ■

Right: Youth artwork from a support group activity



2019 SUPPORT GROUP ATTENDANCE



On average, we had over 100 people attend support group each month throughout 2019.



EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBER GROUP FACILITATOR

Thoughts on being a part of the CHOP/PACTS Support Group from Laura Palmer, MDiv, BCC, chaplin:

What has been the most meaningful part of facilitating the extended family group?

What makes the work with the extended family group so meaningful, if not magical, is when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—when the group comes together on its own and families heal and support each other with kindness and generosity that's spontaneous. It's when I feel most deeply grateful as a facilitator. The resounding message [from the group] is "You can get there from here." It's wonderful to see how love makes people braver and more courageous than they ever expected to be. ■

BINDERS THAT FIT

When youth have body parts that don't fit with their gender identity, it can be incredibly distressing (if not impossible) to imagine going to school. For our transmasculine youth, a binder that compresses their chest is life-saving. Each binder costs \$33 (minus taxes and fees) which can be a financial burden for families. In 2019, we gifted over 90 binders to our patients. Our clinic staff works with youth and families to educate about the healthy use of a binder and to find what size fits them best, and we send the youth home with a free binder. This is often one of the first steps towards gender affirmation for our youth who identify as nonbinary or transmasculine. There is so much joy that can be brought to a youth by the simple act of providing this free resource to help reduce their distress or dysphoria. When we see the smile that spreads across a youth's face when feeling more affirmed in their identity, it is priceless. Their happiness is hard to put into words. Our free binders are kept in stock thanks to generous donors to our clinic. ■

IN 2019, WE
GIFTED OVER
90 BINDERS TO
OUR PATIENTS,
ONE OF THE
FIRST STEPS
TOWARDS GENDER
AFFIRMATION.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Research is critical to improving the health and well-being for our patients. This year we have authored many peer-reviewed publications, book chapters and policy statements and presented at several national and global meetings including Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, World Professional Association of Transgender Health, and International AIDS Society. Here we share a few highlights of current projects.



CHEST DYSPHORIA IN TRANSMASCULINE YOUTH

Jamie Mehringer, MD, third-year fellow in Adolescent Medicine at CHOP

What was this study about?

The study is about people's experiences with chest dysphoria, which is discomfort or distress about your chest, and about experiences with top surgery. We are talking with transmasculine guys between the ages of 13-21 about their experiences with chest dysphoria, how that's impacting their life, how they cope with it, what their thoughts are about top surgery, and for those who have already had top surgery, we are interested in learning about their experiences getting it and how surgery has impacted their life.

What observations inspired you to create this study?

I've had the opportunity to take care of a lot of trans guys. Commonly our focus has been around testosterone and menstrual suppression, but in talking to many guys, there's still a huge aspect of their dysphoria that we're not addressing with those things, and that's chest dysphoria. There seems to be wide variability in terms of who has access to masculinizing chest surgery—more commonly called top surgery—and when they can access it, and whether they can get it covered. And the professional guidelines say that in certain situations it's okay to do top surgery before 18, yet this doesn't seem to be translating to insurance policies or clinical practice. What we wanted to do was understand how chest dysphoria is impacting people's lives, how youth are coping with it, how people come to the decision to pursue top surgery, and what their experience with top surgery was like. We are hoping to use what we learned to find better access to top surgery for those that would like it.

What has been the most meaningful part of your research?

I think one of the most meaningful parts has been the willingness of the young people to open up and share their experiences of what they are going through. This topic is not something that is easy to talk about, and their willingness to open up and share this and trust us to use this to help advocate for other young people, I think, has been powerful. And how motivated people are to want to be able to help other guys down the line. Another thing that has been really powerful has been getting to hear about the positive impact that top surgery has for a lot of young people in terms of helping them regain the sense of comfort, confidence, and alleviating distress. ■

T.H.E.Y/T.H.E.M.

Trans Health Equity for Youth/ Trans Health Equity Matters

A NEW MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH NETWORK

Nadia Dowshen, MD, and her investigator colleagues at CHOP's PolicyLab and across the country have formed a new multidisciplinary research network to better understand healthcare for transgender and gender-expansive youth. Currently, most of the studies about healthcare for individuals are either surveys or include participants from one or a few clinics or health systems. The goal of the Trans Health Equity for Youth/Trans Health Equity Matters (T.H.E.Y/T.H.E.M.) research network is to learn more about how youth access and utilize medical and mental healthcare across the country using large

national administrative and insurance datasets. The first project will focus on using machine learning—a type of artificial intelligence that allows computers to learn without being explicitly programmed—to identify transgender and non-binary youth in these datasets since, unfortunately, gender identity information is often not collected. Then, once we can identify transgender youth in these large datasets, we will be able to better understand healthcare services for transgender youth, strengths and weaknesses, and how healthcare they receive compares to cisgender youth on a national level. ■

STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



LAURABETH MCALLISTER, BSN, RN

Nurse specialist, Craig Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine and the Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic at CHOP

Interviewed by the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and LGBTQ+ Pride for the CHOP employee homepage. Here is an excerpt from her interview:

What is the best part about working at CHOP?

One of the best things about working at CHOP is how much the employees care about our patients and families. Everyone is doing their best to help at every step of the process and every patient interaction with CHOP.

What does being an ally to the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?

To me, being an ally means being available as a support person and as an advocate for the community. As an advocate, it is important to support the community, especially when individuals are not around to speak for themselves, but also be mindful to not speak for them. An ally also seeks to learn more about the diverse LGBTQ+ communities and the challenges they face. Increasing knowledge and continuing to learn about LGBTQ+ issues are essential parts of being an ally.

What are some things allies can do to show their support to the LGBTQ+ community?

Small gestures can go a long way in supporting the community. Patients in our clinic often comment on the pride and transgender flag buttons that staff wear. Once they see the button, they are visibly more comfortable and relaxed. When introducing yourself, including your preferred gender pronouns invites others to do the same and can help foster a more welcome and inclusive atmosphere. I think it is also important to support LGBTQ+ friendly businesses in your local community and any spaces where the community feels safe to gather and express themselves. Helping these businesses and community spaces is one way to give a voice and platform to LGBTQ+ individuals. ■



BRIANNA HOBSON, MA, is a fourth-year dual-degree doctoral candidate of Clinical Psychology and Human Sexuality at Widener University's Institute of Graduate Clinical Psychology (PsyD) and Center for Human Sexuality Studies (MEd). Within the Gender Clinic, she has worked as a research assistant on a survey study to understand patient satisfaction with the puberty blocking implant procedure for transgender youth. Currently, for her dissertation she is expanding on these findings to explore qualitatively, through in-depth interviews, the experience of transgender youth undergoing puberty suppression. ■

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS!



PARTNERS AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA:

- Division of Adolescent Medicine
- Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Division of Endocrinology
- Office of Government Affairs, Community Relations & Advocacy
- Department of Social Work and Family Services

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 chop.edu/gender to make a donation online.



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