

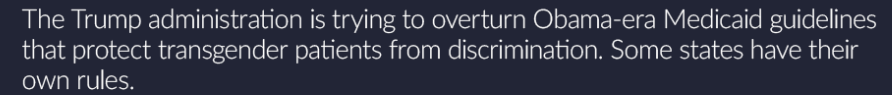


TRANS HEALTH IN AMERICA: DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION IN HEALTHCARE

By: Maya McClain

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STUDIES

- In a study conducted in California, The State of Transgender California, the following statistics were presented showing the adverse health effects that many transgender patients face.
- Among 648 respondents: 30% postponed care due to disrespect or discrimination from health care clinicians; 42% postponed care because they could not afford the medical care they needed; and 26% of those who postponed care reported that their conditions worsened as a result.

COMMUNITY CLINICS

- One proposed solution to improving care for transgender patients is the use of community clinics. They serve a large portion of the transgender community and many times their missions make a point to care for under-served and low-income populations such as the transgender community. Community clinics are incredibly important as they break through the barriers of cost, lack of insurance, distance, and language that transgender communities (as well as other minority groups) face.





- There hasn't been a lot of research done on the individual health profiles of transgender patients. However, from what has been found, we know that many transgender patients experience harmful misunderstanding, rejection, and discrimination. Research has shown that up to 78% of transgender people were harassed in school, and 57% experienced rejection from their families. Many times, coping with this discrimination, rejection, and misunderstanding can negatively affect the physical and mental health of transgender patients. For example, transgender people have higher rates of alcohol use, drug use, and suicide attempts.
- One important way to promote inclusivity and acceptance in the medical field is through the use of preferred pronouns and lack of gender assumptions. Medical professionals can promote an accepting atmosphere by always asking the gender of their patients (not just assuming) or by using gender neutral terms.

STATISTICS AND SOLUTIONS

INTERVIEW: ASH MCDOWELL (QUESTIONS)

- 1. Have you faced any discrimination in health care? Either from nurses/doctors or medical forms or anything else related to health
- 2. What most affected your mental health (either positively or negatively) when you came out as transgender.
- 3. Have you had any difficulties getting access to healthcare that you need?
- 4. What is one (or more) thing that you believe would help transgender patients get equal and easy access to healthcare? What needs to change in our healthcare system to promote equality?

INTERVIEW: ASH MCDOWELL (ANSWERS)

- 1. I wouldn't say I've faced discrimination directly in healthcare, but I have had issues with getting my medication on time because of discrepancies between my given and chosen names and I've had issues with insurance as well.
- 2. What affected my mental health most was the vast amount of discord and discussion in the trans community. Online videos and chat rooms were both my greatest support and my biggest insecurity. Arguments over trans identities and histories often caused intense anxiety and fear over being wrong about my identity, but I also found tons of people who echoed my feelings and had suggestions on how to deal with them.
- 3. Yes, I have had some difficulties accessing healthcare. The biggest one that comes to mind is the cost barrier with surgeries. I'm unsure as to my insurance's policy on trans surgeries but I know most companies don't cover surgery and many don't cover hormones either. Surgery is not likely to be an option for me for at least 10 years, probably more, because of how expensive it is. Cost has also been an issue with my hormones. Testosterone is a cheap hormone to manufacture, yet I've had to face my insurance changing their coverage and my out of pocket going up. Originally, my medication cost me \$15 for a 10-week supply. Since then, it's increased twice: first to \$50 and then to \$67 something for the same amount. And I do injections which are the cheapest form. Needles are pretty costly too if you don't have a prescription. One time I had an issue with my prescription and had to buy full price needles from the pharmacy. Though I only need one a week, the discrepancy between insured prescription prices and out of pocket is very notable. My usual bag of 20 needles would cost me \$2-\$3 with a prescription. Without, they're close to \$1.50 each.
- 4. As far as discrimination is concerned, ensuring proper education and training for medical professionals on trans issues and unique healthcare situations is essential. It's also a small but helpful change to ask a new patient for their preferred name and pronouns when they go to a new provider. Overall normalizing sharing pronouns when meeting someone can be a big help rather than assuming. Some of the best and most inclusive healthcare I've received is at planned parenthood, and if other offices treated their patients the way PP does, it would make a huge difference in people's lives.

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