

**Transgender, Gender Diverse, or Intersex (TGI) Health Care Quality Standards and
Training Curriculum Working Group
September 19, 2023
Meeting Summary**

1. TGI Working Group Members in Attendance

In-person attendees:

Bambi Cisneros, Department of Health Care Services (she/her/hers)
Bee Curiel, TransLatin@ Coalition (they/them)
Kendra M. Muller, Disability Rights California (she/they)
Adrian Naidu, California Public Employees' Retirement System (he/him/his)
Dr. Ryan Spielvogel, Sutter Family Medicine Residency Program
(he/him/his)
Katalina Zambrano, Somos Familia Valle Central (she/her/ella)

Virtual attendees:

Kelly Bradfield, Covered California (she/her)
Stesha Hodges, California Department of Insurance (she/her/hers)
Evan Johnson, TransFamily Support Services (they/them)
Skyler Rosellini, National Health Law Program (he/him)
Jason Tescher, California Department of Public Health (he/him/his)

Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) Staff in Attendance:

Mary Watanabe, Director (she/her/hers)
Amanda Levy, Deputy Director, Health Policy and Stakeholder Relations (she/her/hers)
Latika Sharma, Attorney III, (she/her)
Mary Peterson, Attorney III, (she/her/hers)
Alma Ochoa-Soria, Associate Governmental Program Analyst (she/her/hers)
Sara Ortiz, Staff Services Manager II (she/her/hers)
Shaini Rodrigo, Associate Governmental Program Analyst (she/her)
Leslie Thompson, Staff Services Manager I (she/her/hers)

2. Welcome & Introductions

Jacob Rostovsky welcomed everyone to the meeting and facilitated introductions.

3. Review of July 18, 2023 Meeting Summary

Jacob Rostovsky asked for any changes or additions to the July 18, 2023, meeting summary. There were no changes.

4. Working Group Members Presentations

Katalina Zambrano, Executive Director, Somos Familia Valle Central, provided an overview of the work they are doing in the Central Valley. Somos Familia Valle Central is a non-profit

resource center dedicated to education, advocacy and training for inclusion of all LGBTQ+ in Merced County. Somos Familia offers peer support, gender affirming care, name change assistance, a Safe Space Center, Spanish translation services, PrEP/PEP information, and referrals to other resources.

Dr. Ryan Spielvogel provided an overview of his role at Sutter Health and the Gender Health Center of Sacramento, including advocating for clients on insurance approval and educating the next generation of physicians in providing quality gender-affirming care. Dr. Spielvogel shared the need for standardized curriculum in medical schools regarding gender-affirming care and the need for providers to care for the whole patient instead of dismissing patient requests or needs as something caused by “their hormones”, otherwise known as “Transgender Broken Arm Syndrome”.

5. National Committee for Quality Assurance: Report on Current Quality Measures for the TGI Population

Rachel Harrington, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, Health Equity for the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), presented an overview of the work NCQA is doing related to quality measures for the TGI population. The presentation included a background on Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and recent revisions to some of the measures. She noted NCQA is focused on building equity into the quality measures used by 90% of health plans in the United States. NCQA is reviewing their quality measures to eliminate gendered language in some measures. For example, the language was changed from “woman with pregnancy diagnosis” to “member with pregnancy diagnosis”. The rationale for such revisions is that 1) members may be excluded from denominators of HEDIS measures for which they should be included (and vice versa), 2) gendered language contributes to disparities in care by omitting gender-diverse members in need of services from quality targets and improvement efforts, and 3) the updates to guidelines and new electronic and clinical data sources may provide an opportunity to address past barriers to care. Gender-inclusive quality measures matter because gender-diverse patients experience greater disparities in care compared to overall population and cisgender patients.

6. Panel Discussion: Health Care Providers’ Perspective

A panel of TGI health care providers discussed their experience with the health care system. The panel included Maddie Deutsch, MD, MPH, Professor of Clinical Family & Community Medicine, Medical Director, UCSF Gender Affirming Health Program; Dan Karasic, MD Professor Emeritus, Psychiatry, UCSF Weill; and Tristan Buzzini, PsyD, Elevation Psychological Services.

Dr. Deutsch discussed the various “pain points” that her patients experience in trying to access care, including requiring an in-person visit in order to obtain hormone prescriptions, requiring prior authorization for gender affirming care when it is not required for other care, and the inconsistent manner in which patient data and information is collected.

Dr. Karasic discussed the difficulty in coverage and access to services for Medi-Cal patients. He has conducted over 150 independent medical reviews and advocated for client coverage.

Dr. Karasic discussed how with the diagnosis of gender dysphoria, this can sometimes rescind prior approvals for healthcare as the client now has a “mental disorder”.

Finally, Dr. Buzzini discussed how care providers need to focus on the intersection of mental health issues when treating transgender, gender diverse and intersex patients, specifically, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. He mentioned increased community discrimination, as well as co-occurring depression, and where best to write this in treatment plans. He also discussed how dysphoria still spikes, even after long periods of time in treatment, and in many cases it's because of the triggers of going through the healthcare coverage process.

7. Public Comment

Jacob Rostovsky asked for comments from the public. There was no public comment.

8. Closing Remarks

Jacob Rostovsky thanked everyone for attending and re-iterated the importance of the working group and the impact it will have on the TGI community. The next meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2023.