

The Importance of Gender Affirming-Care



Bodily autonomy continues to face unprecedented challenges, even in the 21st century. Globally, gender affirming care has been politicized to justify restricting or limiting access to – for many – life saving care. As anti-trans groups continue to organize locally and globally, we stand in support of our local Two-Spirit, transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse communities. The Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN) recognizes the right to receive gender-affirming care for all in our catchment area and beyond.

Gender-affirming care not only refers to health care related to medical transition (including but not limited to puberty blockers, hormone replacement therapy, and gender affirming surgeries and procedures) but to all health care (i.e., preventative screening, vaccine appointments, mental health counselling, emergency department visits). There is much diversity within the 2SLGBTQ+ communities, with an array of services and approaches needed to provide adequate gender-affirming care to all.

Recent waves of anti-trans movements are highly visible, massively influential, and actively cause harm to trans and non-binary people, their allies, and those who provide care to their communities. Here in Ontario, we have seen services that provide gender-affirming care being targeted by institutions and hate groups.

Trans and non-binary people face unique challenges when it comes to gender expression and receiving appropriate health care through a gender affirming lens. For example, trans people experience higher rates of discrimination and harassment compared to cisgender people (people that have a gender identify congruent with their sex assigned at birth).



We stand in support of our local Two-Spirit, transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse communities. Providing gender-affirming care confirms bodily autonomy to those we serve and is consistent with our Health Equity framework.

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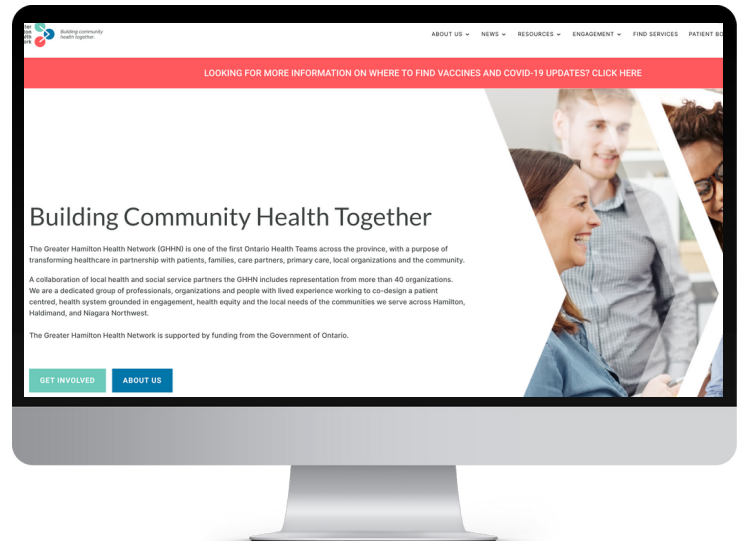
As cis people are deserving of care that considers bodily autonomy in order to minimize harm that unfolds when health care and bodily autonomy are denied, it is imperative that the same response be issued for those in the trans and gender-diverse community. When we fail to mobilize this response, it is an act of discrimination against trans and gender diverse communities and must be recognized as such.

The GHHN calls for all health care institutions to adopt position statements recognizing the right to gender-affirming care. Additional recommendations for organizations to demonstrate an active, concrete commitment to improve the health equity of trans and gender diverse communities include mandating trainings for Board Directors through Rainbow Health Ontario, identifying opportunities to explicitly state the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ communities in initiatives, and providing safe access to care for these communities.

We call on all health care providers to commit to working with their trans and gender diverse patients to provide high quality health care, and to seek support and guidance from available resources around the provision of gender-affirming care.

For those interested in increasing capacity for providing gender-affirming care, the GHHN has a Trans Health Community of Practice (CoP) that is welcome to all.

Trans Health Community of Practice



This CoP contains helpful resources, including training opportunities, case studies, and information on gender-affirming clinics and providers in our area. It is also a safe space for providers to ask questions and learn from their peers. To join, please email info@ghhn.ca.



[greaterhamiltonhealthnetwork.ca](https://www.greaterhamiltonhealthnetwork.ca)



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