



Center for Student Health & Counseling
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Transgender Health Care Resource Guide

Overview

This is a working document created to assist transgender and nonbinary students navigate the healthcare system. Information will be updated as more information and resources become available. For feedback on the ways we can improve this document, we encourage you to complete our [anonymous online feedback form](#).

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Meet Our Teams

Queer and Trans Care Team

The SHAC Queer and Trans Care Team's mission is to center student voices and bring those most impacted by disparities in healthcare to the forefront in an effort to provide high quality, affirming, and accessible care for queer and trans students. The QTCT has historically included SHAC staff and student employees as well as PSU staff and faculty. In 2024 the QTCT decided to meet on an ad hoc basis in order to address any concerns brought by students or staff related to their experiences with queer and trans care at SHAC. If you would like to alert the QTCT to an emerging issue related to transgender/non-binary health care please contact Amy Ruff, LCSW at ruff2@pdx.edu.

Team Members include:

Student-Staff Representation:

- TBD once all student-employee positions are filled for the academic year 2024-2025.

Faculty Representation:

- Jeff Conn (they/them), PhD, CCC-SLP: Associate Clinical Professor, Undergraduate/Postbac Advisor, Clinic Supervisor of the Gender Communication Lab, Speech and Hearing Sciences, Portland State University
- Matthew Town (he/him), PhD, MPH: Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Portland State University

Staff Representation:

- Marcy Hunt, PhD, (she/her): Counseling Services Director
- Amy Ruff, LCSW, (they/them): Counseling Services Case Manager
- Christi Ziegler (she/her): Student Insurance Coordinator
- Sandhya Gunarathne (they/them): SHAC Office Assistant

Trans Health Care- Clinical Consultation Team

The Trans Health Care Clinical Consultation team consists of health and counseling services staff and is focused on providing high quality, comprehensive gender-affirming care for transgender, gender non-confirming, and gender-questioning students. Given the need for confidentiality and compliance with HIPAA requirements, this team is limited to health care professionals. The team meets for bi-weekly clinical consultation, discusses referrals when needed, and works to coordinate care for trans students seeking both mental and physical health care through SHAC. Team members have received specialized training and consultation around Transgender Health Care and supporting trans students.

Current Team Members include:

Health Services Staff

- Chris Hanel, MD, (he/him): Physician
- Heather Poehler, PA-C, (she/her): Physician Assistant
- Emma Slachta, FNP, (they/them): Family Nurse Practitioner

Counseling Services Staff

- Marcy Hunt, PhD, (she/her): Counseling Services Director
- Lisa Koralewicz, LCSW, (she/her): Licensed Clinical Social Worker

- Jesse Neel, LPC, (he/him): Licensed Professional Counselor
- Amy Ruff, LCSW, (they/them): Counseling Services Case Manager

Our Approach

Informed Consent Approach for Hormone Therapy

Informed consent for hormone therapy includes discussing the risks/benefits of hormone therapy (e.g., potential side effects) with your provider and reviewing physiological aspects related to the hormones you are seeking.

Please note: We review risks/benefits and the physiological impact of medications with both cis and trans clients who access medication through health services.

The informed consent for gender affirming hormone therapy can be found at:

- [Testosterone Therapy Informed Consent](#)
- [Estrogen Therapy Informed Consent](#)

WPATH Standards of Care for Surgical Letters

The SHAC Trans Health Care Clinical Consultation Team follows the [World Professional Association for Transgender Health \(WPATH\)](#) Standards of Care v. 8 for surgical letters. Our goal is to reduce barriers to accessing services, while also providing support around navigating both surgical and insurance requirements.

WPATH is a non-profit, interdisciplinary professional and educational organization devoted to transgender health. WPATH has organized [Standards of Care](#) based on research and information currently available with regards to health care for transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals.

WPATH standards for gender affirming surgery letters are often required by surgeons and insurance companies. As such, we incorporate WPATH's criteria in our letters. We recommend students check with their insurance and surgeon for specific criteria that the provider letter should address. We will make every effort to assist you in meeting your individual needs, while meeting all requirements for your letter of support.

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

An integral part of effective health care involves cooperation from both the patient and the health care team. Therefore, patients must know their rights and their responsibilities. It is part of SHAC's mission to help our students become better health care consumers. We encourage you to review our [Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#).

As part of the patient rights, we affirm that patients have a right to dignity and respect, regardless of age, disability, national origin, race, color, marital status, veteran status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, or any other basis.

Name Changes/Pronouns

Upon accessing our services, we ask patients to fill out our standardized paperwork. We will update our documentation and system according to the information provided, including information regarding pronouns, current name, and gender identity. For medical treatment purposes, we also ask patient's assigned sex at birth. If your name and/or pronouns change during treatment, we encourage you to let your provider and/or front desk know so that we can update our system accordingly.

Name change information may sometimes affect insurance information, pharmacy prescriptions, and/or surgical referrals. We will do our best to assist you in advance to avoid these concerns from arising. If you encounter difficulties, please let us know and we will work to resolve it.

Please note: SHAC Medical Records, including current name, gender identity, and pronouns are separate from University/Academic Records. We encourage students to keep this in mind when completing our paperwork, as you may also need to work with the QRC and Registrar to update information across your University/Academic records.

For more information regarding name change options, we recommend you reach out to the [QRC](#) and/or [Student Legal Services](#). Information regarding the name in use guidelines through the registrar can be found at: [Office of the Registrar, Preferred and Chosen Name Guidelines](#). Information regarding pronoun changes and usage at PSU generally can be found at: [Office of the Registrar, Pronouns](#).

All Gender Bathrooms

Throughout Student Health and Counseling (2nd and 3rd floor), students, staff, and visitors have access to all gender bathrooms. The Queer Resource center also maintains a list of all-gender bathrooms on their [website](#) and via the [Refuge Bathroom App](#) to assist students in navigating facilities on campus.

Privacy and Confidentiality

SHAC staff is committed to protecting your medical, mental health, and personal information. Information regarding ways we protect your information can be found at:

- [Confidentiality Policy](#)

For some patients concerns may arise regarding parent access to health care information. For example, patients may be concerned that parents have access to their health information via their current insurance,

student billing, and/or through the patient portal. If this is a concern, please notify your provider at SHAC so we can discuss ways we can protect your information, while also working towards meeting your health care needs.

If you would like to provide information to others in your life, you can complete a [release of information form](#). We also encourage you to discuss potential privacy concerns with your provider.

Addressing Student Concerns/Complaints

You are encouraged to talk with your provider about any concerns you have with your working relationship, particularly if your needs are not being met. If you are dissatisfied with your provider you have the right to request a different one. You are encouraged to discuss this first with your current SHAC provider.

That being said, if you feel your rights have not been respected, or wish to file a complaint, compliment, or suggestion, you can:

- Complete a [feedback](#) form, with the option to remain anonymous, for the appropriate department where your concern was raised.
- Contact SHAC Director of Administrative Services, Heather Goah at 503-725-2552 or hsh@pdx.edu

Reporting an Incident of Bias

Portland State University is committed to addressing bias incidents on campus and in our community and will provide individuals with resources and support when someone experiences a traumatizing event. Bias is harmful to individuals and the community.

To report an incident, please complete and submit the [Bias Incident Report Form](#). We also encourage you to review the [Portland State University Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (PDF), which addresses the definition of discrimination and harassment and provides appropriate contacts for reporting cases.

SHAC Transgender Health Services

Below is a list of SHAC services for transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and gender-questioning students offered by Student Health and Counseling. We continually try to evaluate and improve our services, and therefore the list below is subject to change. In this event, we will make every effort to update this information accordingly.

Additionally, services may be impacted by staff availability, insurance requirements, individual needs, and other factors. Our staff will do our best to work with you to support your individual health care needs.

Not sure where to start?

We recommend calling to schedule a case management appointment. The case management team can provide an overview of the medical process and refer you to the appropriate resource based on your interests and health care needs. To schedule, call 503-725-2800.

Health Services

Hormone Therapy (aka HRT)

SHAC staff use an informed consent approach for hormone therapy. You do not need a letter of support to begin hormone therapy. To schedule an appointment with a Trans Health Care Team provider call the SHAC Front Desk at (503) 725-2800. Trans Health Care providers offer consultation around hormone therapy, discuss associated benefits/risks, review the informed consent form, and prescribe hormones when appropriate.

Consent forms can be found at:

- [Testosterone Therapy Informed Consent](#)
- [Estrogen Therapy Informed Consent](#)

Referrals for gender affirming surgeries

Trans Health Care Team providers offer referrals for surgery once you have decided where and with whom you would like to get your surgery. Your insurance company's provider directory is a good place to start when looking for a surgeon. If you need assistance with that process the Health Services Patient Care Coordinator is available to provide a list of referrals and the Counseling Services Case Manager is able to assist with outreach to potential providers and answer questions about the process of identifying a surgeon to work with.

Other Health Services Resources

- Pre-op physicals
- PrEP/PEP
- STI testing
- Informed care for other comorbid conditions (e.g., weight gain, sleep apnea)
- Medical information about binding
- Information about sex toy care/safety
- Contraception options across gender spectrum
- Transition of Health Care as you prepare for graduation

Call (503) 725-2800 to schedule an appointment.

Counseling Services

Initial Consultations for short-term counseling

If you are new to counseling services and interested in obtaining short-term, affirming counseling or group therapy at SHAC visit the [Patient Portal](#) or call 503-725-2800 to schedule an initial brief consultation appointment. During your appointment a SHAC counselor will determine the most appropriate next steps for care which may include: referral to another PSU support resource, a follow up appointment, assignment on the counseling services assignment list for individual counseling and/or a referral to a community resource.

You may request a therapist (e.g., trans health care team member, queer therapist, clinician of color, or other identity) when scheduling, though scheduling options may be more limited and all options may not be available.

Concerns that students may address in short-term counseling, might include, but are not limited to:

- Navigating coming out
- Navigating complicated family dynamics
- Experiencing gender dysphoria
- Relationship difficulties, and changes in relationships after coming out
- Coping with experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and oppression
- Feelings of isolation
- Concerns regarding safety in the current political climate
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal Ideation

Referrals for Specialty Services/Long-term/Community services

In some cases, we may also refer to specialty services, long-term therapists, and community services that may be able to better meet your needs. Please let us know if you would like to connect with someone who identifies as queer/trans in the community, and we will do our best to match you to services that may best fit your needs.

Letters of support for gender-affirming surgery

If you would like a letter of support for gender-affirming surgery contact the Front Desk (503) 725-2800 to schedule a 30 minute case management appointment. In this meeting the case management team will review your insurance, general goals for surgery, discuss surgeon referral options and answer any questions you may have about the process. The case manager will then coordinate with the Trans Health Care Team to schedule you for a gender-affirming evaluation appointment that is needed to obtain a letter of support. On-going counseling is not required to obtain a letter of support.

During your appointment your provider will review and discuss: the medical process including aftercare, your gender history, potential impact of surgery on mental and physical health, coordinating care with your medical team, support and logistical planning for postoperative recovery, as well as the potential social, occupational, financial and familial impacts of surgery.

Due to high utilization of our services, letters of support and/or accessing our services may take time. Our best recommendation is to take your first steps 3-5 months before your initial consultation and/or hoped-for surgery date. Letters should typically be written within 6 months to 1 year of the date of the surgery. We can provide community referrals to providers who offer standalone assessments for letters of support when necessary.

Group therapy

We will occasionally offer LGBTQIA+ Support Groups. Check Counseling Services [Workshops & Groups](#) each term to see what is available and how to get started. Many groups run on a walk-in basis with no requirement to register early. Other groups require meeting with a member of the counseling services team prior to attendance. Additionally, students can specify interest in groups during an initial consultation appointment.

Insurance

- Students may contact the Student Insurance Coordinator at insurancehelp@pdx.edu for support with health insurance, information about hormone therapy and surgery coverage, and help navigating trans care on a parent/guardian's insurance plan.

Dental Services

SHAC Dental offers both routine and emergency dental services. All treatment is done by **licensed, experienced providers** with your comfort in mind. Our dental office does not have student dentists. All services are confidential. We advocate for patient's rights and responsibilities and encourage all our patients to become familiar with our policy.

Dental staff are able to discuss the effects of hormone therapy on dental care and are able to support clients in meeting their dental needs.

If students experience dysphoria, fears of discrimination, and/or dental anxiety, we are happy to discuss these fears and how we can support you in pursuing dental care (e.g., comfort blankets, headphones, soothing music, consultation with providers).

Health Promotion

The SHAC Health Promotion department is committed to offering comprehensive community level interventions aimed to improve the environment in which students live, work, and learn. This work is accomplished through health promotion programs and health education that include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining the [Mind Spa](#)
- Outreach and events (e.g., WHAT HUT, Sex & Chocolate)
- Distribution of the *Queering Harm Reduction* and *Let's Talk about Queer Sex* Zines
- [What's Up: Wellness from the 3rd Floor](#) Podcast
- [Peer Recovery Support](#) for students in or interested in recovery from substance use, 1 on 1 support is available with Peer Recovery Specialist and SMART Recovery meetings are offered on a weekly basis
- Distribution of naloxone for overdose reversal and fentanyl test strips offered by Peer [Harm Reduction](#) Specialist
- Peer [Wellbeing Coaching](#) allows students to connect with peer coaches to build plans towards reaching their personal wellness goals

A comprehensive overview of [Health Promotion activities can be found on the SHAC website.](#)

Sexual Health Supplies

Students can access sexual health supplies (e.g., internal and external condoms, gloves, dental dams, lubricant) and health kits in the lobby of SHAC. Students can also call SHAC at 503-725-2800 to schedule a time to pick up a kit as well.

Portland State University Resources

Portland State has a variety of services and programs to meet the needs of queer and trans students. These services can enhance student well-being and success.

- [Queer Resource Center](#)
- [Student Legal Services](#) *
- [Women's Resource Center](#)
- [Gender Communication Lab](#)
- [Sexual and Gender Equity Task Force \(SAGE\)](#)
- [PSU Community Counseling Clinic](#)
- [Global Diversity and Inclusion Bias Review Team](#)

* Please note: Student Legal Services (SLS) provides free legal services to eligible PSU students in a variety of areas, including insurance disputes due to denials of gender affirming care. SLS can also assist with other matters, such as name and gender changes and employment discrimination. You can fill out an intake form at https://portlandstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dmwBup1Mt4i50LY or leave a voicemail at (503) 725-4556 to receive a callback.

Community Providers and Resources*

Below you will find information about some of our local community providers and resources that may be of interest to you as you navigate services in the Portland area. If it doesn't feel that your provider is a fit for you, don't be afraid to tell them. They may be able to adapt to your needs or be able to suggest someone else that would personally fit you better. For assistance connecting to providers, we welcome you reaching out to our Health Services or Counseling Services staff for support.

- [OHSU Transgender Health Program](#)
- [Kaiser Gender Pathways](#)
- [The Community Clinic at Good Samaritan](#)
- [Outside In Health Services](#)
- [Planned Parenthood LGBTQ Services](#)
- [The Q Center](#)
- [Portland Therapy Center- Therapists who specialize in Gender Identity](#)
- [Portland Therapy Center- Therapists who specialize in LGBTQ issues](#)

*This list is compiled as a service to Portland State University students and is not an endorsement of any individuals or organizations. Individual inquiry should be made regarding fees, services, compatibility with your insurance carrier and credentials.

Referrals may also be gathered by scheduling a case management appointment at SHAC or the QRC for access to the BIPOC and/or QT Therapist Guild Database.

Crisis Resources

If you are in crisis and need urgent support, you can call SHAC Counseling Services during any of our open hours (M-H 9am-5pm, F 9:30am-5pm). If you need in-person evaluation after hours, Unity Center for Behavioral Health (1225 NE 2nd Ave) has a mental health emergency room.

After hours, you can also access the following crisis supports/emergency numbers:

Multnomah County Crisis Line: (503) 988-4888 - Available 24/7

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 9-8-8, available 24/7

Ayuda en Español: (888) 628-9454

Racial Equity Support Line: (503) 575-3764

Native Crisis Text Line: text NATIVE to 741741

The following warmlines DO NOT CALL POLICE to provide welfare checks:

LGBT National Hotline: (888) 843-4564, Mon-Fri 1p-9p, Sat 9a-2p

THRIVE Lifeline: text “THRIVE” to (313) 662-8209 - Available 24/7

Trans Lifeline: (877) 565-8860 - Mon-Fri 10a-6am

BlackLine: (800) 604-5841 - Available 24/7 (text or call)

Students can also access [state-specific mental health crisis resources](#).

Trans Health Links and Resources

“A word of caution about searching for information online: The internet has forever changed the availability of information on a wide range of topics; immediate results are at one’s fingertips 24 hours a day. However, the open nature of the internet means that there is a lot of information available which is outdated, incorrect, misleading, or which may have a negative bias toward transgender people. Note that the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association all oppose the use of “reparative therapy” for transgender people.”

- Disclosure clause from The University of California Berkeley, University Health Services, Trans Care Team and supported by Portland State University’s Center for Student Health and Counseling

Basics:

- [10 Things Transgender Persons Should Discuss with their Healthcare Provider](#)
- [What I Need to Know About Trans Health Care via Planned Parenthood](#)
- [Trans Student Educational Resources](#)

Health:

- [UCSF Center for Excellence for Transgender Health: Online Learning](#)
- [Information of Estrogen Hormone Therapy](#)
- [Information on Testosterone Hormone Therapy](#)
- [Breast Augmentation](#)
- [Healthcare Rights and Transgender People](#)
- [WPATH Standards of Care v. 8](#)

Health Insurance:

- [Transgender Health Care via Healthcare.gov](#)
- [Outside In’s OHP “Get Insured” Program](#)
- [OHP Member Handbooks](#)

Resource Centers:

- [OHSU Transgender Health Resources](#)
- [Sexual & Gender Minority Youth Resource Center](#)

- [National Resource Center on LGBT Aging](#)
- [UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health](#) -- Information about routine care, HIV prevention, mental health and community education.
- [The National Center for Transgender Equality](#)
- [Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board- Two Spirit and LGBTQ Resource](#)

Legal Assistance:

- [Victims Rights Law Center](#)
- [Lambda Legal: Trans Rights and Law](#)
- [The Transgender Law Center](#)
- [Changing Your Name and Gender Markers - Basic Rights Oregon](#)
- [State by State Overview: Identity Document Laws and Policies](#)
- [State by State Snapshot: LGBTQ Equality By State](#)

Resources For Parents:

- [Gender Spectrum](#)
- [Trans Active: Gender Project](#)
- [PFLAG](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

All SHAC Services

How are you working to incorporate Queer and Trans voices into SHAC policies regarding trans health care?

SHAC values Queer and Trans voices. In 2013, we held listening sessions with trans students to discuss SHAC practices and policies for trans health care and current insurance coverage. Based on student feedback we advocated for student needs when negotiating insurance coverage, while also moving towards an informed consent approach to hormone therapy to decrease “gatekeeping” experiences.

In the Fall of 2019, [SAGE](#) conducted a campus climate survey focused on understanding queer and trans experiences on campus and specifically at SHAC. We then hosted virtual collaborative visioning sessions in 2020 for Queer and Trans Students of Color focused on envisioning health care both in and out of SHAC. The Queer and Trans Team is using this survey to inform and guide the work we do.

Currently, on the Queer and Trans Care Team, we have queer SHAC staff and PSU faculty as well as trans student representation. This team works to center student voices and bring those most marginalized to the forefront in an effort to provide high quality, affirming, and accessible care for queer and trans students. If you are interested in learning more about the team and ways to get involved, please contact Amy Ruff at ruff2@pdx.edu

We recognize that change is an on-going process, and we are constantly striving to do better. If you have additional recommendations on how we can continue to support trans students, we encourage you to reach out to one of our Queer and Trans Health Care Team members, your SHAC provider, a Trans Health Care Team member, the QRC and/or GDI. You can also submit anonymous feedback via our [online feedback form](#).

To whom can I provide feedback regarding current services offered and areas for improvement?

You are encouraged to talk with your provider about any concerns you have with your working relationship, particularly if your needs are not being met. If you are dissatisfied with your provider you have the right to request a different one. You are encouraged to discuss this first with your current SHAC provider, but you may also request a change in provider with the Director of that SHAC department via phone (503) 725-2800, [email](#), or in-person.

If you feel your rights have not been respected, or wish to file a complaint, compliment, or suggestion, you can:

- Complete our anonymous [online feedback form](#)
- Contact SHAC Director of Administrative Services, Heather Goah at 503-725-2552 or hsh@pdx.edu
- Review [SHAC Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy](#) for more context

As I am preparing to graduate, what should I be thinking about in terms of my health care?

As you prepare for graduation, we recommend discussing your needs with your health services providers. Our insurance coordinator can also assist you in navigating your insurance needs upon graduation. If needed, we encourage you to set up a consultation with the counseling services case manager to review mental health providers in the community.

Navigating Insurance

What does the PSU Health Insurance plan (Pacific Source) cover with regards to transgender specific medical care?

PacificSource covers hormone therapy, hair removal, and gender affirming surgery. The cost of these services depends on whether the patient seeks services from an in-network provider, an out-of-network provider, or a SHAC provider.

For example, hormone therapy services provided at SHAC are fully covered and do not require that the student make a copay. Hormone therapy services provided by an in-network provider in the community are fully covered but a \$35 copay is required. Hormone therapy services provided by an out-of-network provider in the community are covered at 50% of the total charge and a \$70 copay is required.

An overview of benefits and costs for services can be found [here](#). For additional questions regarding insurance coverage, please contact our health insurance coordinator at insurancehelp@pdx.edu

What does the PSU Health Insurance plan not cover in regard to transgender specific medical care?

For a complete list of services that are not considered medically necessary and are therefore not covered by insurance contact the PacificSource's gender affirming care team via email at: genderaffirmationteam@pacificsource.com.

Can I talk to someone to review my medical benefits?

Yes. You can reach out to our Student Insurance Coordinator to discuss detailed medical benefits by emailing insurancehelp@pdx.edu.

What if I don't have PSU Health insurance?

The Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) is available to all students regardless of insurance type. In some cases Health Services will need to refer a student to a community-based provider if they are unable to provide care. Health Service staff will discuss all costs and provider options with students prior to initiating any course of treatment or making a referral. The other departments at SHAC do not bill insurance.

How do I find a preferred provider?

For those with PacificSource insurance, preferred providers can be found by visiting the online directory [here](#). In addition, a list of preferred providers can be obtained by emailing insurancehelp@pdx.edu. For students with other forms of insurance, visit your insurance company's provider directory usually found on their main website.

If I graduate or leave PSU, how long will I have the PSU Health insurance?

Students must maintain five or more credits per term to receive the student health insurance. The only exception is during the summer, when students who have graduated or were enrolled during spring term but are not taking classes during the summer, will maintain coverage through the summer. The coverage end date is generally mid-September depending on the year.

Where can I go for more information or additional assistance?

More information and additional assistance can be found by emailing the Student Insurance Coordinator at insurancehelp@pdx.edu.