



TRANSGENDER HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY CHECKLIST

Accessing affirming health care can sometimes be challenging and overwhelming. It may be helpful to prepare for self-advocacy ahead of time, or to bring an advocate with you to reduce stress, provide a sounding board, and keep track of important information from your provider.

Before an Appointment:

- ___ If at all possible, compile a written copy of your family medical history. An advocate may assist with contacting biological family to access this information.
- ___ Print a copy of any electronic health records you have, including a list of any medications you currently take, along with dosages.
- ___ Compile a list of reasons for your visit to make sure your time with your provider is efficient and meets all of your healthcare needs.
- ___ If relevant, compile a list of any symptoms you may have. It is helpful to include onset of symptoms, how long the symptoms have occurred for, intensity, and any changes in symptoms.
- ___ Gather all your insurance documents. If you are under-insured, research which providers in your area offer sliding-scale care, and assistance applying for Medicaid.
- ___ Consider pros and cons of being out as transgender to your healthcare provider, so you can make an informed decision about what you choose to disclose. Make sure this plan is communicated to your healthcare advocate.

During an Appointment:

- ___ Bring your checklist of questions and concerns, and if desired and possible, bring your healthcare advocate. Check things off as you go and make sure all concerns are addressed.
- ___ Take notes on what your provider says. Ask for spelling of unfamiliar terms or medications. Ask about what tests are being run and why. Ask which medications are addressing which presenting problems. Double check to make sure any newly prescribed medication does not conflict with any current medications you are taking. Ask any clarifying questions you have.

Specific Questions You Can Ask

“What is my diagnosis?”

“What are my treatment options? What are the benefits and risks of each?”

“Do I need any tests? Will you document why you are testing or not so I can read it? What will the results of the test tell me?”

“What are you prescribing? Are there any possible complications? What are my alternative options?”

___ If a provider refuses to run a test or take seriously any symptoms you bring up, ask to see them formally document this and their rationale in your electronic medical records.

___ If you do not know already, make sure to ask how to access your electronic medical records.

___ Ask for your provider’s contact information and the best method of contacting them.

___ Ask about next steps, and when you should contact your provider for follow up.

___ If you are out as transgender to your provider, make sure they have an accurate *Organ Inventory* for you, so that all relevant routine testing and screening is conducted.

___ If you are out as transgender to your provider, ask them to make a long-term health plan for screenings throughout the lifespan that may impact you specifically- including cardiovascular screenings and cancer screenings.

The *Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People* by the Center for Excellence in Transgender Health is an excellent resource for all providers. If your provider is unfamiliar with primary care for transgender patients, this is an excellent resource for them to educate themselves on providing you the best care possible.

After an Appointment:

___ Note and side effects or problems from new medication, or worsening of symptoms, and contact your provider.

___ Contact your provider or access your electronic medical records for results of tests.

___ Contact your provider with any questions you have about test results.

___ Make a plan for filling and refilling any prescriptions.

___ Schedule and attend any follow up appointments.

References:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2012. Before your appointment; During your appointment; After your appointment. Retrieved from:

<https://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/ask-your-doctor/index.html>

Clancy, C. M., 2010. Why you may need a health advocate. AARP Bulletin. Retrieved from: https://www.aarp.org/health/doctors-hospitals/info-07-2010/my_medical_manager_using_a_health_advocate.html

Deutsch, M. B. 2016. Guidelines for the primary and gender-affirming care of transgender and gender nonbinary people. Center for Excellence in Transgender Health.

John Hopkins Medicine. 2019. The power of a healthcare advocate. Retrieved from: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-power-of-a-health-care-advocate>

Patients Rising. 2018. Be your own advocate. Retrieved from: <https://patientsrising.org/advocacy-articles/be-your-own-advocate/>