

# QUALITY STANDARDS

## Placemat for Gender-Affirming Care for Adults

This document is a resource for clinicians and summarizes content from the [Gender-Affirming Care for Gender-Diverse People: Care for Adults](#) quality standard.

### Quality Statement (QS) 1: Gender-Affirming Education and Training for Health Care Teams

Gender-diverse adults receive care from clinicians who have the clinical and cultural competency and cultural humility to provide safe and appropriate gender-affirming care. Health care organizations provide ongoing gender-affirming education and training for health care teams to build organizational capacity to deliver equitable care.

Treat gender-diverse adults with respect, dignity, and compassion, and work to establish trust with them. Ensure that you are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide safe and appropriate gender-affirming care with clinical and cultural competency and cultural humility, for example, by pursuing ongoing gender-affirming education and training. See each person as an individual, engage in active listening, work to understand people's needs, and provide timely, high-quality gender-affirming care. Be an advocate for gender-diverse people and an agent of change if structural factors of discrimination need to be addressed.

### QS 2: Gender-Affirming Primary Care

Gender-diverse adults receive appropriate and compassionate gender-affirming primary care health assessments, screening, treatment, and follow-up. This care is based on their needs and preferences and is appropriate for their age, gender, and current anatomy.

Provide appropriate and compassionate gender-affirming primary care to gender-diverse adults. Provide them with health assessments, screening, treatment, and follow-up according to clinical

practice guideline recommendations, in line with their needs, preferences, and goals, and as appropriate for their age, gender, and current anatomy. Discuss plans for ongoing and further gender-affirming care, and maintain up-to-date records of people's past and present use of gender-affirming hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgeries, and current anatomy. Consult with other primary care clinicians with knowledge and experience in gender-affirming care as needed. Provide referrals to specialist care only as needed. Do not respond to health concerns that are unrelated to gender as though there is a connection with gender.

### QS 3: Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy

Gender-diverse adults have access to gender-affirming hormone therapy from a primary care clinician. Gender-affirming hormone therapy meets the needs and preferences of gender-diverse adults.

Following a health assessment, provide gender-affirming hormone therapy that meets people's needs and preferences and is in line with current clinical practice guideline recommendations and Rainbow Health Ontario's [Guidelines for Gender-Affirming Primary Care With Trans and Non-binary Patients](#). Use a collaborative, trauma-informed, and person-centred approach that focuses on psychosocial preparation and informed consent. Provide people with the information they need to engage in informed, shared decision-making, including the potential risks of hormone therapy:

- People receiving testosterone may experience an increase in blood pressure; therefore, blood pressure and lipid profile should be assessed before starting testosterone and then monitored regularly after a person has begun taking testosterone

- Testosterone can increase the severity of certain conditions, including hypertension, polycythemia, and sleep apnea
- People receiving estrogen are at increased risk of thromboembolism; smoking, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle can increase this risk

Take an active role in helping people access gender-affirming hormone therapy and meet their transition-related goals. Teach people how to take their hormone therapy safely and effectively. Consult with other primary care clinicians with knowledge and experience in gender-affirming care as needed. Refer people to an endocrinologist for gender-affirming hormone therapy in cases that are medically complex (e.g., if the person has diabetes or a heart condition).

If you feel you need to build your competency in providing gender-affirming hormone therapy, please refer to current clinical practice guideline recommendations and the resources provided in the Resources section.

#### QS 4: Gender-Affirming Mental Health Care

Gender-diverse adults are offered trauma-informed, person-centred, gender-affirming care for mental health and substance use concerns as needed. These concerns are considered concurrently with gender incongruence and gender diversity as needed. Care for all aspects of health and well-being is delivered as part of a comprehensive care plan.

Discuss mental health and substance use supports with people who may need them. If you are unable to provide the care they need, refer them to an appropriate clinician or services. Ensure that care provided for mental health and substance use concerns is trauma informed, person centred, and gender affirming and that it meets people's needs, preferences, and goals.

Work with people receiving care to develop a comprehensive care plan that addresses all aspects of their health and well-being, and update the plan as needed. Include care for mental health and substance use concerns in comprehensive care plans as needed. A mental health or substance use concern or diagnosis should not prevent a person

from receiving gender-affirming care unless there are concerns with their capacity to provide informed consent. Unless otherwise indicated, gender-affirming care and care for mental health or substance use concerns can be provided concurrently.

#### QS 5: Gender-Affirming Health Care Environments

Gender-diverse adults receive care in a safe, trauma-informed, gender-affirming, and culturally responsive environment. Person-centred care is provided throughout their care journeys.

Ensure you have the skills, knowledge, and training to provide safe and appropriate gender-affirming care to gender-diverse adults. Create an environment that feels safe and accepting to gender-diverse people, and ensure that all health care team members treat gender-diverse people with respect and compassion. Ask for and use gender-diverse people's correct names and pronouns, and work collaboratively with them to establish an appropriate plan for their care.

#### Resources

- [Gender-Affirming Care for Gender-Diverse People: Care for Adults quality standard and patient guide](#)
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health clinical practice guidelines: [Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, version 8](#)
- Sherbourne Health and Rainbow Health Ontario's [My Guide to Caring for Trans and Gender-Diverse Patients](#) (a guide for primary care clinicians), [Guidelines for Gender-Affirming Primary Care With Trans and Non-binary Patients](#), and [A Quick Reference for Primary Care Providers](#) (a guide to prescribing gender-affirming hormone therapy)
- Rainbow Health Ontario's [online learning platform](#) and [Trans Health Mentorship Call](#)
- [Ontario eConsult](#) offers access to gender-affirming care specialists

Additional tools and resources are on [Quorum](#)

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