

Transgender Health Services

Report back from USPATH

Issue Date: March 2017

The Transgender Health Services (THS) team, attended and presented at the Inaugural United States Professional Association on Transgender Health (USPATH) during the weekend of February 2nd-5th. This was the first conference, that the entire THS staff was able to attend and present, representing San Francisco Department of Public Health.

A note from THS Director, Julie Graham

“Our team at USPATH attended a variety of presentations offered by international experts in all aspects of gender related care” said Julie Graham, Director of Transgender Health Services as well as the Curriculum Chair for the World Professional Association on Transgender Health (WPATH) the parent organization for USPATH. “Most of my focus was on attending the presentations on surgery that were open to non-surgeons. I participated with a group of surgeons to discuss how to better educate surgeons on the development of a model for standards of surgical care for transgender patients.”

What We Did

Members of the THS team presented throughout the weekend, with the entire team presenting on the final day of the conference on the importance of peer patient navigators. “It felt really amazing and important to do the presentation on utilizing peer patient navigators,” said Zami Tinashe Hyemingway, THS Wellness Coordinator and Patient Navigator. “Several different programs utilize peer navigators to support clients, and we were able to speak to how important it is to provide this type of support for Transgender and GNC clients who are accessing surgical support.”

According to Graham, the THS team presentation provided new information for several of the attendees in the workshop. “Overall, it felt like what is new for other groups is known information for us. There is interest in the models we have and the awareness of the need for comprehensive and informed care that respects cultural backgrounds and is grounded in team members described navigation, patient needs and how community members providing for each other is a transformative experience,” Graham said.

Earlier in the conference, members of THS presented a phalloplasty panel that stressed the importance of preparation and planning, facilitated a town hall on facial feminization with Dr. Thomas Satterwhite and Dr. Fiona Donald, from the San Francisco Health Plan, as well as a workshop on how there needs to be standards of care for people who choose to “de-transition”. The THS team also was able to collaborate with several local and national organizations, Dr. Barry Zevin, Medical Director for Transgender Health Services, did a presentation in collaboration with Boston Healthcare for the Homeless on Homelessness and transgender issues.

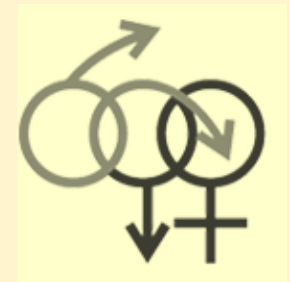
While Hyemingway and Lotus Dao (Behavioral Health Clinician for THS), were able to do a collaborative workshop with Dr. Sand Chang of Oakland, on topics such as cultural humility, the Western medical binary systems and its implications, and the compounded health disparities that trans and non-binary people of color, poor people, and women face.

Towards the end of the conference, Dr. Seth Pardo, the Lead Evaluator with THS, presented client outcomes for THS and reviewed how well THS is serving our patients including how satisfied they are with the navigation and care they are receiving. Dr. Pardo also provided one of only a handful of data presented at the conference informed by trans people of color. His presentation summarized the baseline characteristics of the clients served by THS including their quality of life, mental distress including new non-clinical ways of measuring gender dysphoria, and satisfaction with their primary care and behavioral health services within the San Francisco Health Network.

“We received strong feedback from workshop participants regarding the importance of our workshop topics and need for WPATH/USPATH to centralize cultural humility and peer models. I appreciated the opportunity to meet folks working towards improving access to quality care for Trans and non-binary people,” said Dao.

What We Heard

The THS team was also able to attend several workshops and presentations throughout the conference. Karen Aguilar, Bilingual Patient Navigator said, “I liked a lot of the presentations, especially the presentation that our supervisor Julie Graham did on detransition. I am aware that providers that are against the Transgender community can use de-transitioners against our community. I still think it is important to discuss this topic because they still need services.” Aguilar continues with, “I also learned more about phalloplasty and the experiences of trans men. Now I feel I can better support the trans men that we serve.”



THS’s Patient Care Coordinator, Maria Hower, also attended the conference as part of the team, “I am grateful of the opportunity to learn from several presentations that were a variety of topics ranging from surgeons and their techniques, researchers, providers and several Transgender care programs in the US. I believe my attendance has given me a new perspective to healthcare as a whole for the transgender community,” Hower said.

One of Hower’s favorite presentations was one on insurance. Hower states, “The forum was dedicated to insurance and what problems are occurring within the audience. There was a discussion between the audience where everyone was able to discuss and listen to which programs are gaining headway in authorizing surgical procedures in their cities and which programs are continuously hitting a wall. It was interesting and eye-opening to listen to how many forward thinking areas in the US still are not capable of providing gender confirmation surgeries to their community.” Hower continues with, “It was a moment that helped me understand and appreciate where I work and where I live, and I can say that I walked away feeling happy for the opportunity of being a part of Transgender Health Services.”

Our Team and Final Thought

The Transgender Health Services team felt honored and privileged to be able to represent our work, clients and all of our supports at the inaugural conference. We are even more excited to be able to take the knowledge gained and implement it into our services and programs to better serve the Transgender and GNC community here in San Francisco.

