



Center for Student Health & Counseling
Portland State University
Phone: 503.725.2800
Fax: 503.725.5812
1880 SW 6th Ave. Portland UCB Suite 200



Transgender Health Care Resource Guide

Overview

This guide reviews SHAC services available following COVID-19.

Please note: This is a working document. Information will be updated as more information/resources become available. For feedback on ways we can improve this document, we encourage you to complete our anonymous online feedback form.

Table of Contents

1. Meet our Team!
 - a. Queer and Trans Care Team
 - b. Trans Health Care Clinical Consultation Team
 - c. Our Approach
2. Patient Rights and Responsibilities
 - a. Your Basic Rights and Responsibilities
 - b. Name Changes and Pronouns
 - c. Gender Inclusive Bathrooms
 - d. Privacy and Confidentiality
 - e. Addressing Student Concerns/Complaints
 - f. Reporting an Incident of Bias
3. SHAC Transgender Health Services
 - a. Not sure where to start?
 - b. All SHAC services
 - c. Health Services
 - d. Counseling Services
 - e. Insurance
 - f. Dental Services
 - g. Health Promotion
4. Portland State University Resources
 - a. Queer Resource Center
 - b. Student Legal Services
 - c. Women's Resource Center
 - d. Gender Communication Lab
 - e. Sexual and Gender Equity Task Force (SAGE)
 - f. PSU Community Counseling Clinic
 - g. Global Diversity and Inclusion, Bias Review Team
5. Community Providers and Resources
 - a. Community Providers
 - b. Additional COVID-19 Community Resource Information

- c. Crisis Resource Information
- 6. Helpful Links
 - a. Basics: Terminology, Navigating Healthcare, WPATH Standards of Care
 - b. Health Resources
 - c. Health Insurance
 - d. Resource Centers
 - e. Legal Assistance
 - f. Trans-related groups in the Community
 - g. Resources for Parents
- 7. FAQs
 - a. Gender Affirming Letters of Support
 - b. Health Services
 - c. Counseling Services
 - d. Navigating Insurance

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 marginalized to the forefront in an effort to provide high quality, affirming, and accessible care for queer and trans students.

Current Team Members include:

Student-Staff Representation:

- Julia Chambers : Social Work Intern, Counseling Services
- Parsa Ghezelayagh : QRC Representative, Volunteer Coordinator
- Eli Hess: QRC Representative, Trans Student Resource and Retention Coordinator
- Quinn Westlynd: WHATster and SHAC Front Desk

Staff Representation:

- Mark Bajorek, MD: Health Services Director
- Malia Band, RDH, MPH: Dental Services Director
- Chandra Gilder: Assistant Director of Clinic Operations
- Marcy Hunt, PhD: Counseling Services Director
- Amanda Ramirez, PhD: Licensed Psychologist
- Amy Ruff, LCSW: Mental Health Promotion Specialist

Trans Health Care- Clinical Consultation Team

The Trans Health Care Clinical Consultation team is a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of health and counseling services staff, 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

- Mark Bajorek, MD: Health Services Director
- Chris Hanel, MD: Physician
- Mary Beth Buffum: Patient Care Coordinator

Counseling Services Staff

- Marcy Hunt, PhD: Counseling Services Director
- Lisa Koralewicz, LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Karen Ledbetter, PhD: Licensed Psychologist
- Amanda Ramirez, PhD: Licensed Psychologist

Our Approach

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

Informed Consent Approach for Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy

Informed consent around gender-affirming hormone therapy includes discussing the risks/benefits of hormone replacement therapy (e.g., potential side effects) with your provider and reviewing physiological aspects related to HRT.

Please note: We review these areas with both cis and trans clients who access medication through health services.

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

- [Masculinization Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)
- [Feminizing Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)

WPATH Standards of Care for Surgical Letters

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 the insurance and surgeon requirements for letters.

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, name in use, 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 name in use, 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, Name in Use Guidelines](#)

Gender Inclusive Bathrooms

Throughout Student Health and Counseling Services, students, staff, and visitors have access to gender inclusive bathrooms. The Queer Resource center also maintains a list of [gender neutral bathrooms](#) 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](#)
- [Releases of Information](#)

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 our anonymous online feedback form](#)
- 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.

The [Bias Review Team \(BRT\)](#), which includes key campus-wide stakeholders, communicates and meets regularly to respond to a reported bias incident, and to support students, employees and community members who experience or witness an act of bias. The BRT comprehensively, collaboratively, and consistently works to address bias incidents that affect Portland State University (PSU) students, faculty, staff, and community members.

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 Services following COVID-19 Response Efforts. We have moved to providing telehealth for most services. [More information can be found on our website](#). 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 an initial telehealth consultation with one of the Trans Health Team Health Services providers. They can refer you to the appropriate resources based on your interests and health care needs. To schedule, call 503-725-2800.

All SHAC Services

Sexual Health Supplies (e.g., internal and external condoms, gloves, dental dams, lubricant). Students can access sexual health supplies and health kits at the [PSU Food Pantry](#). The food pantry is temporarily relocated to 5th Ave Cinema on 510 SW Hall. To follow social distancing, they will be operating by appointment only. [Click here to access Food Pantry appointment scheduling](#). Students can also call SHAC at 503-725-2800 to schedule a time to pick up a kit as well.

Health Services

Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy (HRT)

You may request a provider on the Trans Health Care Team when scheduling, though scheduling options may be limited. Trans Health Care providers are able to provide consultation around gender affirming hormone therapy. They will discuss benefits/risks associated with hormone therapy, and will review the consent form information with you.

Health Services providers use an informed consent model for hormone therapy.

Consent forms can be found at:

- [Masculinization Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)
- [Feminizing Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)

Letters of support for Gender Affirming Surgery

Health Services providers can provide letters of support for gender affirming surgery. It's important you consult with your insurance and potential surgeon on letter requirements, as some may require a letter from a mental health professional. If this is the case, we can refer you to a Trans Health Care Team member in Counseling Services for resources and support.

Given COVID-19 concerns, many hospitals have paused their surgeries and services. However, some hospitals are still offering post-op visits and surgical consultations, which they are able to do through virtual online

visits. As such, we recommend you consult your surgeon, hospital, and insurance regarding their timeline for services and letter requirements.

Bottom/top surgery information and referrals for gender affirming surgeries

Our patient care coordinator will work with our trans health advocate to assist you in navigating referrals and insurance. They will work with you to identify referrals, while also being reflective around the time sensitive nature of accessing services.

Given COVID-19 concerns, many hospitals have paused their surgeries and services. However, some hospitals are still offering post-op visits and surgical consultations, which they are able to do through virtual online visits. As such, we recommend you consult your surgeon, hospital, and insurance regarding their timeline for services and letter requirements.

Surgical referrals may include, but are not limited to:

- Mastectomy
- Orchiectomy
- Phalloplasty
- Vaginoplasty
- Hysterectomy
- Phallectomy
- Metoidioplasty

Community referrals

In some cases, we may refer out to specialty and community services that may better be able to meet your individual needs. We will do our best to match you to services that may best fit your needs.

Other Resources

- Nutritional Support
- 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
- Birth control options across gender spectrum
- Transition of Health Care as you prepare for graduation

Counseling Services

Brief Consultations

We recommend scheduling a telemental health consultation appointment to access the services below. Call our front desk to schedule at 503-725-2800.

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.

Letters of support for gender affirmative surgery

The process and timeline to obtain letters of support may be influenced by the type of surgical procedure, surgeon, insurance, and recovery process associated with surgery, as well as the availability/current wait for services.

Due to high utilization of our services, letters of support and/or accessing our services may take time. Our best piece of advice 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.

Given COVID-19 concerns, many hospitals have paused their surgeries and services. However, some hospitals are still offering post-op visits and surgical consultations, which they are able to do through virtual online visits. As such, we recommend you consult your surgeon, hospital, and insurance regarding their timeline for services and letter requirements.

Please talk to your individual therapist if you need safe passage letters or letters of support around potential name and/or gender marker changes. We also recommend you discuss your needs with QRC supports and/or Student Legal Services. QRC and/or Student Legal Services. Information regarding name in use guidelines through the registrar can be found at: Office of the Registrar, Name in Use Guidelines

Referrals for Specialty Services/Long-term/Community services

In some cases, we may also refer out to specialty services, long-term therapists, and community services that may better be able to meet your individual 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.

Short-term Gender-Affirming Telemental Health Counseling

Concerns that students may raise in short-term telemental health counseling, may include, but are not limited to:

- Navigating the coming out process
- 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

Group therapy

We will be offering a virtual LGBTQIA+ Support Group starting May 12th at 4:00 pm. Interested students should call (503-725-2800), and schedule an initial consultation appointment with Kathy Lawrence, LCSW and/or Julia Chambers from Student Health and Counseling Services. Students can specify interest in the group when scheduling and/or during the consultation appointment.

Other Resources

- Medication Management
- Case Management

Pre-and post-gender affirming surgery support

- Planning for surgery and identifying sources of support during the healing process
- Working with friends/family around ways to provide support both pre- and post- surgery

Insurance

- Students may contact the SHAC Trans Health Advocate at transhealth@pdx.edu for support around insurance
- Information about hormone replacement and surgery coverage
 - Additional information can be found in our FAQ section
 - Help understanding insurance plan and reviewing options
 - Help with navigating trans care on a parent/guardian's insurance plan

Dental Services

Urgent and emergency dental services are being offered at this time. All nonessential and nonurgent dental services have been suspended.

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

- Virtual Mind Spa
- Virtual outreach and events (e.g., sexual health; IPV/SA)
- Sexual health zine
- What's Up: Wellness Podcast on Spotify!

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](#)

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](#)
- [Quest Center for Integrative Health](#)
- [Outside In Health Services](#)
- [Planned Parenthood LGBTQ Services](#)
- [The Q Center](#)
- [Prism Health](#)
- [Portland Therapy Center- Therapists who specialize in Gender Identity](#)
- [Portland Therapy Center- Therapists who specialize in LGBTQ issues](#)
- [Psychology Today- Therapists who specialize in Trans Care](#)

*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.

Additional COVID-19 Community Resources*

- [Basic Rights Oregon: Queer Town Hall- Transgender Healthcare Q&A](#)
- [Basic Rights Oregon: First Queer Town Hall- Weekly Events](#)
- [Queer Resource Center COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Queer Resource Center Affinity Groups and Events](#)
- The Trans Womxn's Affinity Group through the WRC will be meeting virtually this term. The Trans Womxn's Affinity Group (TWAG) works to create space in which trans femmes are welcome to share experiences, build community, and celebrate trans bodies and history. TWAG will meet on Zoom from 4:30pm to 5:30pm every Tuesday for the rest of the term. Students can contact jmm27@pdx.edu for the Zoom link.

- There are some [Q Center Affinity Groups](#) that are continuing to meet virtually. We encourage you to contact the group leaders for more information.
- [Validation Station](#) is a free text based service that provided affirming daily text messages for non-binary and trans people who may be stuck in less than affirming environments. You receive daily text with your name in use and pronouns. More information can be found within this [Pink News article](#).

Below are two online support groups students who may have had their surgery postponed:

- [Resilience](#) - Private Facebook group to express yourself and find peer support regarding getting your gender-affirming surgery, consultation, or other procedure cancelled/postponed due to COVID-19
- [Top Surgery canceled due to COVID-19 Support Group](#) - A Facebook group to express yourself and find peer support regarding your top surgery getting cancelled/postponed due to COVID-19

*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.

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:

Translife Line: 877-565-8860

LGBTQ Suicide Hotline: 866-488-7386

Crisis Text Line: 741741

Multnomah County Crisis Line: 503--988-4888

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:

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

Health:

- [Fertility and You](#)
- [Sexual Health For Transmen](#)
- [Sexual Health for Transwomen](#)
- [Information of Estrogen Hormone Therapy](#)
- [Breast Augmentation](#)
- [Healthcare Rights and Transgender People](#)
- [WPATH Standards of Care](#)

Health Insurance:

- [Transgender Health Care via Healthcare.gov](#)
- [Get Insured - Affordable Care Act Resources for the LGBTQ Community](#)
- [Transgender Health Insurance Guide to Marketplace](#)
- [Plans that Cover Trans Healthcare in Oregon](#)
- [OHP Handbook](#) See page 16.

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](#)
- [The Name and Gender Change Process -- Where to Start via Basic Rights Oregon](#)
- [State by State Overview: Changing Gender Markers on Birth Certificates](#)
- [ID Please: Quick Guide to Changing Federal Identity Documents](#)

Trans-related Groups:

- [Trans People of Color Coalition](#)
- [Transgender American Veterans Association](#)
- [Trans Latin Coalition](#)
- [Trans Lifeline](#)

Resources For Parents:

- [Gender Spectrum](#)
- [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 decrease “gatekeeping” experiences.

Currently, on the Queer and Trans Health Care Team, we have representatives from the QRC, Queer SHAC Staff, and 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 Amanda Ramirez at amanda.ramirez@pdx.edu

We are also planning to host virtual envisioning sessions in 2020 for Queer and Trans Students of Color focused on envisioning health care both in and out of SHAC. In the Fall of 2019, [SAGE](#) conducted a campus climate survey focused on understanding queer and trans experiences on campus. We hope to use the survey and envisioning session results to better inform the work we do.

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 Consult 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.

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

If this is my first-time pursuing services at SHAC, where should I start?

We recommend scheduling an initial telehealth consultation with one of the Trans Health Team Health Services providers. They can refer you to the appropriate resources based on your interests and health care needs. We also recommend you reach out to the QRC to learn more about their various supports/services.

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 counseling services to review mental health providers in the community.

Gender Affirming Letters of Support

Do I need a letter of support to start gender affirming hormone therapy?

SHAC Staff use an informed consent approach for gender affirming hormone therapy. Consent forms and information regarding hormone therapy can be found at:

- [Masculinization Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)
- [Feminizing Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)

How do I obtain a letter for gender affirmative surgery?

To obtain a letter for gender affirmative surgery, we recommend scheduling an initial telemental health consultation appointment with a Counseling Services clinician on the Trans Health Care Team. They may be able to discuss your options with regards to obtaining a letter for gender affirming surgery. The process and timeline to obtain letters of support may be influenced by the type of surgical procedure, surgeon, insurance, and recovery process associated with surgery, as well as the availability/current wait for services.

Due to high utilization of Counseling Services, letters of support may take time. Our best piece of advice is to take your first steps to access services for letters of support 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 recommend you consult your surgeon, hospital, and insurance regarding their timeline for services and letter requirements. We can also provide community referrals that specialize in LGBTQIA+ counseling and Transgender Health Care, who may also be able to support you in obtaining a letter for gender affirming surgery.

Does PSU provide second letters for gender affirming surgery if I have already received one from my current provider?

In most cases, yes, we should be able to accommodate a second letter of support. Reasons why we may not be able to accommodate a second letter may be the timeframe for the letter to be completed and staff resources. We will make every effort to support a second letter.

What will I be asked to explore with a provider if I want a letter for gender affirming surgery?

You and your provider will likely discuss the risks/benefits of surgery, recovery process, and insurance requirements. Therapists provide support around connecting to a surgeon if needed, discussing anticipated expectations/hopes, providing support around logistical planning for recovery post-surgery, healing plan/recovery process, addressing potential social occupational, financial, familial effects regarding surgery. Therapists will also discuss potential impacts on mental and physical health as well as secure a release of information to speak to your surgeon should they have any questions or concerns.

Do I need to have therapy at SHAC if I want to get a letter for gender affirming surgery?

No, therapy is not required. The first step in discussing a letter would be to schedule an initial telemental health consultation appointment.

What if I want to start therapy after receiving my letter?

You are welcome to access therapy at any time.

Does PSU use a WPATH or informed consent approach?

We use an informed consent approach to gender affirming hormone therapy, and follow WPATH Standards for surgical letters. Our goal is to reduce barriers to accessing services, while also providing support around navigating both surgical and insurance requirements. For more information, please review the “Our Approach” Section of this document.

Health Services

Where can I review the consent forms from HRT?

Consent forms are available on the SHAC Health Services website. The link can be found at:

- [Masculinization Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)
- [Feminizing Therapy Informed Consent Form](#)

Counseling Services

Can I choose my therapist?

When scheduling an initial telehealth consultation with our front desk you have the opportunity to 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.

Can I switch to a new therapist?

If you would like to switch therapists, you can let the Front Desk staff know you would like to speak with the Counseling Services Clinical Director or Director about your request. They will follow up with you to discuss next steps in coordinating your care.

Navigating Insurance

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

The PSU student insurance provider, Pacific Source, currently covers visits for hormone therapy at SHAC without a co-pay and outside of SHAC for a co-pay. Hormone injection visits at SHAC are covered by Pacific Source insurance.

The following medically necessary core surgical procedures: Hysterectomy, vaginectomy, salpingo-oophorectomy, metoidioplasty, phalloplasty, urethroplasty, scrotoplasty and placement of testicular implant, mastectomy, penectomy, orchidectomy, vaginoplasty, clitoroplasty, perineal electrolysis and labiaplasty.

For additional questions regarding insurance coverage, please contact our trans health care advocate at transhealth@pdx.edu

What does the PSU Health Insurance plan (Pacific Source) not cover in regards to transgender specific medical care?

Services to change specific appearance characteristics are considered not medically necessary when performed as part of gender affirmation procedures. These include but are not limited to: Hair removal (e.g. electrolysis or laser), Voice modification surgery or treatments and voice therapy lessons. For a complete list see the [Insurance Plan Information Page for Gender Affirming Surgery](#).

No coverage is provided for reversal of gender affirming surgery, whether or not that surgery was originally covered by the policy.

Can I talk to someone to review my medical benefits?

Yes. You can reach out to our Trans Health Advocate to discuss detailed medical benefits by emailing transhealth@pdx.edu.

What if I don't have PSU Health insurance?

While you will not have the PacificSource plan, there are still services available at PSU's Student Health and Counseling (SHAC). In addition, you can discuss requirements for surgery and hormone therapy by contacting the Trans Health Advocate at transhealth@pdx.edu.

How do I find a preferred provider?

Preferred providers can be found by visiting the PacificSource online directory [here](#). In addition, a list of preferred providers can be obtained by emailing transhealth@pdx.edu.

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

Students must maintain five or more in-load credits per term to receive the insurance. The only time when this is not the case is for students who had the insurance in spring and are graduating in spring. In this case the insurance covers students through the summer with the coverage end date generally in 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 our Trans Health Advocate at transhealth@pdx.edu.