

The Rights of Transgender People in Healthcare

It is the position of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care that:

- Transgender and gender diverse people have the right to non-judgmental, high quality, trauma-informed, person-centered healthcare from appropriately trained professionals that include evidence-based gender affirming care and HIV prevention services, mental health care, substance use disorder screening & treatment, and other indicated services.
- Resources specifically targeting the health needs of transgender persons and gender diverse people must be made available at national, state, and local levels.
- No local, state or federal law, regulation or policy at the national or international levels should discriminate against transgender and gender-diverse individuals or interfere with evidence-based care as well as the confidential relationship between a patient and their healthcare provider.

Statement of Concern:

The Transgender and gender diverse (TGD) communities are historically minoritized and systemically excluded in our healthcare systems. While trans visibility and social acceptance have furthered the trans rights movement, health care provider insensitivity to transgender or gender diverse identity remains a significant barrier to seeking health care. Moreover, since 2021, there has been a surge of anti-transgender legislation introduced in state legislatures in the U.S.. And in many parts of the world, being TGD or expressing gender identity that does not align with one's sex assigned at birth continues to be criminalized. While the political and legal fate of these acts is being determined, profound impacts on patients and their providers are affecting not only the delivery of health care and services but also the well-being and security of transgender and gender diverse individuals.

Background:

Transgender refers to a person whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. Gender diverse is a wide-ranging inclusive term that indicates a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to socially defined gender expectations. Both transgender and gender diverse are gender identity minorities. While the transgender and gender diverse identities are distinct, they are often conflated or unrecognized individually.

There are an estimated 1.6 million people ages 13 and older in the U.S. who identify as transgender. Transgender and gender diverse individuals experience higher rates of health disparities as compared with their cisgender counterparts. A 2021 report by the Williams Institute found that despite equal levels of insurance in the population surveyed, transgender people were more likely to avoid care and reported poorer physical health days per month than cisgender people (i.e., people whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth). The 2022 United States Transgender Survey provided extensive data on the experiences of 92,329 adults with a variety of identities on the transgender spectrum. Of those who saw a health care provider within the last 12 months, nearly half (48%) reported having at least one negative experience because they were transgender, such as being refused health care, being misgendered, or having a provider use abusive language when treating them. An equal number of respondents considered moving because their state government considered or passed laws that target discriminatory laws against transgender people. Studies indicate the high rates of negative mental health outcomes among transgender people are associated with a myriad of social and structural factors that impact mental health, including stigma, social and structural exclusion, and violence. However, data from more than a dozen studies of more than 30,000 transgender and gender-diverse young people consistently show that access to gender-affirming care is associated with better mental health outcomes—and that lack of access to such care is associated with higher rates of suicidality, depression, and self-harming behavior. ANAC joins more than thirty major medical and nursing associations in support of evidence-based gender-affirming care and calling for an end to discriminatory and harmful anti-transgender laws and policies.

Policy in Action: ANAC members and others can support this position by taking these individual and/or collective actions:

- Become an ally to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Start by inquiring about/using an individual's correct pronouns.
- Educate yourself and others about the evidence for gender-affirming care.
- Be intentional in integrating transgender and gender diverse health-related education into nursing curriculums.
- Partner with transgender and gender diverse people in developing policies that affect this community.
- Recognize transgender and gender diverse researchers as leaders when conducting transgender and gender diverse health research.
- Advocate within the healthcare workplace for high-quality, person-centered gender affirming care.
- Join organizations that promote the rights of transgender and gender diverse persons, including access to evidence-based gender affirming care.
- Recognize the discriminatory proposed and enacted laws and policies in your state and local community that affect the transgender community.
- Write letters to editors,
- Meet with/call/email your state legislators and other key decision-makers regarding these issues.
- Reference this link to the ANAC Advocacy toolkit for other ways to advocate on behalf of the transgender community.
 - [www.nursesinaidscare.org/files/2023%20Attachments/ANAC Advocacy Toolkit.pdf](http://www.nursesinaidscare.org/files/2023%20Attachments/ANAC%20Advocacy%20Toolkit.pdf)

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The Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) is the leading nursing organization responding to HIV/AIDS and related co-morbidities and co-occurring conditions globally. Founded in 1987, our mission is to promote the education and development of nurses and others involved in the delivery of health care to persons living with or affected by HIV and to promote the health and welfare of people living with HIV/AIDS around the world.