

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) & COMMON CONCERNS:

**UPDATE March 2021:** Under new guidelines issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, a referral letter is no longer needed to seek trans hormone services.

**I've been told I need to talk to a therapist before I can start hormones. Why? I thought informed consent meant I didn't need to see a therapist! Informed consent means you are not required to have a letter of support before being seen by a medical provider for hormones.**

A provider may still request a behavioral health assessment prior to starting you on treatment. As part of meeting criteria for hormones, mental health concerns need to be reasonably well managed, and therapy, evaluation, or treatment may be the next step along your path to gender affirmation. Needing to see a therapist as part of your transition does not disqualify you from pursuing hormone treatment. Some people start seeing a therapist at the same time that they start hormone therapy.

**I have a medical condition that my provider says I need to manage before starting hormones. I came to BVWHC for hormones! I want to start hormones and deal with my other health issue later.**

As with any program of health care, our providers need to ensure that a patient's total health is addressed when deciding whether or not to prescribe hormones. You do not have to be in perfect health to start hormones. If a provider thinks that hormones might destabilize a physical or mental health condition, however, they will work with you on that issue prior to prescribing hormones.

**This is taking a long time! I thought "informed consent" meant I could just come in and get hormones!**

Informed consent does not mean "hormones on demand". Informed consent means you can demonstrate understanding of both the risks and the benefits of hormone therapy and you and your provider have both decided that this is the appropriate time for you to begin treatment. Under the informed consent model, we respect the individual's sense of self and agency, and this means taking the time to ensure that we are providing the most comprehensive and holistic care possible.

## TRANSGENDER HEALTH PROGRAM RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

### **You have the right to:**

- Be heard and understood by your provider and care team
- Be fairly evaluated for treatment and referrals
- Access an equal standard of care as any other patient
- Be provided with assistance or referrals to manage psychological and physical health issues
- If appropriate, to be given access to gender affirming medical treatment

### **You have the responsibility to:**

- Accurately convey your symptoms (story and history) of gender dysphoria, gender identity development, medical and mental health history to your provider
- Follow your treatment plan and take your medications as prescribed

- Work to manage your medical and mental health conditions and concerns
- Follow up with care as recommended
- Communicate your concerns and questions about your treatment to your provider

Some people feel relieved and emotionally much better after starting GAHT but it can also be a difficult process at times. Sometimes the effects don't happen as quickly as you may like or expect (we will discuss the timeline of expected effects at your first visit). Sometimes your family/friends/coworkers may be supportive and sometimes they may not. It can be helpful to have support through this process. Organizations in the Boulder/Denver area that may be of interest include:

- **OUT Boulder County at the Equality Center of the Rocky Mountains**

3340 Mitchell Lane  
Boulder, CO 80301  
(303)499-5777

[www.outboulder.org](http://www.outboulder.org)

“Working independently and in collaboration, we facilitate connection, advocacy, education, research and programs to ensure LGBTQ+ people and communities thrive in Boulder County and beyond.”

- **The Umbrella Collective**

2769 Iris Ave  
Boulder, CO 80304  
(303)717-4766

[www.umbrellacollective.org](http://www.umbrellacollective.org)

“Providing accessible, affordable, and affirming mental health care services to the transgender community in Colorado is a foundational component at Umbrella Collective, a Boulder based counseling center dedicated to serving Colorado’s LGBTQ+ community.”

- **Mental Health Partners**

1455 Dixon Ave, Ste 140  
Lafayette, CO 80026  
(303)443-8500

[www.mhpcolorado.org](http://www.mhpcolorado.org)

If you think you need mental health services, please call us at [303-443-8500](tel:303-443-8500) (24 hr crisis line) and you will be welcomed by one of our supportive staff and asked a series of registration questions to determine how we can best help you.