

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Tallahassee Division**

AUGUST DEKKER, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

**PLAINTIFFS' MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO
EXCLUDE EXPERT TESTIMONY OF DR. KRISTOPHER KALIEBE**

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Plaintiffs respectfully submit this memorandum of law in support of their motion to exclude the expert testimony of Dr. Kristopher Kaliebe.¹

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Plaintiffs are transgender Medicaid beneficiaries who have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria. In August 2022, Defendants adopted a rule, Florida Administrative Code 59G-1.050(7) (the “Challenged Exclusion”), prohibiting Medicaid coverage of services for the treatment of gender dysphoria. Defendants adopted the Challenged Exclusion after undergoing a process with a predetermined outcome that concluded that the provision of medical treatment for the treatment of gender dysphoria, including puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and surgery, “do not conform to GAPMS [(“generally accepted professional medical standards”)] and are experimental and investigational.” Defendants thus deny equal treatment to Plaintiffs based on sex because they are transgender.

In response, Defendants have put forward an expert, Dr. Kristopher Kaliebe, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, who has no experience regarding the treatment of gender dysphoria, nor has ever studied or written any literature—alone scientific, peer-reviewed literature—on gender identity or gender dysphoria. However, Dr. Kaliebe is not a qualified expert on gender dysphoria or its treatment, and his

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all exhibits cited herein are attached to the contemporaneously filed Declaration of Omar Gonzalez-Pagan.

opinions and testimony are neither relevant nor reliable, under Federal Rule of Evidence 702 and the standards set forth in *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharm., Inc.*, 509 U.S. 579 (1993), and its progeny.

Accordingly, and for the reasons set forth below, the Court should exclude the expert report, opinions, and testimony of Dr. Kaliebe. At minimum, based on Dr. Kaliebe's lack of qualifications and the unreliability and unhelpfulness of his testimony and opinions, the Court should exclude any portions of the expert report, opinions, and testimony of Dr. Kaliebe that go beyond his experience regarding the diagnosis—not treatment—of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents.

LEGAL STANDARD

“The admission of expert evidence is governed by Federal Rule of Evidence 702, as explained by *Daubert* and its progeny.” *Rink v. Cheminova, Inc.*, 400 F.3d 1286, 1291 (11th Cir. 2005). “District courts are [thus] charged with [a] gatekeeping function.” *Id.*; see also *United States v. Frazier*, 387 F.3d 1244, 1260 (11th Cir. 2004) (“The importance of *Daubert*'s gatekeeping requirement cannot be overstated.”).

In conducting their gatekeeping function, courts must “engage in a rigorous three-part inquiry” and determine whether

(1) the expert is qualified to testify competently regarding the matters he intends to address; (2) the methodology by which the expert reaches his conclusions is sufficiently reliable as determined by the sort of inquiry mandated in *Daubert*; and (3) the testimony assists the trier of

fact, through the application of scientific, technical, or specialized expertise, to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue.

Frazier, 387 F.3d at 1260 (quoting *City of Tuscaloosa v. Harcros Chems., Inc.*, 158 F.3d 548, 562 (11th Cir. 1998)). The Eleventh Circuit refers to these three considerations separately as “qualification,” “reliability,” and “helpfulness” and has emphasized they are “distinct concepts that courts and litigants must take care not to conflate.” *Quiet Tech. DC-8, Inc. v. Hurel-Dubois UK Ltd.*, 326 F.3d 1333, 1341 (11th Cir. 2003). “The party offering the expert has the burden of satisfying each of these three elements by a preponderance of the evidence.” *Rink*, 400 F.3d at 1292.

To be sure, “[i]mplementing Rule 702, *Daubert* requires district courts to ensure that any and all scientific testimony or evidence admitted is both relevant and reliable.” *Claire v. Fla. Dep’t of Mgmt. Servs.*, 2021 WL 5982330, at *1 (N.D. Fla. Oct. 20, 2021). “[T]he trial judge must determine [this] **at the outset**.” *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 592 (emphasis added). “Rule 702 applies whether the trier of fact is a judge or a jury.” *UGI Sunbury LLC v. A Permanent Easement for 1.7575 Acres*, 949 F.3d 825, 832 (3d Cir. 2020). Even rigorous cross-examination is not a substitute for the court’s gatekeeping role. *See Nease v. Ford Motor Co.*, 848 F.3d 219, 231 (4th Cir. 2017). As such, the court’s gatekeeping role and the test for admissibility of expert testimony are applicable even at a bench trial or at the summary judgment stage. *See, e.g., Rink*, 400 F.3d at 1294 (finding no abuse of discretion by the district court in motions to exclude in the context of summary judgment); *Kadel v. Folwell*, 2022

WL 3226731, at **5-17 (M.D.N.C. Aug. 10, 2022) (granting motions to exclude in the context of summary judgment); *Lo v. United States*, 2022 WL 1014902, at *12 (W.D. Wash. Apr. 5, 2022) (excluding unqualified expert evidence in the context of a bench trial); *cf. UGI Sunbury*, 949 F.3d at 833 (holding the district court abused its discretion in a bench trial when it “ignored rule [702]’s clear mandate” by “sidestepping Rule 702 altogether and declining to perform any assessment of [expert]’s testimony before trial”).

Finally, because of the potentially misleading effect of expert evidence, *see Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 595, on occasion expert opinions that otherwise meet admissibility requirements may still be excluded under Fed. R. Evid. 403.

ARGUMENT

I. Qualification – Dr. Kaliebe is not qualified to offer expert opinions on the treatment or causes of gender dysphoria, nor on the development of clinical practice guidelines.

An expert witness may be qualified “by knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education.” Fed. R. Evid. 702. “Determining whether a witness is qualified to testify as an expert requires the trial court to examine the credentials of the proposed expert in light of the subject matter of the proposed testimony.” *Banuchi v. City of Homestead*, 606 F.Supp.3d 1262, 1272 (S.D. Fla. 2022) (cleaned up). “Whether [an expert] is qualified is a threshold question, and vigorous cross-examination is no substitute.” *Griffin v. Coffee Cnty.*, 608 F.Supp.3d 1363, 1373 (S.D. Ga. 2022),

objections overruled, 2022 WL 2805037 (S.D. Ga. July 18, 2022). If not qualified, the expert's testimony is unreliable. See *Reliastar Life Ins. Co. v. Laschkewitsch*, 2014 WL 1430729, at *1 (E.D.N.C. Apr. 14, 2014).

However, “qualifications alone do not suffice.” *Clark v. Takata Corp.*, 192 F.3d 750, 759 n.5 (7th Cir. 1999); see also *Patel ex rel. Patel v. Menard, Inc.*, 2011 WL 4738339, at *1 (S.D. Ind. Oct. 6, 2011). Even “[a] supremely qualified expert cannot waltz into the courtroom and render opinions unless those opinions are based upon some recognized scientific method and are reliable and relevant under ... *Daubert*.” *Clark*, 192 F.3d at 759 n.5.

Moreover, “an expert’s qualifications must be within the same technical area as the subject matter of the expert’s testimony; in other words, a person with expertise may only testify as to matters within that person’s expertise.” *Martinez v. Sakurai Graphic Sys. Corp.*, 2007 WL 2570362, at *2 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 30, 2007); see also *Lebron v. Sec. of Fla. Dept. of Children and Families*, 772 F.3d 1352, 1369 (11th Cir. 2014) (“Expertise in one field does not qualify a witness to testify about others.”). “Generalized knowledge of a particular subject will not necessarily enable an expert to testify as to a specific subset of the general field of the expert’s knowledge.” *Martinez*, 2007 WL 2570362, at *2.

This is particularly true in medicine where “no medical doctor is automatically an expert in every medical issue merely because he or she has graduated from

medical school or has achieved certification in a medical specialty.” *O’Conner v. Commonwealth Edison Co.*, 807 F.Supp. 1376, 1390 (C.D. Ill. 1992), *aff’d*, 13 F.3d 1090 (7th Cir. 1994); *see also, e.g., Hartke v. McKelway*, 526 F.Supp. 97, 100-101 (D.D.C. 1981). For example, a clinical psychologist may not be necessarily qualified to testify about stress worsening a preexisting heart condition, and a pediatrician experienced as a children’s accident preventionist may not be qualified to testify to the conduct of an adult driver. *See Diviero v. Uniroyal Goodrich Tire Co.*, 919 F.Supp. 1353, 1355–56 (D. Ariz. 1996) (citing *Kloepfer v. Honda Motor Co.*, 898 F.2d 1452, 1458–59 (10th Cir. 1990), and *Edmonds v. Illinois Central Gulf Railroad*, 910 F.2d 1284, 1287 (5th Cir. 1990), as examples).

Here, Dr. Kaliebe opines that: gender dysphoria has been rare until the last two decades; there is no consensus in the field regarding the treatment of gender dysphoria, nor is there an evidence-base sufficient to lead to any confident recommendations; the evidence for affirmative treatment is low-quality; spread of ideology combined with technologically induced contagion effects leading the recent increase in gender dysphoria; and on criticisms of medical associations as well as political criticisms. Ex. A, at ¶ 4. But Dr. Kaliebe, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, is not qualified to render most, if any, of the opinions he proffers.

Dr. Kaliebe (1) has never conducted any original, peer-reviewed research about gender identity, transgender people, or gender dysphoria, Ex. B, at 43:17-44:1;

(2) has not published any literature, let alone scientific, peer-reviewed literature, on gender dysphoria or transgender people, Ex. B, at 25:5-14; (3) has never treated a patient for gender dysphoria, Ex. B, at 33:18-21 (“So you wouldn’t be providing treatment for the dysphoria at Silver Clinic? A. I think we would not be directly addressing gender dysphoria in psychotherapy.”); *id.* at 33:15-16 (“A. ... I don’t know that we would say we were giving therapy for gender dysphoria”); *id.* at 138:24-139:1 (“Q. You do not provide medical treatment for gender dysphoria; is that right? A. Medicines, correct.”);² and (4) is not an endocrinologist, pediatrician, adolescent medicine doctor, surgeon, or other kind of physician qualified to medically treat gender dysphoria. Ex. B, at 44:2-8; Curriculum vitae attached to Ex. A.

Given the above, the district court’s decision in *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at **5-17, is most instructive here. Like other experts in *Kadel*, Dr. Kaliebe “has never ... treated gender dysphoria, ... conducted any original research about gender dysphoria diagnosis or its causes, or published any *scientific, peer-reviewed*

² At most, Dr. Kaliebe can claim that he has supervised psychiatric residents (Ex. B, at 29:9-10) in overseeing the care of twelve (12) patients with gender dysphoria (Ex. B, at 28:15-20) for “comorbidities,” like “depression or anxiety or trauma or personality disorders or whatever,” by “trying to provide them skills and sort of basic coping mechanisms, self-regulation, all the standard things you provide to someone who has emotional dysregulation or behavioral problems or, you know, emotional problems, standard care.” Ex. B, at 33:21-34:5. But as Dr. Kaliebe has acknowledged, “[p]roviding treatment for comorbidities doesn’t necessarily address a patient’s gender dysphoria.” Ex. B, 35:10-16.

literature on gender dysphoria.” *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at *9 (emphasis added). Dr. Kaliebe “is not an endocrinologist, nor has he ever treated a patient with hormone therapies.” *Id.* at at *13; Ex. B, at 32:15-17 (“A. ... nor are we involved with providing hormones or those type of things.”); *id.* at 138:24-139:4. In fact, Dr. Kaliebe had to consult his wife, an adult endocrinologist, ahead of his deposition in order to familiarize with the effects of puberty-delaying medications and hormone therapy. Ex. B, at 12:24-13:11, 139:5-8. Thus, Dr. Kaliebe “is not qualified to render opinions about ... the efficacy of puberty blocking medication or hormone treatments, the appropriate standard of informed consent for ... endocrinologists.” *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at *13. Additionally, Dr. Kaliebe “is not a surgeon and has no experience with surgery for gender dysphoria and, therefore, is not qualified to testify to the risks associated with surgery or the standard of care used by surgeons for obtaining informed consent for surgery.” *Id.* at *9.

Moreover, Dr. Kaliebe is not qualified to opine on the diagnosis and treatment of gender dysphoria in adults. During his deposition, Dr. Kaliebe acknowledged that he “definitely ha[s] more expertise and more experience in child psychiatry” and that “would be more where I’m comfortable.” Ex. B, at 44:16-17, 45:1. While Dr. Kaliebe “was asked to review and opine generally,” he “did [his] best to try to catch up on adult literature and know more about adult issues.” Ex. B, at 44:21-22. But

that is not enough. See Ex. B, at 86:1-2 (“And I will admit that I know less about and am less up to date everything about adult transgender care.”).

Dr. Kaliebe “is also not qualified to opine on the efficacy of randomized clinical trials, cohort studies, or other longitudinal, epidemiological, or statistical studies of gender dysphoria.” *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at *13; see, e.g., Ex. A, at ¶¶ 47, 163, 164. “He is not a statistician or epidemiologist, and there is no evidence in his report or deposition that he has any experience, specialized training, or knowledge about crafting a research study, analyzing data, or conducting a clinical trial.” *Id.* A psychiatrist “with little to no research experience is not qualified to opine on the veracity of statistical studies.” *Id.*

In large part, Dr. Kaliebe bases his opinions on his review of other people’s scholarship—in fact, on non-primary sources, those being non-peer reviewed reports about the scientific literature. But “[m]erely reading literature in a scientific field does not qualify a witness—even an educated witness—as an expert.” *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at *9; see also *Dura Auto. Sys. of Ind., Inc. v. CTS Corp.*, 285 F.3d 609, 614 (7th Cir. 2002) (“The *Daubert* test must be applied with due regard for the specialization of modern science. A scientist, however well credentialed he may be, is not permitted to be the mouthpiece of a scientist in a different specialty. That would not be responsible science.”). Indeed, this is precisely the sort of “generalized knowledge of a particular subject” that courts have rejected as a qualification under

Rule 702. As with the disqualified expert in *Lebron* who “reached his opinion instead by relying on studies,” this is not a sufficient qualification to serve as an expert witness. 772 F.3d at 1369.

Nor can Dr. Kaliebe claim to be qualified based on his conversations with the twelve (12) transgender minor patients, to whom he has provided no treatment for gender dysphoria and only supervised others’ psychotherapeutic care of the patients. Such “reliance on anecdotal evidence” is a “red flag[] that caution[s] against certifying an expert.” *Newell Rubbermaid, Inc. v. Raymond Corp.*, 676 F.3d 521, 527 (6th Cir. 2012).

Moreover, Dr. Kaliebe, who opines at length about the development of clinical practice guidelines by WPATH and the Endocrine Society (*see, e.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶¶ 62-63; Ex. C, at ¶¶ 19-26, 31-33), admits he is not an expert on the development of clinical practice guidelines. Ex. B, at 101:3-10; *see Solaia Tech. LLC v. ArvinMeritor, Inc.*, 361 F.Supp.2d 797, 813–14 (N.D. Ill. 2005) (finding expert was not qualified “to testify about areas in which he has admitted he has no expertise”); *accord Lifewise Master Funding v. Telebank*, 374 F.3d 917, 928 (10th Cir. 2004) (affirming trial court’s ruling that purported expert could not testify where the court noted, *inter alia*, that witness admitted that he was not expert in areas pertinent to damages modeling). And Dr. Kaliebe does not profess any training or experience on the development of clinical practice guidelines.

The Court should find that Dr. Kaliebe is not qualified to testify about gender dysphoria and its treatment, the conduct and efficacy of scientific studies and the weighing of these, and the promulgation of clinical practice guidelines. At most, based on his purported experience diagnosing twelve (12) patients with gender dysphoria over his career, Dr. Kaliebe could testify to the diagnosis of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents.

II. Reliability – Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions and testimony are unreliable.

An expert’s testimony should only be admitted if it is sufficiently reliable. The requirement of reliability found in Rule 702 is “the centerpiece of any determination of admissibility.” *Rider v. Sandoz Pharm. Corp.*, 295 F.3d 1194, 1197 (11th Cir. 2002). “To meet the reliability requirement, an expert’s opinion must be based on scientifically valid principles, reasoning, and methodology that are properly applied to the facts at issue.” *In re 3M Combat Arms Earplug Products Liab. Litig.*, 3:19MD2885, 2022 WL 1262203, at *1 (N.D. Fla. Apr. 28, 2022). It must be based on “good grounds,” *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 590, and cannot be based on “leaps of faith.” *Rider*, 295 F.3d at 1202.

Thus, when determining the reliability of proposed expert testimony, courts “consider, to the extent possible: (1) whether the expert’s theory can be and has been tested; (2) whether the theory has been subjected to peer review and publication; (3) the known or potential rate of error of the particular scientific technique; and (4)

whether the technique is generally accepted in the scientific community.” *Quiet Tech.*, 326 F.3d at 1341. Other factors which may be relevant include (1) the nature of the field of claimed expertise, (2) the source of the expert’s knowledge, (3) the expert’s level of care in using the knowledge, and (4) the expert’s consideration of alternative hypotheses. *See Hendrix v. Evenflo Co., Inc.*, 255 F.R.D. 568, 578-79 (N.D. Fla. 2009), *aff’d sub nom. Hendrix ex rel. G.P. v. Evenflo Co., Inc.*, 609 F.3d 1183 (11th Cir. 2010).

“At this stage, the court must undertake an independent analysis of each step in the logic leading to the expert’s conclusions; if the analysis is deemed unreliable at any step the expert’s entire opinion must be excluded.” *Id.* at 578. And “proffered evidence that has a greater potential to mislead than to enlighten should be excluded.” *In re Lipitor (Atorvastatin Calcium) Mktg., Sales Pracs. & Prod. Liab. Litig. (No II) MDL 2502*, 892 F.3d 624, 632 (4th Cir. 2018).

Here, Dr. Kaliebe’s report, testimony, and opinions fail all indicia of reliability. Dr. Kaliebe’s proffered opinions are based on nothing more than speculation, “untested” theories, uncorroborated anecdotes, and assumptions that are obsolete, flawed, unethical, or expressed opinions based upon “unsettled science.” What is more, some of his opinions are patently false.

A. Dr. Kaliebe's opinions are unreliable because they are based on unsupported premises, untested hypotheses, and speculation.

“While hypothesis is essential in the scientific community because it leads to advances in science, speculation in the courtroom cannot aid the fact finder in making a determination.” *Dunn v. Sandoz Pharms. Corp.*, 275 F.Supp.2d 672, 684 (M.D.N.C. 2003). “[T]he courtroom is not the place for scientific guesswork, even of the inspired sort.” *Rosen v. Ciba-Geigy Corp.*, 78 F.3d 316, 319 (7th Cir. 1996). Indeed, such “speculation is unreliable evidence and is inadmissible.” *Dunn*, 275 F.Supp.2d at 684. “Where an expert’s opinion testimony is founded on an unsupported premise, it gives rise to an inference that is based on speculation and has no evidentiary value.” *Walker v. Blitz USA, Inc.*, 663 F.Supp.2d 1344, 1364 (N.D. Ga. 2009).

Here, several of Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are based on speculation, unsupported premises, or mere guesswork. Take the following examples:

One. Dr. Kaliebe opines that “Significant evidence points to a spread of ideology combined with technologically induced contagion effects leading the recent increase in gender dysphoria.” Ex. A, at ¶ 4(e); *id.* at ¶¶ 30, 39-41. But Dr.

Kaliebe admits there is no evidence to support this opinion,³ rather, in his words, “We are all *hypothesizing*, obviously.” Ex. B, at 58:23-59:3 (emphasis added).⁴

Two. Dr. Kaliebe repeatedly opines about a purported failure of the scientific and medical community to study what he calls “body affirmation” as a psychotherapeutic approach to treatment. Ex. A, at ¶ 66(a) (“SOC 8 makes no analysis of privileging gender affirmation over body affirmation.”); Ex. C, at ¶ 12 (“Body positivity and body acceptance are laudable goals and should be compared against the use of hormones and surgeries in order to determine which is a more effective and humane treatment.”), *id.* at ¶ 13 (“Further research may well find psychotherapies or mind-body approaches with better results than gender affirmation through hormones and surgery.”). However, Dr. Kaliebe cites no literature—none—in support this hypothetical treatment modality he repeatedly proposes. In fact, he concedes there is no literature at all to support this hypothetical approach to therapy. Ex. B, at 111:20-21; Ex. C, at ¶ 13. In other words, it is a hypothesis built upon unsupported premises.

³ For example, the literature to which Dr. Kaliebe cites to support his opinion does not relate to gender dysphoria, Ex. B, at 58:8-11, and the Littman article to which he cites “actually doesn’t reach any conclusions as to social contagions,” but rather “at best ... raises hypotheses,” Ex. B, at 71:15-18.

⁴ To the extent Dr. Kaliebe points to two unscientific polls of the attendees to two conference panel sessions and a single personal anecdote, such evidence has no indicia of reliability. *See* Section II.C, *infra*.

Upon questioning, Dr. Kaliebe clarified that what he refers to as “body affirmation” has nothing to do with treating gender dysphoria or resolving a person’s incongruence. At his deposition, Dr. Kaliebe explained that what he terms “body affirmation” “is purely about [a person] being comfortable with their body,” such that “somebody that identifies as female” would be “completely comfortable with their stereotypically male body, notwithstanding that they identify as female.” Ex. B, at 111:11-17. However, upon questioning Dr. Kaliebe admits that “part of somebody’s gender dysphoria [is] the distress associated with that incongruence due in part to how they are perceived by others in the world.” Ex. B, at 113:1-5. It is thus unclear how his hypothetical approach would treat gender dysphoria.

Indeed, Dr. Kaliebe posits that “if we could help people become more comfortable in the body that they are in, you know, perhaps, that would mean that they could be somewhat more comfortable and *maybe the gender dysphoria never goes away*, but we might be able to help them with their depression or anxiety or self-harm or other things.” Ex. B, at 113:6-11 (emphasis added). But again, Dr. Kaliebe cites to nothing in support of this hypothetical, and until now unheard of, approach to treating gender dysphoria.

Three. Dr. Kaliebe repeatedly makes broad assertions that “in private, but not in public, most psychiatrists will acknowledge their doubts regarding affirmative care,” Ex. A, at ¶ 123; “[m]ost psychiatrists are willing to admit we don’t have

enough research to really know how to proceed,” *id.*; and “[m]ost physicians have doubts about a gender medicine,” Ex. C, at ¶ 36. However, Dr. Kaliebe fails to cite to any study, literature, or evidence in support of such broad assertions in every instance in which he makes them. Instead, Dr. Kaliebe bases these opinions on a few conversations he has had and then extrapolates them to the population of physicians and psychiatrists at large. *See, e.g.*, Ex. B, at 60:17-61:6, 63:19-64:4, 127:8-10, 146:10-25. But when Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are based on a select few anecdotes, it is a circumstance where “there is simply too great an analytical gap between the data and the opinion proffered,” such that the expert testimony must be excluded. *Gen. Elec. Co. v. Joiner*, 522 U.S. 136, 144 (1997).

Four. Dr. Kaliebe suggests that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or yoga could be effective modes of psychotherapy for gender dysphoria. Ex. A, at ¶¶ 136, 142. But he admits he does not know if CBT could be effective to treat gender dysphoria (it cannot), because according to him it has not been studied. Ex. B, 152:7-22. Likewise, Dr. Kaliebe admits there are no studies on yoga as treatment of any mental health conditions, let alone gender dysphoria. Ex. B, at 164:21-165:9, 166:5-11. Such speculative opinions are wholly unreliable.

Similarly, Dr. Kaliebe suggests that “more specific and nuanced approaches for gender dysphoria exist,” such as gender exploratory therapy. Ex. A, at ¶ 137 (citing to <https://genderexploratory.com/>). However, not only does he not cite to any

literature in support for this modality of treatment, but he admits that there is no evidence that gender exploratory therapy is safe or effective. Ex. B, at 159:2-4. Again, his opinion about gender exploratory therapy is speculative, at best.⁵

Five. Dr. Kaliebe opines in his rebuttal report that “[i]n childhood, most gender dysphoria spontaneously resolves without treatment.” Ex. C, at ¶ 16. He provides no citation or evidence for this opinion, making it an unsupported premise that should be excluded as unreliable.

Six. Dr. Kaliebe opines that “it is clear the SOC 8 guidelines are at odds with the stated policies of most countries.” Ex. C, at ¶ 6. He provides no citation or support for this extremely broad statement. What is more, he concedes he has no awareness “of which countries have adopted SOC 8.” *Id.* The Court should reject this wholly unsupported opinion as unreliable.

Seven. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions about the innerworkings of WPATH or the motivations and opinions of its membership is wholly speculative and unreliable. *See, e.g.*, Ex. C, at ¶¶ 3-4. The same holds true for his criticisms of the Endocrine

⁵ “Whereas gender-affirmative approaches follow the client’s lead when it comes to gender, gender-exploratory therapy discourages gender affirmation in favor of exploring through talk therapy the potential pathological roots of youths’ trans identities or gender dysphoria.” Ex. D, at 472. “The surge of gender-exploratory therapy coincides with ongoing attempts to criminalize gender-affirming care for trans youths, sometimes masquerading as a compromise between gender-affirmative care and conversion practices and at other times functioning as the intellectual arm of political movements calling for the criminalization of gender-affirming care.” *Id.* at 473.

Society. *E.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶ 105 (“While I have little direct experience with the Endocrine Society, my assessment is that many endocrinologists, and perhaps most, also believe their professional organization is also too strongly influenced by activist physicians.”). Dr. Kaliebe has no experience with these organizations upon which to base his criticisms. “He is therefore not qualified to testify about the credibility of those organizations.” *Kadel*, 2022 WL 3226731, at *10. Indeed, Dr. Kaliebe can “not offer[] any reliable testimony on this subject that will help the trier of fact.” *Id.*

* * *

Dr. Kaliebe lacks knowledge “of facts which enable him to express a reasonably accurate conclusion as opposed to conjecture or speculation.” *Jones v. Otis Elevator Co.*, 861 F.2d 655, 662 (11th Cir. 1988). Indeed, much of Dr. Kaliebe’s testimony and opinions “appears to be based more on supposition than science.” *O’Neill v. Windshire-Copeland Assocs.*, 372 F.3d 281, 285 (4th Cir. 2004). And opinions based on “subjective belief or unsupported speculation” should be rejected. *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 589-590.

B. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are unreliable because they are misleading, employ flawed methodologies, and do not serve to enlighten the trier of fact.

In addition, many of Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are misleading at best, or flat out false. Take the following examples:

One. Dr. Kaliebe spends much ink criticizing the development of the WPATH Standards of Care, Version 7 and Version 8. Dr. Kaliebe does so by quoting

and repeating criticisms made by others. *See, e.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶¶ 62-63; Ex. C, at ¶¶ 19-26, 31-33. But these criticisms are unreliable for, at least, two independent reasons.

First, Dr. Kaliebe admits that he is not an expert in the development of clinical practice guidelines. Ex. B, at 101:3-10. And an expert, “however well credentialed he may be, is not permitted to be the mouthpiece of a scientist in a different specialty.” *Dura Auto. Sys.*, 285 F.3d at 614. Indeed, because Dr. Kaliebe is not qualified “to testify about areas in which he has admitted he has no expertise,” such testimony is unreliable. *Solaia Tech.*, 361 F.Supp.2d at 813–14.

Second, while an expert may properly rely on the opinion of another expert, an expert cannot simply repeat or adopt the findings of other experts without investigating them. *See In re Polypropylene Carpet Antitrust Litig.*, 93 F.Supp.2d 1348, 1357 (N.D. Ga. 2000) (citing *In re TMI Litig.*, 193 F.3d 613, 715–16 (3d Cir. 1999) (finding blind reliance by expert on other expert opinions demonstrates flawed methodology under *Daubert*); *TK–7 Corp. v. Estate of Barbouti*, 993 F.2d 722, 732–33 (10th Cir. 1993) (excluding expert opinion relying on another expert’s report because witness failed to demonstrate a basis for concluding report was reliable and showed no familiarity with methods and reasons underlying the hearsay report)).

Two. Dr. Kaliebe opines throughout his reports on the efficacy of gender-affirming medical treatment. However, Dr. Kaliebe does not discuss any single

original, peer-reviewed study in detail and in fact, only cites four original studies in the references for his original report. *See* Ex. B, at 88:2-22; Ex. A, at 69-75. Specifically, he cites to four studies Branstrom, et al. (2020), Chen, et al. (2023), Dhejne, et al. (2011), and Kaltiala, et al. (2020). However, the universe of original peer-review research looking into the safety and effectiveness of gender-affirming medical treatments is orders of magnitude larger.

For example, a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed studies published in English between 1991 and 2017 looked at 56 original peer-reviewed studies into whether gender transition, including medical treatments such as hormone therapy and surgeries, improves the overall well-being of transgender adults. *See* Exs. E and F.⁶ Similarly, a review from 1998 looked at data from 80 studies spanning 30 years. Ex. G (Expert Report of Johanna Olson-Kennedy, M.D., M.S.), at ¶ 44. In other words, *a meta-analysis review from 25 years looked at 20 times the number of studies that Dr. Kaliebe reviewed for his report.* There is likewise a multitude of original peer-reviewed studies looking into the effect of gender-affirming medical treatment on the mental health and well-being of transgender adolescents with gender dysphoria. *See, e.g.,* Ex. G, at ¶¶ 25-30, 33-39,

⁶ Though not relevant for purposes of this Motion to Exclude, it is worth noting that this systematic literature review “found a robust international consensus in the peer-reviewed literature that gender transition, including medical treatments such as hormone therapy and surgeries, improves the overall well-being of transgender individuals.” Ex. E.

46 (discussing over 13 original peer-reviewed studies looking specifically at transgender adolescents); Ex. H (Expert Report of Daniel Shumer), at ¶¶ 82, 86 (discussing over 15 original peer-reviewed studies looking specifically at transgender adolescents); Ex. I (discussing 16 original peer-reviewed studies examining the impacts of gender-affirming medical care for transgender adolescents).

Plaintiffs do not point to the aforementioned vast expanse of scientific literature to argue the merits of Dr. Kaliebe's opinions (as wrong as they are), but to illustrate the lack of reliability of Dr. Kaliebe's opinions based on his methodology (or lack thereof). Dr. Kaliebe is unfamiliar with and does not reference—let alone, discuss—the original peer-reviewed studies that he criticizes. Rather, Dr. Kaliebe parrots the criticisms of others. His references are primarily opinion pieces and literature reviews by others, not original peer-reviewed studies. *See generally* Ex. A, at 69-75. But Dr. Kaliebe cannot serve as a mouthpiece for others. His criticisms of the scientific evidence supporting gender-affirming medical care must be based on his own review of that evidence. The fact that Dr. Kaliebe is unfamiliar with the expansive universe of literature at issue here demonstrates the lack of reliability for his opinions about the effectiveness of gender-affirming medical care.

Three. Dr. Kaliebe disputes that gender identity has a biological basis. He cites to an article by Marianowicz-Szczygiel (2022) outlining an apparent rise of

people presenting to gender clinics and an article by Littman (2018) discussing the perceptions of the non-affirming parents of transgender adolescents. Ex. C, at ¶ 10. But neither article disputes there is a biological basis for gender identity. For example, Dr. Kaliebe conceded that “the fact that more people have been showing up at clinics could be explained by the fact that, A, the care is more available; and, B, more people feel comfortable seeking the care.” Ex. B, at 54:5-10. And Dr. Kaliebe conceded that the Littman article, given its multiple limitations, could not reach any conclusions regarding social contagion and, at most, raised hypotheses. Ex. B, at 71:16-18. What is more, scientific, peer-reviewed literature that Dr. Kaliebe has encountered shows the opposite, namely, that “there is empirical evidence that there is a biological basis for a person’s gender identity.” Ex. J; *see also* Ex. B, at 150:17 (“A. I’ve seen it cited.”).

Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions about whether there is a biological basis for gender identity are unreliable because (a) he employed a flawed methodology that omitted discussion of existing, on point peer-reviewed scientific literature, and (b) his opinions are based on unproven hypotheses and not any data. While usually the factual basis of an expert opinion goes to credibility, “it is possible for an experts’ omission of articles to render his or her opinion inadmissible on reliability grounds.” *Huggins v. Stryker Corp.*, 932 F.Supp.2d 972, 994 (D. Minn. 2013). Such is the case

here where Dr. Kaliebe omits key information, or worse, misrepresents facts that if properly disclosed would contradict his opinions and undermine their foundation.

* * *

The Court “must ensure that any and all scientific testimony or evidence admitted is not only relevant, but reliable.” *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 589. Here, Dr. Kaliebe has employed flawed methodologies and misrepresented or omitted information that goes to the heart of his opinions, all of which calls into question the reliability of his opinions. In such circumstances, the “potential to mislead” rather “than to enlighten” is too great. *In re Lipitor*, 892 F.3d at 632.

C. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are unreliable because they are based on facts or data not typically relied on by physician or scientists.

Rule 703 requires that “[t]he facts or data ... upon which an expert bases an opinion or inference” must be “of a type reasonably relied upon by experts in the particular field in forming opinions or inferences upon the subject.” Fed. R. Evid. 703.

One. Based on his alleged “review of the research,” Dr. Kaliebe opines “that the evidence base for gender dysphoria treatment is mixed and generally low quality.” Ex. A, at ¶ 45. However, Dr. Kaliebe bases his opinions on his review of reports of government entities in Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, as well as the GAPMS Report. Ex. B, at 86:25-87:8. But, as Dr. Kaliebe acknowledges, none of those are published, peer-reviewed literature. *Id.*; see also Ex. B, at 99:17-25. And

such unpublished, non-peer-reviewed reports *are not* the types of materials reasonably relied upon by experts in any field of medicine. When asked what actual peer-reviewed, original studies he reviewed, he could not identify any and his original report cites to only four (4) original studies (none of which relate to the provision of puberty-delaying medications as treatment for an adolescent’s gender dysphoria). Ex. B, at 86:21-88:22.

Two. As noted above, Dr. Kaliebe *hypothesizes* that “direct social influences and online and social media contagion” are “major contributors” to a rise in gender dysphoria. *E.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶ 30; *see also id.* at ¶¶ 40, 41. However, he points to no *reliable* evidence to support his *hypothesis* (which itself is an unreliable basis for an expert opinion, *see* Section II.A, *supra*). For example, Dr. Kaliebe points to a single case anecdote in support for his hypothesis. Ex. B, 59:13-16. But such “anecdotal information ... is scientifically unreliable and not supported by any ... scientifically reliable studies.” *Soldo v. Sandoz Pharms. Corp.*, 244 F.Supp.2d 434, 571 (W.D. Pa. 2003);⁷ *see also McClain v. Metabolife Int’l, Inc.*, 401 F.3d 1233, 1252, 1253-54 (11th Cir. 2005).

In addition, Dr. Kaliebe relies on two non-published, non-peer-reviewed, unscientific polls of the attendees of two conference panel sessions to support his

⁷ In *Soldo*, the excluded expert’s testimony was based on anecdotal evidence contained in *published case reports*. Here, Dr. Kaliebe has not even attempted to publish his anecdotal evidence as a case report.

opinion that “Psychiatrists also believe social media has significantly contributed to the rise in gender dysphoria.” Ex. A, at ¶ 41; *see also id.* at ¶¶ 42-43. Dr. Kaliebe admits that he did not do any regression or statistical significance analysis regarding these polls, Ex. B, at 66:15-19, and that all the polls tell us “is the views of the attendees of that particular seminar.” Ex. B, at 67:1-4. Indeed, there are about 45,000 psychiatrists in the United States, Ex. B, at 63:15-18, and as Dr. Kaliebe admits his “conversations are not a representative sample of all childhood adolescent psychiatrists.” Ex. B, at 64:8-11.

Dr. Kaliebe also cites as a support a *press release* from the French Academies, Ex. A, at ¶ 40, but admits that “a press release is not peer-reviewed or scientific literature.” Ex. B, at 68:7-13.

Of course, it should be noted that, as Dr. Kaliebe admits, “it is not shocking that teens find like-minded teens online and they speak to each other about their similar experiences,” and “that, in particular, small populations that tend to be isolated and/or discrete tend to turn to social media actually as a way to connect and find one another.” Ex. B, at 67:21-68:6.

In sum, none of the sources upon which Dr. Kaliebe relies for his opinions are of reliable or of the type upon which any serious physician or scientist would rely on.

Three. Dr. Kaliebe also spends much ink discussing the apparent politicized nature of conversations surrounding the treatment of gender dysphoria and *hypothesizes* that such politicization and moralization has led to the silencing of contrary views. *See, e.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶¶ 71-89 (discussing apparent “lack of consensus”); *id.* at ¶¶ 90-124 (discussing “breakdown in scholarly dialogue”). Dr. Kaliebe bases these opinions on conjecture and anecdotes he has purportedly collected based on a few conversations. However, neither of these are the type of “facts or data” other experts in psychiatry or medicine “would reasonably rely on ... in forming an opinion in the subject.” Fed. R. Evid. 703. Indeed, “broad opinions [that] are based solely on ... generalized views, anecdotal accounts, and speculation ... are not reliable.” *In re 3M*, 2021 WL 684183, at *3 (N.D. Fla. Feb. 11, 2021). Similarly, opinions “based on mere conjecture, assumption, credibility calls, and amounting to no more than ipse dixit” are “neither reliable nor helpful.” *Day v. Edenfield*, 2022 WL 972430, at *10 (N.D. Fla. Mar. 31, 2022).

What is more, in some instances, some of these opinions are demonstrably false. For example, Dr. Kaliebe states that “skeptical voices have been difficult to find within any of the journals of the Endocrine Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association or American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry” and that he “ha[s] not found a single skeptical or even ideologically balanced article in any of these journals.” Ex. A, at ¶ 82. But

notwithstanding that Dr Kaliebe was aware of two letters to the editor published in the *Journal of the Endocrine Society* that were critical of gender-affirming medical care, he still made the false statement.⁸ See Ex. B, at 131:15-132:13.

In sum, none of Dr. Kaliebe’s “opinions” about the politicized nature of the debate surrounding transgender issues and the treatment of gender dysphoria are medical or scientific opinions. They do not require “the application of scientific, technical, or specialized expertise, to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue.” *Frazier*, 387 F.3d at 1260. To the contrary, they are at best personal opinions and gripes with those with whom he disagrees. They are both unreliable and irrelevant, and at times, outright false. Allowing Dr. Kaliebe to testify “based on limited personal accounts and information relayed to [him] by an unspecified number of third parties would be to sanction [his] use as a vehicle for introducing hearsay testimony.” *In re 3M*, 2021 WL 684183, at *2.

* * *

Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are thus “unsupported by reliable principles and methods and lack[s] hallmarks of scientific rigor: peer-reviewed research, studies, or experiments in support of his opinions.” *United States v. Geanakos*, 2017 WL 4883294, at *3 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2017).

⁸ To be sure, neither of these two letters were based on original research or were peer-reviewed.

D. Dr. Kaliebe's opinions are unreliable because they are not generally accepted in the scientific and medical community.

General acceptance in the relevant scientific community is also relevant to the reliability inquiry. *Nease*, 848 F.3d at 229. Not only is widespread acceptance an important factor in assessing the reliability of an expert's opinions, but the fact that a known technique or theory "has been able to attract only minimal support within the community may properly be viewed with skepticism." *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 594. Here, Dr. Kaliebe's opinions are outside the mainstream of medical and scientific opinion and have been explicitly rejected by these relevant communities.

The provision of gender-affirming medical care has been accepted and endorsed, *inter alia*, by the: American Medical Association; American Psychiatric Association; American Psychological Association; Endocrine Society; Pediatric Endocrine Society; American Academy of Pediatrics; and the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. *See* Ex. K at 361.

In fact, another federal district court found as much when it enjoined Arkansas' state law seeking to ban gender-confirming treatment for minors. *See Brandt v. Rutledge*, 551 F.Supp.3d 882 (E.D. Ark. 2021), *aff'd*, 47 F.4th 661 (8th Cir. 2022). In doing so, the *Brandt* court explicitly found that: (a) "Gender-affirming treatment is *supported by medical evidence* that has been *subject to rigorous study*;" and (b) "*Every major expert medical association* recognizes that gender-affirming care for transgender minors may be *medically appropriate and necessary* to improve

the physical and mental health of transgender people.” *Id.* at 891 (emphasis added). The *Brandt* court’s findings stand as a stark repudiation of Dr. Kaliebe’s opinion that the provision of gender-affirming medical care to adolescents with gender dysphoria is an “experiment,” for which “there is clearly no consensus of opinion.” Ex. A, at ¶¶ 11, 21-22.

* * *

Given that Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions fail to meet the most basic indicia of reliability, the Court should exclude Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions and testimony as unreliable.

III. Helpfulness – Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions and testimony are not relevant to this case.

Helpfulness “goes primarily to relevance.” *Daubert*, 509 U.S. at 580; *see also Prosper v. Martin*, 989 F.3d 1242, 1249 (11th Cir. 2021) (“The touchstone of this inquiry is the concept of relevance.”). Under the helpfulness prong, the “court must satisfy itself that the proffered testimony is relevant to the issue at hand, for that is a precondition to admissibility.” *Sardis v. Overhead Door Corp.*, 10 F.4th 268, 282 (4th Cir. 2021) (cleaned up). Relevant expert testimony “logically advances a material aspect of the proposing party’s case” and “fits” the disputed facts. *McDowell v. Brown*, 392 F.3d 1283, 1298-99 (11th Cir. 2004). Thus, “expert testimony which does not relate to any issue in the case is not relevant and non-

helpful.” *Knight v. Boehringer Ingelheim Pharms., Inc.*, 323 F.Supp.3d 837, 846 (S.D. W.Va. 2018).

In order to be relevant, an opinion needs to “fit” with the facts at issue. *Simmons v. Augusta Aviation, Inc.*, 596 F.Supp.3d 1363, 1374 (S.D. Ga. 2022) “To satisfy this requirement, the testimony must concern matters beyond the understanding of the average lay person and logically advance a material aspect of the proponent’s case.” *Id.* Testimony that “offers nothing more than what lawyers for the parties can argue in closing arguments” or that consists of “subjective portrayals of factual information” “generally will not help the trier of fact.” *Giusto v. Int’l Paper Co.*, 2021 WL 3603374, at *4 (N.D. Ga. Aug. 13, 2021).

This case is about whether Defendants’ exclusion of coverage for medical treatments for gender dysphoria violates Plaintiffs’ rights under the equal protection clause, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and the Medicaid Act. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions are not relevant to this inquiry as they will not help the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue. His opinions do not “fit” because they are not sufficiently tied to the facts of the case so that they will aid a factfinder.

A. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions about “desistance” are irrelevant.

Dr. Kaliebe’s opinion that “[i]n childhood, most gender dysphoria spontaneously resolves without treatment” is wholly irrelevant. Ex. C, ¶ 16. But no

medical or surgical treatment is recommended or provided to *prepubertal* children. And this case is about the coverage for medical treatment for gender dysphoria. Dr. Kaliebe’s (unsupported) opinions about “spontaneous desistance” are thus irrelevant to this case.⁹

B. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions about supposed controversies in other countries are irrelevant.

Likewise, Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions about “controversies” regarding the provision of medical treatment for gender dysphoria in other countries, such as Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, are both misleading and wholly irrelevant. *See, e.g.*, Ex. A, at ¶¶ 49-60, 160, 161. Dr. Kaliebe failed to disclose that each of these countries *provides and covers* gender-affirming hormonal and surgical treatment for gender dysphoria for adolescents in certain circumstances and adults, without any restriction, whereas Defendants exclude coverage for treatments for both these populations categorically. *See, e.g.*, Ex. B, at 100:17-101:2; Ex. L; *see also Brandt*, 47 F.4th at 671; *Eknes-Tucker v. Marshall*, 603 F.Supp.3d 1131, 1146 (M.D. Ala. 2022) (“According to Dr. Cantor, Defendants’ own expert witness, no state or country in the entire world has enacted a blanket ban of these medications other than Alabama.”).

⁹ These opinions are methodologically flawed and unreliable because Dr. Kaliebe cites to no authority and provides no basis for his opinion.

Moreover, each of the reports and reviews of the provision of gender-affirming care in these three countries pertained to medical care for minors and not adults, unlike the Challenged Exclusion. Ex. B, at 100:1-16.

In the end, how care is provided and covered in countries with nationalized health care systems is not relevant to whether coverage of gender-affirming medical care should be provided by Medicaid in Florida.¹⁰

C. Dr. Kaliebe's musings about the causes of gender dysphoria are irrelevant.

As noted above, Dr. Kaliebe *hypothesizes*, without any evidence, that gender dysphoria *may be* caused by social contagion and social pressure. But whether gender dysphoria is caused by social contagion is both wholly unsupported, as described above, and irrelevant to the case at hand. It is undisputed that gender dysphoria is a recognized medical condition that necessitates treatment. *See, e.g.*, Ex. B, at 34:9-11 (“Q. ... Would you agree with me that gender dysphoria is a very real condition? A. Yes.”); *see also Grimm v. Gloucester Cnty. Sch. Bd.*, 972 F.3d 586, 594-95 (4th Cir. 2020); *Eknes-Tucker*, 603 F.Supp.3d at 1138 (“Gender dysphoria is a clinically diagnosed incongruence between one’s gender identity and assigned gender. If untreated, gender dysphoria may cause or lead to anxiety,

¹⁰ For example, in Sweden standards of care are developed through legislation and thus part of a political process. *See Socialstyrelsen, About the National Board of Health and Welfare*, <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/about-us/> (accessed Apr. 7, 2023) (noting that standards are based on legislation).

depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide.” (citations omitted)).

* * *

The opinions expressed by Dr. Kaliebe are insufficiently tied to the facts of this case so that they will aid a factfinder and should be excluded as irrelevant.

IV. Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions lack probative value and are therefore inadmissible under Rule 403.

Finally, the Court should exclude Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions because their introduction will result in unfair prejudice, confusion of the issues, or in misleading testimony. Fed. R. Evid. 403. Dr. Kaliebe offers no opinions relevant to the issues in this case, and, in any event, the opinions he offers are unfounded, speculative, and unreliable. The testimony would also result in prejudice, as the testimony seeks to sow confusion about the propriety of gender-confirming care based on speculation, irrelevant, misleading, or biased opinions.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Court should exclude Dr. Kaliebe’s report, opinions, and testimony. More specifically, at minimum, the Court should limit Dr. Kaliebe’s opinions and testimony solely to those regarding the diagnosis of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents, and otherwise exclude Dr. Kaliebe’s report, opinions, and testimony in full.

Dated this 7th day of April 2023.

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LOCAL RULE 7.1(B) CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he attempted in good faith to resolve the issues raised in this motion through a meaningful conference with Defendants' counsel, including through a meet and confer Zoom conference on April 6, 2023.

/s/ Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Counsel for Plaintiffs

LOCAL RULE 7.1(F) WORD COUNT CERTIFICATION

As required by Local Rule 7.1(F), I certify that this Opposition contains 7,948 words.

/s/ Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Counsel for Plaintiffs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 7th day of April 2023, a true copy of the foregoing has been filed with the Court utilizing its CM/ECF system, which will transmit a notice of electronic filing to counsel of record for all parties in this matter registered with the Court for this purpose.

/s/ Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Counsel for Plaintiffs

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Tallahassee Division**

AUGUST DEKKER, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

**DECLARATION OF OMAR GONZALEZ-PAGAN IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS' MOTION TO EXCLUDE EXPERT TESTIMONY OF
DR. KRISTOPHER KALIEBE**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Omar Gonzalez-Pagan, do hereby declare as follows:

1. I am over 18 years of age.
2. I am Counsel at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. and serve as counsel of record for the plaintiffs in the above-captioned matter.
3. I have personal knowledge of the stated herein, except those stated on information and belief, and if called upon, could and would testify competently to them.
4. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Motion to Exclude Expert Testimony of Dr. Kristopher Kaliebe.

5. Attached as **Exhibit A** is a true and correct copy of the expert witness report of Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D. (including a copy of his curriculum vitae) in the above-captioned matter, which is dated February 17, 2023, was served upon plaintiffs on that date, and was entered as Exhibit 1 to Dr. Kaliebe's deposition in this matter on March 20, 2023.

6. Attached as **Exhibit B** is a true and correct copy of excerpts of the transcript of the deposition of Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D. on March 20, 2023 taken in relation to the above-captioned matter.

7. Attached as **Exhibit C** is a true and correct copy of the rebuttal expert report of Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D. (including a copy of his curriculum vitae) in the above-captioned matter, which is dated March 8, 2023, was served upon plaintiffs on March 10, 2023, and was entered as Exhibit 10 to Dr. Kaliebe's deposition in this matter on March 20, 2023.

8. Attached as **Exhibit D** is a true and correct copy of the article "Interrogating Gender-Exploratory Therapy," published in the peer-reviewed academic journal of psychology *Perspectives on Psychological Science* in January 2023, and which was entered as Exhibit 9 to Dr. Kaliebe's deposition in this matter on March 20, 2023.

9. Enclosed as **Exhibit E** is a true and correct copy of the one-pager of the systematic literature review "What Does the Scholarly Research Say about the Effect

of Gender Transition on Transgender Well-Being?” conducted by Cornell University’s What We Know Project and published in 2018, and which can be found at <https://whatweknow.inequality.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PDF-Trans-well-being.pdf>. The full systematic literature review, including copies of each of the studies reviewed, is cited to as “What We Know Project, Cornell University, “What Does the Scholarly Research Say about the Effect of Gender Transition on Transgender Well-Being?” (online literature review), 2018,” and can be found at <https://whatweknow.inequality.cornell.edu/topics/lgbt-equality/what-does-the-scholarly-research-say-about-the-well-being-of-transgender-people/>.

10. Enclosed as **Exhibit F** is a true and correct copy of “Search Methodology for Research Analysis on the Effect of Gender Transition on Transgender Well-being,” published by Cornell University’s What We Know in 2018, and which can be found at: <https://whatweknow.inequality.cornell.edu/about/selection-methodology/>.

11. Attached as **Exhibit G** is a true and correct copy of the Expert Report of Johanna Olson-Kennedy, M.D., M.S. (including attachments) in the above-captioned matter, which is dated February 16, 2023, was served upon defendants on February 17, 2023, and was entered as Exhibit 1 to Dr. Olson-Kennedy’s deposition in this matter on March 17, 2023.

12. Attached as **Exhibit H** is a true and correct copy of the Expert Report of Daniel Shumer, M.D., M.S. (including attachments) in the above-captioned matter, which is dated February 16, 2023, was served upon defendants on February 17, 2023, and was entered as Exhibit 1 to Dr. Shumer's deposition in this matter on March 21, 2023.

13. Attached as **Exhibit I** is a true and correct copy of the article "The Evidence for Trans Youth Gender-Affirming Medical Care," which was authored by Jack Turban, M.D., M.S. and was published in *Psychology Today* on January 24, 2022, and was last updated on October 11, 2022.

14. Attached as **Exhibit J** is a true and correct copy of the peer-reviewed literature review "Neurobiology of gender identity and sexual orientation," published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* in July 2018, and which was entered as Exhibit 8 to Dr. Kaliebe's deposition in this matter on March 20, 2023.

15. Attached as **Exhibit K** is a true and correct copy of excerpts of *Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations*, a Consensus Study Report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine published in 2020.

16. Attached as **Exhibit L** is a true and correct copy of the Brief for *Amici Curiae* Stonewall UK, et al., filed on January 19, 2022 before the U.S. Court of

Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in support of the plaintiffs-appeals in *Brandt v. Rutledge*, Case. No. 21-2875.

I declare under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated this 7th day of April 2023.

/s/ Omar Gonzalez-Pagan
Omar Gonzalez-Pagan

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TALLAHASSEE DIVISION**

AUGUST DEKKER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

EXPERT REPORT OF KRISTOPHER KALIEBE, M.D.

Introduction

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1746, I declare:

1. I have been asked by the defendants to discuss my membership in professional associations, and the relevant guidelines and policies concerning gender dysphoria in those associations. I have been asked to provide a review of the evidence base for treatments of gender dysphoria. I also have been asked to opine on the influence of activism and suppression of open inquiry which has distorted academic dialogue and made published research and expert recommendations untrustworthy with regard to gender dysphoria.

2. This report is entirely my own work product, and no one was consulted for this this report.

3. If called to testify in this matter, I will testify truthfully based on my personal experience and knowledge.

4. I am being compensated at an hourly rate of \$400 per hour for my time preparing this declaration. My compensation does not depend on the outcome of this litigation, the opinions I express, or the testimony I may provide.

Here I provide a summary of my major points:

a. While historical reports of gender dysphoria exist, it has been rare until the last two decades.

b. There is no consensus in the field regarding the treatment of gender dysphoria, nor is there an evidence-base sufficient to lead to any confident recommendations.

c. Multiple reviews of the evidence base regarding treatment of gender dysphoria indicate that the evidence for affirmative treatment is low-quality.

d. Small numbers of advocate physicians within medical organizations have been able to leverage moralized claims and low quality evidence in order to promote affirmative care for gender dysphoria.

e. Significant evidence points to a spread of ideology combined with technologically induced contagion effects leading the recent increase in gender dysphoria.

f. As American medical professional organizations have already endorsed the concept of affirmative care as evidence-based and ethical, they are no longer neutral with regards to the science and have instead entered into advocacy roles.

g. Much of the slogans and assumptions associated with affirmative care for gender dysphoria are conjecture, opinion or misinformation presenting as established fact.

h. Due to the highly politicized and ideological nature of the issue of gender dysphoria, there is limited rigorous scholarly dialogue within American professional medical organizations and medical journals.

Background

6. I am an associate professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa Florida. I am Board Certified in Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Forensic Psychiatry. My clinical work has been primarily in University based clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers and juvenile corrections.

7. I was awarded my medical degree in 1999, and subsequently completed general psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry and forensic psychiatry training. This training includes education in human biology, human sexuality, development, brain functioning, normal development and psychopathology. Gender dysphoria and gender dysphoria treatment were part of my professional training.

8. From 2005 to 2016 I was Assistant Professor at Louisiana State University Health Science Center – New Orleans. I was the program director of the LSU Child Psychiatry Fellowship for 2 years. Since 2016 I have been Associate Professor at the University of South Florida where my clinical roles which mainly include working with juvenile corrections, supporting primary care physicians through the Florida Medicaid Psychiatric Medication hotline and in a university child and adolescent psychiatry clinic. I cover at Tampa General Hospital and recently added an adult psychiatry resident clinic to my schedule. I also practice forensic psychiatry including child and adult cases, both within criminal and civil court.

9. As a supervising physician at the University of South Florida's Silver Child Development Center my role is to function as a clinical supervisor and instructor. Child psychiatry residents and general psychiatry residents serve as the primary patient evaluators and clinicians. I evaluate new patients directly, and after see patients directly as needed. I oversee the resident's work products and function as the physician of record. Within this clinic I evaluate and treat patients with gender dysphoria.

10. In addition to these direct clinical experiences, part of my scope of duties within the Silver Child Development Center is training residents regarding the treatment of patients, including patients with gender dysphoria.

11. Within the juvenile justice system I also evaluate and treat patients with gender dysphoria. I further have been consulted to provide a second opinion and coordinate care regarding a patient with gender dysphoria in the Louisiana juvenile correctional system.

12. In addition to direct clinical care, I am routinely consulted by colleagues. Within my work at the Florida Medicaid Psychiatric Hotline I have collaborated in the care of patients with gender dysphoria. My colleague consultation includes providing my opinion regarding would a youth be competent to consent as requested by an endocrinologist regarding a youth considering puberty blockers on

a path toward sex hormone treatment and potential surgeries. I have been consulted regarding psychotherapeutic approaches to young adult patients who detransitioned.

13. I have extensive teaching experience including medical students, general psychiatry residents, child and adolescent psychiatry fellows and forensic psychiatry fellows. I have years of extensive positive feedback from medical students and psychiatrist residents.

14. My approach to the practice of medicine includes utilizing and appreciating the amazing progress modern medicine has made. I practice and support conventional medicine, I have strongly advocated for the expansion of Federally Qualified Health Centers, along with improved collaboration of mental health with primary care (Kaliebe 2016, Kaliebe 2017).

15. My support of, and attempts to improve conventional medicine, is balanced by a healthy degree of caution. The history of medicine is filled with examples of the harms which can come with unproven, unnecessary, aggressive or counterproductive interventions. As such, I've presented twice at the Preventing Overdiagnosis conference.

16. I am involved with Integrative Medicine, focused mainly on the role of mind-body medicine, mindfulness, nutrition and exercise, along with how modern medicine has adopted approaches which underemphasize and at times neglect the basics of health. Another academic interest of mine is the tradeoffs and stress of

moving to primarily electronics based communications, especially on young people. (Kaliebe 2002, Gerwin 2018) I have a longstanding interest in how technology and the media intersect with society and culture, including the impacts of social media, recent increases in tribalism and the spread of misinformation.

17. With Paul Weigle, I co-edited the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America *Youth Internet Habits and Mental Health* edition in 2018 with 16 chapters by invited experts on digital and mental health related issues. (Kaliebe 2018)

18. I am a member of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the American Psychiatric Association. I have been most active within the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). I was awarded status as a Distinguished Fellow at AACAP in 2016. I first presented regarding the media at the 2004 AACAP annual conference, and have now presented at the annual conference 25 times. I served as co-chair of the Media Committee from 2013-2021. I served as the Liaison from AACAP to the American Academy of Pediatrics from 2016-2022. I was an author on their practice guidelines for telepsychiatry. I have also served AACAP in the state affiliates, for the Louisiana Council for Child Psychiatry I was secretary / treasurer for 4 years and served as president for 2 years.

19. I have a longstanding interest in psychotherapy. I have additional training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and trauma-focused therapies. I have been

providing psychotherapy and teaching psychotherapy to psychiatry trainees throughout my career. I currently routinely supervise psychiatry residents regarding psychotherapy with the USF residency program. I created and taught a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy practicum for LSU residents from 2007 to 2016. I was a member of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies from 2004 to 2016.

20. I have been on the Best Doctors list annually since 2007.

21. I also practice and teach forensic psychiatry and have testified in deposition or trial in the following cases over the past four years:

a. Civil Testimony, retained by the defense:

i. In the Interest of RW, LL, AP Minor Children January 28, 2020 Circuit Court of the 13th judicial circuit, Juvenile Division, Judge Lisa Campbell, Tampa FL

b. Civil Testimony, court appointed:

i. February 28, 2020, Jeffrey Spivey, petitioner/father and Teresa Spivey N/K/A Teresa Cartwright, respondent/mother Case No.: 2016 DR0471's, Circuit Court of the 12th judicial circuit in and for Manatee County Florida. Judge Kevin Bruning

c. Civil Testimony, court appointed:

i. Re: The Marriage of Robyn Cohen McCarthy and John McCarthy November 1, 2019 11th Judicial Circuit, Family Division, Dade County, Judge Jason Dimitris, Miami FL

d. Criminal Testimony, retained by the defense:

- i. The State of Florida v. Bill Paul Marquardt December 19, 2019 5th Judicial Circuit, Sumner County, Florida, Judge William Hallman III, Bushnell Florida
 - ii. The State of Florida v. Bill Paul Marquardt August 24, 2022 5th Judicial Circuit, Sumner County, Florida, Judge Mary P. Hatcher Bushnell Florida
 - e. Civil Depositions, retained by the defense:
 - i. Z.M.L., a minor, through her parents and guardians, -vs- D.R. Horton, Inc., a foreign corporation authorized to do business in Florida, United States District Court, Middle Division of Florida, Tampa, May 6, 2021
 - ii. THE ESTATE of JEAN LINDOR, deceased minor, by and through the Personal Representative of the Estate, JAMES LACROIX and NOUSE ANDREE LACROIX, individually, Plaintiffs, v. BOS TRANSPORT, LLC, a Florida Limited Liability Company, and ORESTES ZAMORA FLEITES, individually, December 5th, 2022
 - f. Civil Depositions, retained by the plaintiff:
 - i. Carlton Collins, individually, and on behalf of his minor son, Connor Samuel Collins v. David R. Wallace, Sr., M.D. Louisiana's 14th judicial district, Civil Suit: 2019 – 4128 – D, March 4th, 2022
 - g. Criminal Deposition, retained by the defense:
 - i. State of Florida v. Justin Mitchell Pennell, 2020CF000159FAXWS, 6th Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida in and for Pasco County, March 11, 2022 Since 2016
22. A list of my publications is attached to this report as Exhibit "A".

The abrupt rise in transgender and non-binary identification

23. The discussion regarding transgender care is in the context of an unexplained and remarkable rise in patients reporting gender dysphoria. During my medical school experience and 3 residencies, I never encountered a patient reporting symptoms of gender dysphoria. For eleven years, from 2005 to 2016, I had a busy psychiatry clinic with about 80% minors and 20% adult patients without a single patient expressing gender dysphoria.

24. During those eleven years, none of the hundreds of medical students or residents I supervised presented cases to me describing patients with gender dysphoria. None of my social work or psychologist colleagues ever asked for consultation or advice regarding how to clinically approach patients with gender dysphoria. Within the last year, on a single day, I have treated three adolescent patients diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

25. My experience is consistent with statistics indicating an abrupt rise in gender dysphoria and presentations to medical clinics for related services. When a new patient population emerges, it creates challenges for physicians to respond. In medicine, typically when such an abrupt change in patient populations occur, the subsequent scholarly literature would typically discuss and debate underlying causes of this phenomenon.

26. Never before has there been large cohorts of individuals seeking medical services to alter their secondary sex characteristics. There had been decades of extremely rare treatment which was at the time acknowledged as compassionate but experimental care. Yet the current patients expressing gender dysphoria represent primarily a new and distinct patient population, not a population which has historically existed.

27. As a psychiatrist, I have encountered many patients who are uncomfortable with their bodies. This discomfort and dissatisfaction is often comingled with anxiety and depression, along with various diagnoses which involve bodily discomfort including eating disorders or Body Dysmorphic Disorder.

28. I have observed bodily discomfort more often in females, and especially as girls enter puberty, which is consistent with the epidemiological literature. Puberty introduces significant challenges and risks to females as they receive more attention from males, including adult males, along with increased competition from peers. Puberty now comes much younger than for our ancestors, creating a greater mismatch between brain and body maturity.

29. While the exact number is unknown it can be said that the incidence of gender dysphoria in youth was previously rare. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published in 2013 rated in adults at 2-14 per 100000 (American Psychiatric Association p454).

Referrals at the Tavistock clinic in England increased over 50 fold in just a decade from 2009 to 2019. (Tavistock & Portman, NAHS Foundation Trust, 2020).

30. Similar increases have been reported across much of the economically advanced countries in the world, many showing over 1000% rise in gender dysphoria over the last decades (Marianowicz-Szczygiel 2022). This phenomenon requires some explanation and any complex phenomenon likely has a multifactorial line of causation. Yet multiple lines of evidence point to direct social influences and online and social media contagion as a major contributors to this increase in gender dysphoria. Biological factors causing the increase of gender dysphoria, such as endocrine disrupting chemicals, are plausible but have not been explored in the scholarly literature.

31. The involvement of social spread is supported by Lisa Littman's work (Littman 2018). It is supported by the timing of the massive increase in gender dysphoria coinciding with the rise in social media and associated "influencers". It is supported by the largest rise in gender dysphoria occurring in vulnerable adolescent females. This is precisely the same population most susceptible to online contagions such as "functional" rapid onset tic disorders, suicidal behavior, non-suicidal self-harm and increase self-reported Dissociative Identity Disorder.

32. The influence of culture, medical theories and ideology on symptom production is long-standing and well known. Shorter detailed numerous examples

of how culture intersects with psychiatric illness from the Victorian to modern era (Shorter 1993). For a discussion of how psychopathology can spread among psychiatric disorders, see Horesh et al's recent article (Horesh 2022).

33. Humans evolved as a sexually dimorphic, ultra-social and cultural species. Culture has co-mingled with our evolution, because unlike other animals, learning from others enables our very survival. Humans acquire a considerable portion of our behaviors and viewpoints “by tapping into a large body of non-genetic information that has been filtered and accumulated over generations. This process, termed cumulative cultural evolution, creates a storehouse in the form of strategies, attentional biases, motivations, tastes, and cognitive heuristics that are necessary for us to accomplish even the basics of survival”. (p 210 Henrich 2021).

34. Thus humans can't explain the rationale for much of our routines, habits and customs because they have been shaped over time, some for thousands of year, some more recently. This raises the possibility there is time tested wisdom in many of our cultural adaptations. Cumulative culture constantly changes, but the recent rate of change has been exponentially faster due to the explosion of technologies. The modern world is thus experiencing perhaps the largest generation gap in history. Today's children and adolescents are exposed to so much more than out grandparents.

35. In ancient evolutionary environments, copying others aided survival via the transmission of acquired knowledge about what areas are safe, how to make shelters or weapons, what berries or mushrooms are safe to eat, and what type of social behavior is acceptable within a group. Humans' brains are particularly adapted with exceptional abilities to notice and copy the behavior of others.

36. Transmission of culture occurs in part via humans naturally mimicking what we observe in others. Yet these same instincts that develop helpful behavioral norms also enable social contagions that co-mingle with mental and behavioral disorders. Long-standing scholarly consensus exists confirming that direct social contagion not only affects health such as cardiac disease (Christakis. 2013), but interacts with technology enabled spread of mental health problems. (Haltigan 2023)

37. This can be seen in relation to suicide contagion (Yıldız,2019), non-suicidal self-injury (Jarvi, 2013), contagion related to eating disorders such as anorexia (Allison 2014). Since the Covid 19 pandemic, there has been an explosive increase of young people displaying features of Dissociative Identity Disorder and movements similar to those seen in Tic Disorders such as Tourette's (Pringsheim 2021). A google scholar review shows a dozen articles linking rapid onset tic disorders to social media. Similar to other examples of social contagion, these sudden onset tic presentations tend to be comorbid with pre-existing mental illnesses and adolescent girls show themselves to be the most susceptible.

38. The phenomenon labeled Mass Social Media Induced Illness (Giedinghagen, 2022) shows us that at scale, users of social media can develop technology facilitated psychosomatic illness. Psychiatrists have seen an abrupt rise in patients presenting with a self-diagnosis (Rettew 2022).

39. Consistent with all this evidence, the spread of beliefs about gender identity, such that all individuals should consider and question their gender identity, appears quite plausibly capable of significantly increasing the incidence of gender dysphoria. This is especially true as traditional sources of knowledge about the world such as families, school, local culture and religion have been replaced by what children observe on electronic screens. Youth even form complex reciprocal relationships with their avatars (Szolin 2023).

40. In their February 25, 2022 press release “Medicine and gender transidentity in children and adolescents” the French National Academy of Medicine notes “Whatever the mechanisms involved in the adolescent – overuse of social networks, greater social acceptability, or example in the entourage - this epidemic-like phenomenon results in the appearance of cases or even clusters in the immediate surroundings”. It continues “The vigilance of parents in response to their children's questions on transidentity or their malaise, underlining the addictive character of excessive consultation of social networks which is both harmful to the psychological development of young people and responsible, for a very important part, of the

growing sense of gender incongruence.” Thus the French National Academy of Medicine has concluded that the “epidemic-like” rise in gender dysphoria is tied to social media.

41. Psychiatrists also believe social media has significantly contributed to the rise in gender dysphoria. Yet most child and adolescent psychiatrists admit to me they will not speak publicly on this subject due to how sensitive the topic is, and also fears of hostilities from activists along with condemnation and retribution from others within their universities or organizations.

42. My personal conversations align with recent polling. While I was on stage presenting at the October 2022 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry annual conference, as part of the presentation, the audience was anonymously polled on a number of topics. When polled: *How often do you see teens who seem to be influenced by social media in regards to their sexual and/or gender identity?* 80 of 97 (82%) indicated social media was an influence *somewhat often* or *very often*. To my knowledge, this is the first data confirming that the vast majority of a group of child and adolescent psychiatrists acknowledge social contagion is a major contributor to the rise in gender dysphoria.

43. A similar poll was conducted at the January 18, 2023, meeting of the Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Society of Greater Washington, all attendees were physician members. For the question *How often do you see teens who seem to be*

influenced by social media in regards to their sexual and/or gender identity? Of the 34 respondents, 47% indicated *Occasionally* and 35% indicated *Often*. So again 82% of these child and adolescent psychiatrists reported they see their patients gender identity is influenced by social media.

44. It is plausible and probable that ideological and social factors underlie the increase in gender dysphoria. This does not rule out other factors. Concern, open discussion and scholarly exploration of this data does not constitute bias, discrimination or transphobia. This area requires thoughtful analysis and further study.

Review of the Evidence Base for Treatments of Gender Dysphoria

45. Neither Gender dysphoria (GD) itself, nor what is the best psychotherapeutic or medical approach is well understood. My review of the research concludes that the evidence base for gender dysphoria treatments is mixed and generally low quality. Below I provide detail to this assessment.

46. The administration of sex hormones and performing of surgeries are medical interventions with substantial risks, and as these interventions target otherwise healthy tissue, a high degree of evidence is expected before such a life altering intervention. Until recently cross sex hormone and surgeries for gender dysphoria have been exceedingly rare, thus there exists nominal long term data. It is especially challenging to evaluate this evidence base due to changing definitions and

epidemiology. It is my opinion that insufficient data is available to make confident proclamation regarding the risks and benefits of treatments of gender dysphoria.

47. I have reviewed Drs. Brignardello-Peterson and Wiercioch's 2022 *Effects of gender affirming therapies in people with gender dysphoria: Evaluation of the best available evidence*. This report was compiled for the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. This report utilized GRADE: Grading of recommendations, assessment, development, and evaluations. This is the most widely used method for appraising studies to be included in systematic reviews and guidelines. (Goldet 2013). Their review revealed that the quality of evidence supporting treatments is generally low. The conclusions rendered fit the data and are logically sound.

48. Drs. Brignardello-Peterson and Wiercioch's review is consistent with the Endocrine Society's own grading in their 2017 Clinical Practice Guidelines. The Endocrine Society also utilizes the GRADE system (Hembree 2017). In fact, the Endocrine Society 2017 Clinical Practice Guidelines only grade as moderate or high quality recommendations for assessment or education. All recommendations regarding treatment are graded as supported by very low-quality or low quality evidence.

49. Similar to the state of Florida, countries across the globe have responded to concerns about medical practice for gender dysphoria by conducting

reviews. After the reviews, each country changed their approach. Many of these countries, due in part to their smaller and better organized medical systems, have offered more comprehensive and structured treatment regimens for gender dysphoria. In addition, these treatment options in Nordic countries have been in place longer than they have been typically more available in the United States.

50. In Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) was commissioned by the Swedish government to update guidelines via its *Care of Children and Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria*. After this systematic review was published in 2022 by the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services, Sweden's NBHW recommended a move away from cross sex hormones. The authors conclude that risks currently outweighs the possible benefits and most patients will need psychotherapy and supports rather than medical care. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare reported the 3 main factors:

- a. A lack of reliable scientific evidence concerning the safety and efficacy of treatments.
- b. Increasing concerns about de-transition.
- c. Uncertainty brought about by the extreme rise in those seeking care, especially females.

51. They further conclude that “Evidence for non-binary gender identity is lacking.” and the evidence is limited for adults. They further report “Gender dysphoria rather than gender identity should determine access to care”. The authors conclude the “For adolescent with gender incongruence NBHW deems that the risks of puberty suppressing treatment with GnRH -analogues and gender affirming hormonal treatment currently outweighs the possible benefits. Treatment should be offered only in exceptional cases.”

52. Sweden has made these changes within a context of longstanding access to care for gender dysphoria and much of the available data regarding longer term outcomes. A 2011 article reviewed sex-reassigned patients in Sweden from 1973 to 2003 and showed increased risk for suicide attempts and inpatient psychiatric care. (Dhejne 2011). A recent article, initially published claiming positive mental health results, after Letters to the Editors, caused a correction (Bränström 2020). This article reviewed patients diagnosed with gender incongruence between 2005 and 2015. The reanalysis and multiple Letters to the Editor in the end led even the authors to conclude that the methodological shortcomings preclude any statement on the suitability of surgery in persons seeking treatment for gender noncongruence. The peer review issues exemplified by these events will be discussed later in this report.

53. Finland is another Nordic country with an organized medical system and longstanding availability of care for gender dysphoria. Finland's recent Recommendation of the Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (PALKO / COHERE Finland) *Medical Treatment Methods for Dysphoria Related to Gender Variance In Minors* concluded "The first-line treatment for gender dysphoria is psychosocial support and, as necessary, psychotherapy and treatment of possible comorbid psychiatric disorders." The authors further report cross sex identification "even in extreme cases, generally disappears during puberty. In some cases it persists or intensifies."

54. The authors state "A lack of recognition of comorbid psychiatric disorders common among gender-dysphoric adolescents can also be detrimental. Since reduction of psychiatric symptoms cannot be achieved with hormonal and surgical interventions, it is not a valid justification for gender reassignment. A young person's identity and personality development must be stable so that they can genuinely face and discuss their gender dysphoria, the significance of their own feelings, and the need for various treatment options." They conclude: "In light of available evidence, gender reassignment of minors is an experimental practice. Based on studies examining gender identity in minors, hormonal interventions may be considered before reaching adulthood in those with firmly established transgender identities, but it must be done with a great deal of caution, and no

irreversible treatment should be initiated. Information about the potential harms of hormone therapies is accumulating slowly and is not systematically reported.”

55. In their 2021 Position statement, *Recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of people experiencing Gender Dysphoria / Gender Incongruence*, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) provides an overview of Gender Dysphoria and highlights the importance of respecting an individual’s gender identity.

56. This position statement indicates that “Comprehensive Assessment is critical.” “Evidence and professional opinion is divided whether an affirmative approach should be taken in relation to treatment of transgender children or whether other options are more appropriate.” They further reflect that “There is a paucity of quality evidence on the outcomes of those presenting with Gender Dysphoria.”

57. The 2022 press release of the French National Academy of Medicine, *Medicine and gender transidentity in children and adolescents*, reporting that on the epidemic like increase and that “This primarily social problem is based, in part, on a questioning of an excessively dichotomous vision of gender identity by some young people.” “Therefore, faced with a request for care for this reason, it is essential to provide, first of all, a medical and psychological support to these children or adolescents, but also to their parents, especially since there is no test to distinguish a "structural" gender dysphoria from transient dysphoria in adolescence.

Moreover, the risk of over-diagnosis is real, as shown by the increasing number of transgender young adults wishing to "detransition". It is therefore advisable to extend as much as possible the psychological support phase.”

58. They further report “However, a great medical caution must be taken in children and adolescents, given the vulnerability, particularly psychological, of this population and the many undesirable effects, and even serious complications, that some of the available therapies can cause.”

59. Similarly, The National Health Service of England commissioned the Cass Review to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of gender dysphoria care. The systematic review commissioned in the UK found the evidence for puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to be of “very low certainty.”

60. “The key limitation to identifying the effectiveness and safety of gender-affirming hormones for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria is the lack of reliable comparative studies. All the studies included in the evidence review are uncontrolled observational studies, which are subject to bias and confounding and were of very low certainty using modified GRADE. A fundamental limitation of all the uncontrolled studies included in this review is that any changes in scores from baseline to follow-up could be attributed to a regression-to-the-mean. “ The authors further noted that the studies have relatively short follow-up and studies with a longer follow-up are needed to determine the long-

term effect of gender-affirming hormones for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria.

61. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) is an international, multidisciplinary, professional association whose reports themselves to have a “mission is to promote evidence-based care, education, research, public policy, and respect in transgender health.” WPATH has created their Stands of Care (SOC) documents which shares some features equivalent to what a medical organization would call a clinical practice guideline. These documents are referred to as the Standards of Care (SOC), the 2011 edition as SOC-7 and the 2022 version as SOC-8. The authors of SOC-8 state: “The overall goal of SOC-8 is to provide health care professionals (HCPs) with clinical guidance to assist TGD people in accessing safe and effective pathways to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves with the aim of optimizing their overall physical health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment.”

62. Due to its recent release, a thorough systematic review of WPATH SOC-8 is not available. Dahlen et al provided a systematic review and quality assessment of international clinical practice guidelines for gender minority/trans people which included the review of WPATH SOC-7. They note that WPATH SOC7 “contains no list of key recommendations nor auditable quality standards.” Among the principal findings was that WPATH SOC 7 cannot be considered ‘gold

standard’. The WPATH review scored poorly on editorial independence, applicability, and rigor of development. The review scored better on scope, stakeholder involvement and clarity of presentation. The reviewers noted that WPATH and other international clinical practice guidelines tended to prioritize stakeholder involvement rather than methodological rigor.

63. Among the implications were that “Clinicians should be made aware that gender minority/trans health CPGs outside of HIV-related topics are linked to a weak evidence base” and that “Organizations producing guidelines and aspiring to higher-level quality could use more robust methods, handling of competing interests and quality assessment.”

64. The Mayo Clinic Proceedings article, *Clinical Practice Guidelines: a Primer on Development and Dissemination*, (Murad 2017) highlights that “trustworthy clinical practice guidelines require a systematic review to select the best available evidence and should explicitly evaluate the quality of evidence”. The authors’ criteria for trustworthy guidelines include:

- a. “Be based on explicit and transparent process that minimizes distortions, biases and conflicts of interest”
- b. “Provide a clear explanation of the logical relationships between alternative care options and health outcomes”

- c. “Provide ratings of the quality of evidence and the strength of the recommendations”

65. Despite the well-known methodological weakness to SOC 7, WPATHS created SOC 8 in a similar manner, again disregarding the conventions expected to create a trustworthy clinical practice guideline.

66. While SOC 8 is a large document and it is beyond the scope of this report to review completely, I must note 4 major concerns as a mental health professional.

- a. SOC 8 makes no analysis of privileging gender affirmation over body affirmation. For clinicians and psychotherapist these trade-offs are fundamental concerns.
- b. SOC 8 suggests consumer-driven medical and surgical interventions and deems these medically necessary without adequate supporting evidence.
- c. SOC 8 normalizes self-mutilation via inclusion of “Eunichs” as just another non-binary category without any suggestion that these individual require mental health assessment prior to any consideration of chemical or surgical procedures.
- d. SOC 8 downplays concerns related to de-transitioning.

67. Four final thoughts regarding the limited evidence for treatments for gender dysphoria. Firstly, advocates of gender affirming treatments point to short-term improvements observed in some studies. It is possible that much of these improvements are placebo effects. Placebo effects are positive changes based on expectations. Placebo effects are routinely seen in other treatments, such as pills for depression. Vulnerable youth expressing gender dysphoria may be especially susceptible to believe in remedies celebrated by online influencers or advocate physicians. The enthusiastic claims of effectiveness of gender affirming treatments in the press, by medical societies and expressed by advocates at high prestige institutions, would be expected to enhance placebo effects (Clayton 2022). This creation of false expectations has significant potential to cause harm.

68. The second concern is many proponents of early transition of youth with gender dysphoria point to what is known as the “Dutch Protocol”. Yet a recent reviews display that while some call published reports regarding results of the Dutch Protocol reliable research, this “research”, is in fact severely flawed (Biggs 2022). This is because the Dutch protocol selected out patients to assure only the most successful outcomes. The clinicians flipped the questionnaire, leaving it unclear if gender dysphoria was resolved. Lastly, concomitant psychotherapy confounds whether effects were from psychotherapy or the hormones and surgeries. Added to this, is that clinics in the United States do not follow the rigor of the

original studies, and as such the result are unlikely to be generalizable (Abbruzzese 2022).

69. The third problem regards Informed Consent. It is a concern of clinicians, as I have been asked about it by colleagues. It is curious that there has been minimal dialogue exploring the unanswered questions related to informed consent in medical journals. These matters are disputed in other journals (Latham 2022, Levine 2022). Medical organizations have come out strongly for affirmative care, supporting the opinion that minors have the emotional and cognitive development to be responsible for whatever consequence their teenage selves make. Yet when the question was mandatory life in prison in *Miller V. Alabama*, The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (with the American Medical Association) Amicus Curiae (2012. P2-3) claims: “Scientists have found that adolescents as a group, even at later stages of adolescence, are more likely than adults to engage in risky, impulsive, and sensation-seeking behavior. This is, in part, because they overvalue short-term benefits and rewards, and are less capable of controlling their impulses making them susceptible to acting in a reflexive rather than a planned voluntary manner. Adolescents are also more emotionally volatile and susceptible to stress and peer influences. In short, the average adolescent cannot be expected to act with the same control or foresight as a mature adult.” It is thus my opinion that The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is so

politicized it cannot keep track of its own claims in Amicus Briefs which contradict each other. Unless this organization is willing to backpedal on its well substantiated and well documented arguments in the Miller v Alabama case, how can it basically argue the opposite when it comes to consent for irreversible treatment within the context of low quality evidence and significant risk of harm?

70. The fourth concern is most grave. A recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine tracked 315 youths undergoing 2 years of gender affirming hormones (Chen 2023). Within 315 hormone treated youth there were 2 completed suicides. Curiously, this remarkably high suicide rate is not explored in the article. By comparison, a recent review tracked the Gender Identity Development Service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020 (Biggs 2022). This found 4 completed suicides of 15032 transgender patients over 10 years. As Gender Identity Development Service in these locations were overwhelmed with patients, only a small fraction were receiving gender affirming hormones. If these are compared the American hormone treatment group, it would be akin to a waitlist control. Thus the most recent research shows a much higher than expected rate of suicide in the condition of affirmative hormone treatment.

Lack of consensus regarding treatment of gender dysphoria

71. With rapidly growing cohorts of patients expressing novel symptoms clusters in an new area of medicine where a limited evidence base exist, differences

of opinion regarding clinical care for gender dysphoria are expected. It would be remarkable if there was uniformity of opinion. Furthermore, gender care is politicized, and opinions tend to cluster in a manner consistent with an influence of political ideology (Regnerus 2022).

72. Within this context of low quality evidence and divergent opinions, there are bound to be calls for reasonable clinical safeguards. There are also serious reservations regarding the effectiveness and concerns about the risks from affirmative treatment for Gender Dysphoria (Clayton 2022, Biggs 2022).

73. Much of the push for affirmative treatment for gender dysphoria treatment has come from professional organizations such as the Endocrine Society, American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Medical professional organizations are large bureaucracies which serve many functions. They are important components of our medical system and usually provide great services for the profession and the public.

74. Just as other parts of society, professional medical organizations are susceptible to tribal influences and politicization. Their influence and credibility can be misused in a harmful manner. I have directly observed, that over the last decade, but particularly the last 5 years these organizations have prioritized a politicized and narrow vision of social justice advocacy. While this has arisen from

good intentions, it has contributed to the creation and spread of misinformation regarding treatment of gender dysphoria. I will explain how this occurred.

75. I have directly observed that within these organizations, the members most enthusiastic about a certain type of medicine self-selected into “special interest groups” or committees. For instance, the psychopharmacology committee is filled with supporters of using psychopharmacology and the psychotherapy committee is populated by members enthusiastic about psychotherapy. Committees on gender and sexuality have been no exception. By participating in a committee, a small group of people can establish themselves as content experts within their organization.

76. Using committees as content experts usually works well, as it did during my eight years as co-chair within AACAP’s media committee. ACCAP leadership utilized our input to make decisions about policy statements, clinical recommendations, public education or relevant legislation.

77. Over the recent years that gender clinics started to spread across America, gender medicine enthusiasts self-selected into these clinics and also into gender relevant committees. Most physicians are wary of the very concept that it can be beneficial to give cross sex hormones to still developing minors. Thus those who venture into medicalized gender care are already a select few who bring to this work certain viewpoints and aspirations. Just as with the psychopharmacology or

psychotherapy committee members, gender committee members have strong personal and professional investment in the success of their favored type of treatment. This created a well-intentioned but homogenous group of gender medicine supporters.

78. Without the knowledge of most members of a professional organization, as few as the dozen members in a committee can steer these organization's leadership to advocate for treatments or policy positions. Once medical organizations have come out with policy statements, clinical practice guidelines and press releases advocating strongly for a position, they have difficulty accepting they may have misstated evidence, advocated for unwise policy or otherwise caused harm.

79. For example, the highly influential 2018 Policy Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (Rafferty 2018) contained many citation errors, overstatements and unfortunately mischaracterized the longstanding and well-regarded clinical approach of watchful waiting (Cantor 2020). This policy statement has been particularly detrimental to the scholarly exchange of ideas related to gender dysphoria treatments, as it used the prestige and trustworthiness of the AAP to privilege the concept of affirmative care and denigrate other treatment. It also increased momentum to enshrine social transition and access to

medical treatments in minors, whether or not these are prudent or evidence based approaches.

80. Medical and psychiatric journals editors are surely aware of their affiliated professional organization's policy statements and political advocacy. Since the Endocrine Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have been all openly involved in political advocacy in support of gender affirming care, in reality their journal are no longer are scientifically neutral. This politicization is reflected in the editors' actions as medical and psychiatric journals have recently attempted to consolidate favorable opinion toward gender affirming treatments for gender dysphoria rather than promoting open scholarly debate.

81. This is not just my theory, Michael Norko, the editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law emailed to me in June 2022: "The Journal is an instrument of AAPL, and it is my responsibility as Editor to lead it in a direction that supports the efforts and goals of the parent organization."

82. Not surprisingly, skeptical voices have been difficult to find within any of the journals of the Endocrine Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association or American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. In fact, I have not found a single skeptical or even ideologically balanced article in any of these journals. Journal editors have a wide discretion to

choose what topics are covered in their journals by choosing what articles are sent for review, commentaries, clinical perspective, vetting Letters to the Editor guiding what is included in the book review column and setting policies.

83. The medical journal I follow most closely, The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has only published articles seeking conformity of thought with gender ideology and affirmative care, and has not allowed actual scholarly dialogue to be voiced. Please see the commentaries (Dixon 2020), clinical perspectives (Turban 2017, Turban 2018), and book reviews (Suto 2021, Chilton 2021, Kim 2021).

84. The 2017 Turban article provided the perspectives of transgender and gender nonconforming youth and reading that viewpoint can certainly be valuable for clinicians. Yet most striking was the youth's ideological assertions, misunderstanding of the evidence and pleas for their physicians to believe suppositions such as ““Sexuality and gender are two different things. TOTALLY separate.” and “Puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones can save my life.” It also contained a pressure to join the movement: “Let me know that you are on my team.” These youth somehow have gotten the impression there is no doubt regarding the safety and efficacy of hormones and surgery. They also have the belief that changing society is the solution to their mental health challenges: “If I am depressed or anxious, it's likely not because I have issues with my gender identity,

but because everyone else does.” More striking was that that authors expressed agreement with the youths’ ideology. The authors conclude: “Likely due to a combination of minority stress and dysphoria related to being ‘trapped in the wrong body,’ these young people are disproportionately burdened by depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts.” The evidence actually points to youth who are depressed, anxious and suicidal are more like express gender dysphoria (Kaltiala 2020).

85. The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry even published a Commentary filled with misinformation which pressured researchers to adopt progressive gender theories to “become allies” (Dixon 2022). It is curious but revealing that the participants seemed uninterested in core unanswered questions such as why individuals experience themselves as nonbinary or transgender. Conversely, the youth and authors used the commentary to push researchers to adopt ideology and allyship. These pressures on scholars are antithetical to the scientific method and have been a corrupting force in much recent research and academic dialogue regarding sex and gender. This politicized, low quality scholarship has minimal credibility and is a prime example of how medical journals have prioritized advocacy and ideology over trustworthy science. With two child and adolescent psychiatric colleagues, in response to Dixon et al, we wrote a Letter to the Editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and

Adolescent Psychiatry. The journal editor refused to even send this letter out for review.

86. Not only are the articles one sided, the peer review process regarding gender medicine within medical journals has become dysfunctional. Many recent examples show how prominent medical journals ignore significant weakness in methods, allow erroneous conclusions and overstatement of the strength of the evidence when articles support affirmative care or related concepts (Bigg 2020, Deangelo 2021, Kalin 2020, Giovanelli R. 2022). As mentioned earlier, the Journal of the American Psychiatric Association published a study with an erroneous positive conclusion regarding gender surgeries in Sweden, prompting a flurry of letters to the editors and later revision (Bränström 2020).

87. In 2018 Lisa Littman published an article which revealed aspects of the rapid spread of gender dysphoria in adolescents. After this research was peer reviewed and published, the journal PLOS ONE had a re-editing of the publication with a commentary added. This showed a disregard for the typical rules of scientific discourse, and should be noted was not a corrections, as there was no finding of error, misconduct or faulty methods. As confirmed by the PLOS ONE re-review, Dr. Littman's research methods were unremarkable and comparable to other mental health research, and this was not a correction as claimed by activists. Various journals also published articles deriding Dr. Littman's work and she was personally

harassed by activists. Brown University also did not make any effort to defend her Dr. Littman from attacks on her freedom to pursue science. This antagonism of Dr. Littman was not about her methods, but rather that her data indicated that Gender Dysphoria was spreading in a pattern consistent with social influence. Dr. Littman's other heresy was revealing how many parents perceive the gender affirming approach is dysfunctional. (Littman 2018)

88. Similar dynamics are in place even in newsletters. A colleague related a difficult experience with editors of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Newsletter. The editors would not permit him to describe in his article the actual problematic behaviors of youth who declared themselves to be transgender on his inpatient unit. This silencing of actual clinical situations undermine the exchange of ideas on how to best provide clinical care.

89. Thankfully, journals outside of medicine have not allied themselves to one viewpoint and are willing to embrace open scholarly dialogue (Abbruzzesse 2023, D' Angelo 2021).

The breakdown of scholarly dialogue

90. Open inquiry is the ability to ask questions and share ideas without risk of censure. It is fundamental to medical research and scientific progress. Within medicine the ability for constructive disagreement and the expression of divergent

opinions has withered with regards to questions of biological sex, gender and gender medicine.

91. Political and social pressures are not new to this line of research and clinical care and do not come from only one political pole or fraction of society. Yet especially within the last decade, academia, including academic medicine has become more tribal, moralizing and more likely to attempt to silence divergent opinions (Bindewald 2021).

92. I witnessed these dynamics personally at the American Psychiatric Association 2022 annual conference. At the Clinical Perspective *The Management of Adolescent Onset Transgender Identity: Should “Best Practices” Change* on May 24th 2022, there was a preamble. In a procedure I’ve never before seen at a conference, the representatives from American Psychiatric Association who were monitoring the event were asked by leadership to read a statement prior to presentation indicating the content of the presentation clashed with official proclamations of the organization. During this Clinical Perspectives four speakers presented convincing data and opined that they questioned the evidence based and logic supporting current affirmative psychotherapy and medicalized practice regarding the treatment of transgender youth. Most of the audience respectfully sat while enjoying the thoughtful presentation. Yet a small crowd in the audience was disruptive. There were many interruptions of the presentation by a member of the

crowd who repeatedly provided his input. During the question-and-answer session, a series “questions” were rather hostile ad-hominem statements towards the presenters. Only a tiny fraction of the questions actually responded to any of the evidence or viewpoints presented. I have never previously observed any comparable unprofessional behavior or hostility toward presenters in any medical or psychiatric conference.

93. Similarly, in 2018 Lisa Littman, MD presented her research data at American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference and received personal enmity which caused a colleague to remark he has never seen a presenter at a conference treated with such hostility. I did not attend live but later watched the presentation online and also heard the many demeaning and unprofessional comments directed toward Dr. Littman.

94. Members of APA and AACAP who attend meetings and observe scholars being condemned will certainly think twice before voicing their concerns. This polarization and moralization can create a “spiral of silence”: an appearance of agreement because a small moralizing group dominates the discussion (Noelle-Neumann 1974). This is consistent with my experience as I have been told by a range of child psychiatrists, from very senior AACAP “life members” to residents in training that they are unwilling to openly express their viewpoint, but they do not see data or logic supporting gender affirming treatments.

95. The 2022 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference featured at least 6 presentations related to gender dysphoria or transgender patients, none presenting new research. Yet a research Symposium was rejected which was to include a prominent international researcher, Dr. Littman, a clinician experienced in treating gender dysphoria and was to feature detransitioners. The AACAP program committee co-chair James McGough later indicated via a May 28th 2022 email this highly unusual rejection was in part due to “concerns” about the methods employed in several of the presentations and that detransitioners would be involved. It defies logic that the only time methods are an issue is when the results of the research raises questions about affirmative care. Furthermore, I am aware of a number of presentations which have been accepted with the condition of making a small adjustment. The detransitioners as discussants could have easily been replaced as their only role would be to ask questions after the research is presented.

96. Dr. McGough indicates he took these concerns seriously. He referred concerned parties to “Aron Janssen co-chair the AACAP committee charged with taking the lead on trans issues.” Dr. McGough also noted that “Aron is also on the program committee”. A program committee member “taking the lead on trans issues” would give Dr. Janssen significant power to support or suppress presentations. I have seen Dr. Janssen present twice and spoken with him. Though

we disagree, he is a thoughtful person and means well. Yet those concerned with free exchange of scholarly ideas should notice the words he chose in his 2021 “Perspectives” article (Janssen 2021) whereas he characterized legislative and political endeavors to limit medical care as “malicious changes” that “provide fodder to perpetuate discrimination, fear and exclusion.” He specifically states: “It is our ethical responsibility to respond to this assault”.

97. Dr. Janssen characterizes those arguing against gender affirmative care as making “an effort to oppress”. This all makes clear he does not want open rigorous scholarly exchange that would raise substantial questions about the ethics and efficacy of gender affirming care. It is further my assessment that across medical organizations and medical journals those who are “taking the lead on trans issues” share Dr. Janssen perspective.

98. For those not familiar with the proceedings of medical conferences, research symposiums are eagerly sought out by the medical societies. The same program chair has commented to me personally that research symposiums are by far the easiest type of presentation to be accepted. For this same conference I also submitted, with two other physicians, for a Special Interest Group presentation which was to feature data on de-transitioning. This proposal obviously provided data which raised questions about affirmative care, it was also not accepted.

99. Despite unclear evidence and significant disagreement among psychiatrists regarding the treatment of gender dysphoria, medical professional organizations have enthusiastically conducted a public campaign to portray these treatments as evidence based. The organizations' political activism has important ramifications and creates a false impression that gender affirming treatment rests on strong and settled science. Two recent press releases provide examples. The September 28th 2022 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) press release regarding the State of Oklahoma condemnation of any limits on gender affirming health care. Defending scope of practice is typical for medical associations. Yet the press release frames these limits as discrimination based on gender identity, a moralized characterization of restrictions on care.

100. American Academy of Pediatrics' opposition to Oklahoma's limits on moral grounds (discrimination) fails to acknowledge ethical concerns regarding treatment of children with gender dysphoria including large scale potentially irreversible damage to minors. This is an example of two competing moral frameworks which both express valid concerns. As such, a more appropriate perspective from a medical organization would be a call for reasoned dialogue to evaluate the moral claims on each side, examine the logic and data behind these moral frameworks and treatments. It is not immoral to seek to find more cautious ways to care for and support those with gender dysphoria, or to seek a higher level

of evidence before allowing minors to make permanent decisions regarding altering their bodies.

101. Curiously, the AAP statement invokes parental rights, but without clarifying if the AAP supports the very likely majority, who do not want hormonal or surgical treatment for their child's gender dysphoria. This AAP statement misses an opportunity to show respect for those who disagree, which is an indication of how politicized the AAP organization has become.

102. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) made a number of similar statements regarding limits on care such as the March 1, 2022 statement which characterized actions in Texas as “attacks” which endanger young people. The statement curiously claims “Gender affirming care is informed by long-standing standards of care and by evidence-based clinical studies”. How longstanding are we talking about, because gender dysphoria was previously so rare I went over 20 years from medical school through over the first decade of my career without a single patient reporting gender dysphoria. The first gender clinic in the United States just opened in 2007. It is reasonable for AACAP to defend scope of practice, oppose criminalization of physicians and call out inappropriate use of child protective services. Yet a medical professional organization overstating evidence and using divisive rhetoric reveals serious ideological and political influence which undermines it's own legitimacy.

103. Even more revealing is the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's (AACAP) March 18th, 2022 press release reveals their leadership's strident position by remarking on an education bill, outside psychiatrists' area of expertise. AACAP's statement used politicized derogatory phrasing by calling Florida's legislation the "Don't Say Gay or Trans" bill. The press release quotes the current president of AACAP who demonizes supporters of the bill as unconscionable and implies these supporters "target and harm" LGBTQ+ youth". The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's leadership moralizes the debate, uses polarizing language and does not engage in forthright discussion which must include skepticism, not just affirmation.

104. It should be noted the national organization offered my regional AACAP branch (in the Tampa area) the opportunity to sign on to "BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS AND ADDITIONAL NATIONAL AND STATE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION". The Tampa regional organization refused to sign on.

105. While I have little direct experience with the Endocrine Society, my assessment is that many endocrinologists, and perhaps most, also believe their professional organization is also too strongly influenced by activist physicians.

Similar to AACAP and AAP, they take a polarized position and misstate the strength of the evidence regarding gender affirming care. In particular, the April 20th 2022 press release “Endocrine Society Opposes Florida Department of Health Policy on Gender Dysphoria Treatment for Children and Adolescents” reveals overstatements of the strength of evidence and the false appearance of consensus in the medical community. This statement mischaracterizes puberty delaying medication as a “safe, reversible and conservative approach.” This statement claims that attempts to restrict care are based on politics, rather than acknowledging legitimate concerns. It is interesting that they cite the Endocrine Society’s own clinical practice guidelines. As noted previously, the Endocrine Society’s own guidelines themselves graded the supporting evidence as low or very low quality for their clinical recommendations.

106. These organizations portrayal of affirmative treatments for gender dysphoria as both effective and virtuous has had a chilling effect on scholarly dialogue regarding gender dysphoria in the medical community. This framework brands those who disagree regarding the evidence base as morally inferior and biased. Through mechanisms I will describe below, moralization has been counter-productive to developing trustworthy science and has contributed to the spread of misinformation regarding treatment approaches to gender dysphoria.

107. Prudent physicians generally avoid being part of a partisan and moralized debate, and do not want to be harassed by gender activists (Evans 2021). When anonymously polled, as cited above, physicians are free to provide their actual opinion and show their skepticism. Supporters of affirmative care could survey physicians to specifically test their hypothesis of broad based support. Why have they not conducted such a survey?

108. As mentioned earlier, the highly politicized dialogue regarding the issue of transgender care (Evans 2021) mirrors a larger phenomenon within the academic community. On many complex and divisive issues within academia, there has been a push from the progressive left demanding conformity of opinion with a narrow, highly moralized viewpoints (Bindewald 2021). The example of gender dysphoria shows that academic medicine has not been immune to this same phenomenon.

109. Pressures to make affirmative therapies the only treatment for gender dysphoria essentially push all parties involved to adopt a simple clear framework for gender dysphoria treatment. Yet simple and clear does not represent the reality or the evidence base. All- or-nothing rhetoric can be an effective technique to rally support around a cause. Yet the treatment of gender dysphoria has complex ethical, legal, social and clinical trade-offs.

110. This moralized framing of affirmative treatments for gender dysphoria encourages a cognitive shortcut known as attribution substitution. Attribution substitution is the process whereby a simple, related moral judgement is substituted for various conceptually complex decisions. This common cognitive bias causes humans to intuitively believe viewpoints which appear virtuous, especially ideas which seem widely held within their social group. Affirmative care does sound compassionate and supportive, and these minor semantic can have a surprising influence.

111. For comparison, the Covid-19 pandemic provided a clear parallel of how moralizing medical issues can lead to misinformation and poor decision making. Individuals' tribal associations were shown to often influence their viewpoint of lockdowns, masks and vaccines more than data. (Kerr 2021, Jiang 2021). Call for conformity meant that dissenting physicians, even academic titans like John Ioannidis, Jay Bhattacharya, and Scott Atlas were treated badly both online and within the medical community. These pressures against voicing skepticism distorted the professional dialogue. Respectful conflict of opinion and impersonal rigorous exchange would have likely reduced harms, such as education loss and mental health deterioration associated with prolonged American school closures during the pandemic (Dooley 2022).

112. Ideological homogeneity and group identity are risk factors for developing irrational beliefs and spreading misinformation. (Su 2022, Sun 2022, Macy 2018). This directly relates to attitudes about transgenderism and gender dysphoria treatments where ideological dogma has distorted scientific exploration. Those who dare to question the dogma are treated as heretics.

113. These dynamics are understandable. Many times within psychiatry and medicine we as practitioners face enormous suffering. Gender non-conforming patients do at times face harassment and discrimination. Patients expressing gender dysphoria have high rates of depression, anxiety and self-harm. All physicians and mental health professionals want to help. Those who started gender clinics hoped to relieve suffering. Yet in medicine false hope can cause suffering.

114. All humans, including physicians, tend to find arguments in favor of conclusions we want to believe, and this bias is known as motivated reasoning (Peters 2020). Supporters of gender affirming treatment want to believe they have found an ethical and evidence based solution. This motivated reasoning explains the strong divergence between the enthusiastic support for gender affirming treatments and the relatively weak evidence base.

115. Once a group, such as a gender committee, endorses a statement of belief, such as “gender affirmative care is life-saving”, the other psychiatrists in their professional organization who have not reviewed the facts tend not to question

it. Psychiatrists face a rapidly expanding evidence base across disorders, and we depend on specialization to lead us toward progress in our varied patient populations.

116. Especially if the “experts” assert a strong moral claim regarding a clinical approach, other members would assume it is based on strong evidence. This creates a group process whereas the leadership responds to show support and loyalty, and others tend to follow. Support of this moral claim becomes a marker of virtue and raises status within the group. Those who are skeptical tend to self-censor (a Spiral of Silence) rather than taking a risk of being called unethical. These dynamics, especially leaderships’ endorsement, make opinions appear like facts within the group. Members of this group they never hear counter arguments or disconfirming data and become ever more confident.

117. Within such moralized environments education and intelligence offer limited protection from irrational beliefs. In fact, sophisticated language skills enable virtuosity in creating and promoting false narratives. These dynamics have happened many times before in medicine and it is my assessment this has occurred again with regards to affirmative treatments of gender dysphoria.

118. Contrary to popular belief, humans’ emotional programming drives much of our cognitive processes. That is, we tend to create beliefs that go along with what we feel, rather than the other way around. This usually works well, but also causes

serious problems. In cognitive therapy it is known as “emotional reasoning”. Emotional reasoning helps explain opinion cascades, partisanship and group-think.

119. Our highly social nature and limited rationality demand that, in medicine and science, we create conditions which foster trustworthy data and minimize the creation and spread of misinformation. Recently, as shown, medical organizations and journals have prioritized advocacy, putting them at risk for producing and officially sanctifying misinformation.

120. A prescription for open exchange and deliberate consideration regarding gender dysphoria treatments should aspire to:

- a. Solicit a diversity of perspectives.
- b. Discuss the argument, rather than the person making the argument.
- c. Clarify the methods, source of data and its limitations.
- d. Use precise language rather than broad ideologies.
- e. Discuss potential sources of bias, including those related to group affiliation.
- f. Quickly acknowledge and correct mistakes.

121. This framework would depersonalize the search for truth and esteem empirical dialogue. Yet conflict is required to help us create a trustworthy scholarly dialogue regarding gender dysphoria. This has not occurred and as such claim that there is an evidence base supporting gender affirming treatments is not credible.

122. Complex ethical issues regarding treatment of gender dysphoria deserve attention. Yet pressures to accept affirmation treatment as being the most virtuous and only effective approach discourages good faith scholarly dialogue. Furthermore, the characterization of those who oppose gender affirming care as transphobic or hateful has been used to justify silencing scholars whose data or logic does not support the gender affirming approach. This occurred with Lisa Littman. Former sex researchers have left the field due to the harassment and intellectual bullying they had received (Soh 2021).

123. Thus we are in the curious situation where in private, but not in public, most psychiatrists will acknowledge their doubts regarding affirmative care. My personal interactions with many thoughtful well regarded psychiatrists display a full range of views. Most child and adolescent psychiatrists consider automatic affirmation inappropriate, even though many are willing to use affirmative approaches selectively. (Evans 2021). Most psychiatrists are willing to admit we don't have enough research to really know how to proceed.

124. Within medicine and academia we need to create space to allow input from those who hold the opinion that logic and the evidence base do not support medical interventions for gender dysphoria. We require a frank discussion of the moral issues involved, including moral hazards associated with medical treatments

for gender dysphoria. Currently, I see no evidence any of this scholarly dialogue happening.

125. Beyond hormones and surgeries, thus the costs and benefits of gender self-identification have not gone through academic inquiry with open rigorous academic review. Social affirmation can be considered a psychosocial treatment, and the recent push for adoption of social affirmation is an attempt at a grand social experiment. This is most concerning as it pertains to children. Statements of physician advocates and medical organizations are used to justify social affirmation, yet social affirmation of children seems more driven by ideology than thoughtful reflection. Throughout human history societies have grouped children by biological sex rather than gender identity. In fact, children naturally group themselves by biological sex (Maccoby 1998). Grouping children by biological sex requires tradeoffs but works well. As it has been standard practice throughout the world there has never been the need for literature to defend this practice. Yet abandoning this convention for the experiment of childhood gender self-identification appears imprudent on many grounds, not least of which is that it will likely be psychologically destabilizing for children and adolescents.

126. Social affirmation for children is portrayed as ethical, but to what degree it is ethical depends on how it will affect children's lives. No substantial evidence guides this movement to rewire a basic element of society. There is a

longstanding forensic psychiatric literature showing that children are suggestible (Ceci 2000). It is easy to see the widespread suggestions of the existence of multiple genders and each child should declare their gender will increase confusion and cross sex identification. This should be expected to increase the incidence of, and persistence of, gender dysphoria. It is thus reasonable to expect social affirmation can cause harm, especially for emotionally vulnerable and neurocognitively impaired youth.

127. Social affirmation of children's and adolescents' self-declared gender requires more research and discussion before the risks and benefits are fully explored (Zucker 2020). Until more is known, and more rigorous scholarly dialogue takes place, society and academic medicine should avoid pushing such a large scale social experiment.

Psychotherapy

128. Patients presenting with gender dysphoria have real symptoms, typically with other comorbid mental health disorders. These patients require validation and support. I recommend their mental health treatment start with psychosocial supports and psychotherapy (Schwartz 2021). In psychiatry, we typically refer to other providers such as social workers, psychologists and licensed clinical therapists who tend to provide the bulk of psychotherapy. Despite this, as

noted in my background, I have extensive experience with psychotherapy, and additional training beyond the majority of psychiatrists.

129. Quality psychotherapy includes the process of exploring patient life history, emotions, coping style and thought patterns. This includes validating how patients feel, but it also includes teaching patients to not be guided solely by their feelings. Psychotherapy involves getting patients to recognize their own thought patterns, disturbed emotions, and, when appropriate, includes challenging irrational, self-defeating and harmful beliefs.

130. There is not an evidence base to support strictly “affirmative” psychotherapy for gender dysphoria, where therapists actively agree with a patient’s self-assessment. Automatically agreeing with patient viewpoints is a radical departure from traditional mental health treatments and psychotherapy. Psychiatrists do not “affirm” hopelessness in depression, delusions in schizophrenia or distorted body image in anorexia or body dysmorphic disorder. The similarities between body dysmorphic disorder and gender dysphoria, and the contrast in how they are approached, provide significant evidence of how ideological and political forces have influenced medical practice (Kohls 2022).

131. Is it, for example, sensible, compassionate or good medical practice to, for instance, soon after a sexual assault, to automatically agree with a teen’s new

self-assigned gender label? What about when a 9 year old girl spontaneously says “I feel like I am a boy”, do we immediately ask what boy name to call her(him)?

132. In psychotherapy with a patient with gender dysphoria, the therapist would not advise a patient to change a gender identity, but also should not “agree” that a patient is the opposite sex. It is surely reasonable and compassionate for a psychotherapist to prefer a patient no longer to suffer with gender dysphoria. It would be inappropriate for a mental health professional to prefer gender dysphoria to continue. Yet the false binary of affirmative psychotherapy versus conversion therapy for gender dysphoria is being used to push therapists from any consideration that acceptance of one’s biological sex or resolution of gender dysphoria is a positive event.

133. This categorizing of quality psychotherapy as conversion therapy is a serious misunderstanding of the complexities of ethical and effective psychotherapy (Schwartz 2021, D’ Angelo 2021). The term “conversion therapy” is often misused by the supporters of affirmative care as an attempt to devalue and pathologize approaches other than purely affirming a patient’s gender self-identification (Griffin 2021, Evans 2020). The only conversation therapy which has ever been researched is the attempt to change, or convert, sexual orientation.

134. Sexual orientation, with rare exception, appears to arise from in utero or early life biological factors. Thus conversion therapy for sexual orientation is

ineffective, hostile and pathologizing to same sex attracted individuals. Decades ago conversation therapy was rejected by modern medicine and mental health. Conversion therapy is a historical reality within the United States, but accusations of conversation therapy have been used as a technique to change the discussion from a question of nuanced mental health care to all-or-nothing thinking regarding affirmation. During my entire career I have never once encountered a single mental health professional that has practiced conversion therapy for sexual orientation. Nor has a single patient ever described to me that they endured conversion therapy.

135. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation. Gender identity is often described as fluid, and as this implies, often changes over time, particularly in young people. This gender fluidity is also why it is inappropriate to affirm a declared gender identity in a child. Psychotherapists need space to ask questions about gender identity. Exploring gender identity is not conversion therapy.

136. Time-tested and widely effective psychotherapy approaches include supportive therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy. Cognitive behavioral therapy has proven effective for virtually every mental health condition it has been researched for, including the full range of anxiety disorders, depressive and mood disorders, disturbed anger, sleep disturbance and trauma reactions including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Due to the high levels of comorbidity of psychiatric disorders in patients with gender dysphoria, cognitive behavioral therapy could be

extremely helpful as the same approach and techniques have proven effective with so many problems including anxiety, depression and in reducing self-harm.

137. Any psychotherapy should aim to help individuals gain a deeper understanding of themselves, develop coping skills and provide a neutral, unbiased process. Beyond standard psychotherapies, more specific and nuanced approaches for gender dysphoria exist, such as Exploratory Therapy (<https://genderexploratory.com/>). This “talking therapy” allows time for exploration of mental health concerns without pushing an ideological or political agenda.

138. Advocates of affirmative treatment dismissal of other approaches can be especially harmful in the cases of gender dysphoria presenting in the context of severe pre-existing psychiatric illness. Psychotherapy could lead to the resolution of these comorbid illnesses. I can provide three examples.

139. Trauma: There is longstanding psychiatric literature showing that exposure to sexual trauma can lead to changes in gender expression (Cosentino 1993), and this has also been revealed by recent research on detransitioners. (Littman 2021). A recent review on Dissociative Identity Disorder and co-occurring Gender Dysphoria showed frequent childhood sexual abuse (Soldati 2022).

140. A core feature of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is avoidance. Repeatedly patients have described to me their physical and emotional distress when they are exposed to trauma reminders. Thus, they frequently have difficulty engaging in psychotherapy for PTSD. Even if they participate, they often actively avoid discussing their trauma. This is unfortunate as trauma focused therapies such as Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy have an excellent evidence base.

141. The massive rise in expressions of gender dysphoria has been most pronounced in adolescent females. This is a population where assessment for, and treatment of trauma, should be a top priority. Furthermore, based on the link between sexual abuse and gender dysphoria seen in detransitioners, assessment and treatment of trauma symptoms should be prioritized. It is possible that for many patients the delivery of trauma based psychotherapy may cause the desistence of gender dysphoria, which in some cases could be considered a co-occurring disorder related to the trauma.

142. Another feature which links gender dysphoria to trauma is the well-known phenomenon of traumatized individuals feeling “cut off” or disconnected from their bodies (Van der Kolk, 1994). Van der Kolk and other prominent PTSD experts recommend mind-body techniques and experiential moving meditations such as yoga to help the body process trauma. These techniques help ground people in the physical world, mindfully experience their bodies and increase positive

physical sensations. While only small studies exist, yoga is being used with success in many settings including prisons and substance abuse facilities. Yoga and other somatic therapies should be studied as a component of comprehensive treatment for gender dysphoria.

Autism

143. Autism Spectrum Disorders are neurodevelopment disorders. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder by definition have problems with social communication and interaction along with restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests. People with Autism Spectrum Disorders are consistently shown to be at increased risk for developing gender dysphoria (Cooper 2022). One review found gender dysphoria to be over 4 times as likely in patients with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Hisle-Gorman et al., 2019). Another review found compared to typically developing control, autistic adults who endorsed the wish to be the opposite sex were found to have more mental health challenges, bullying, suicidal ideation and worse quality of life. They also had worse autism symptoms and more co-morbid disorders than autistic adults who did not report the wish to be the opposite sex.

144. Autistic people experiencing gender dysphoria are a complex patient cohort. There is limited evidence of how best to help and support this specific populations. Due to the neurocognitive limitations in patients with Autism Spectrum Disorders they may be more suggestible. Autistic patients struggle

socially and often spend large amounts of time online. Due to their rigid and obsessive thought patterns, if they develop gender dysphoria they can become fixated and preoccupied with receiving hormonal or surgical procedures, whether or not they understand the risks. Patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder can be incredibly insistent, single minded and determined. They also may have limited insight and minimal ability to anticipate the negative consequences of obtaining the object of their obsessions. Until more is known about the specific outcome related to this vulnerable population, caution with any clinical approach is warranted. Again, special psychotherapy approaches would likely be helpful in this population, but as of yet none have been studied.

Borderline Personality Disorder

145. Personality Disorders are enduring patterns of inner experience and behavior which deviates from expected and causes distress and impairment in functioning. The epidemiology of personality disorders in individuals with gender dysphoria is unknown and estimates vary (Furlong 2022). Many estimates have the population extremely increased, such as 50% of adults, but others show smaller increases. One review of emergency room visits of transgender patients diagnosed personality disorders at 4%, versus matched community sample of 1%. The hospitalized sample was at 5% versus 2% in controls (Lam 2021). Little scholarly

guidance exists regarding specific approaches related to the various personality disorders with comorbid gender dysphoria.

146. In Borderline Personality Disorder there is, by definition, an unstable sense of self, and this leads to frequent personality changes. This typically means sudden shifts in employment, relationship, sexual identity, frequent moves and changes in types of friends. Patients with Borderline Personality Disorder often have early life trauma and find many social environments invalidating. Patients with Borderline Personality Disorder have high levels of emotional dysregulation, self-harm and substance use. This population is extremely difficult to treat.

147. With an unstable sense of self being a feature of the disorder, this patient population seems an especially poor candidate for affirming treatments, especially irreversible treatments. There are two psychotherapeutic approaches which have shown significant success, the most established is Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (Gillespie 2022), but Mentalization Base Therapy (Vogt 2019) also has significant evidence as a successful approach.

148. Especially for a young person developing signs of Borderline Personality Disorder, starting these proven approaches as early as possible is their best chance of avoiding a life course which is full of emptiness, struggle and suffering. Again, in this patient population, a focus on gender affirming treatments as the solution to this constellation of serious mental health problems is extremely

problematic, and appears likely to cause harm if it delays access to evidenced based treatments.

Conclusion

149. It is scientific and medical consensus that patients with gender dysphoria typically also have a mix of anxiety, depression, self-harm, personality disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders and trauma related symptoms. Yet these mental health problems generally pre-date or co-occur with the development of gender dysphoria.

150. There is not a scientific or medical consensus that comorbid mental health disorders are due to “untreated” gender dysphoria. This claim does not match the data. These co-occurring mental health problems pre-date and are, for the most part, not caused by the gender dysphoria.

151. As reported in the Finnish review (PALKO / COHERE Finland 2020): “A lack of recognition of comorbid psychiatric disorders common among gender-dysphoric adolescents can also be detrimental. Since reduction of psychiatric symptoms cannot be achieved with hormonal and surgical interventions, it is not a valid justification for gender reassignment.” The Finnish experience shows that “treating” the gender dysphoria with affirmative medications and surgeries does not resolve the patients’ mental health disorders (Kaltiala 2020).

152. Claims of medical necessity for hormones and surgeries for minors can be refuted by the fact that all cohorts of previous children and adolescent throughout human history have never “needed” these procedures. The burden of proof is on those who proposed hormones and surgeries for minors to conduct long term studies and show these practices to be safe and effective. These are currently experimental approaches which seem highly intertwined with ideology. As detransitioners become more visible and relate their stories, it is clear that this ideology has distorted the practice of medicine, leading to harm.

153. The medical system has a long history of spurts of overdiagnosis and overtreatment. Many of our interventions such as frontal lobotomies were celebrated at the time. Eventually society sees the harm, pushes back and the medical profession eventually reforms.

154. Harmful and unnecessary interventions are especially likely to occur when patient desires are combined with financial incentives and the best of intentions. The American opiate epidemic was ushered in by “expert” physicians who proposed physicians need more compassion because “pain is the 5th vital sign” (Mandell 2016, Adams 2016). Too much compassion can cause harm.

155. Psychiatrist Anna Lembke, in her 2016 *Drug Dealer, MD: How Doctors Were Duped, Patients Got Hooked, and Why It’s So Hard to Stop* discusses how susceptible to manipulations physicians can be. “Doctors are by and large

pleasers. They make it through the complex maze of schooling all the way to medical school by figuring out early what people want and providing it.” (Lembke 2016 P 104) In this way, physicians tend to go along with patient narratives and over-treat.

156. Conditions resting on entirely subjective assessments like level of pain or gender identity have the most potential for harmful overtreatment. In both cases, patients can easily find out what symptoms to report to obtain the treatment they desire. In the current political climate, physicians feel the pressure to not be assailed as a “gatekeepers”, even when logic and data tell them outside social pressures should not distort medical care.

157. Dr. Lembke discusses the modern phenomenon of illness as identity: “Illness identities offer a chance for community.” “The adoption of illness identities is driven by the breakdown of traditional social roles. Illness provides a way to define the self in a rapidly changing and increasingly fragmented world. Furthermore, ill persons today are lionized as heroes because they fight a battle against overwhelming physical forces. In a world where the struggle for basic survival (food, clothing, shelter) has become largely irrelevant for most Americans, the ill person is among the last great warriors.” (Lemke 2016 P 98)

158. What Lembke points out is critical to the debate regarding gender dysphoria treatments. Community is so important for all of us, but especially

adolescents. There is significant evidence that a lack of socialization, and social struggles are factors which put adolescents at risk for gender dysphoria.

159. Depression and anxiety in adolescents often relate to social struggles and these generally predate the emergence of gender dysphoria. Autism is primarily a social disorder. Many child psychiatrists have expressed to me their experience that patients expressing a transgender or non-binary orientation have tended to struggle socially prior to declaring this orientation.

160. Sweden, England and Finland have all reviewed the evidence and pressed pause. These are countries with medical systems that have better tracking, more organized care and compassionate attitudes toward gender non-conforming persons. As the Finish review stated (PALKO / COHERE Finland 2020): “The first-line treatment for gender dysphoria is psychosocial support and, as necessary, psychotherapy and treatment of possible comorbid psychiatric disorders.”

161. After reviews, all countries concluded that restricting care and emphasizing psychotherapy rather than hormones and surgery is the compassionate course. Affirmative treatments are not, in fact, medically necessary. This is true when it comes to the most grave concern of all, suicide. Based on long term data in Sweden, Gender Affirming treatment have not been shown to be life-saving. We do not have convening data that affirmative treatments reduce suicidality, and based

on recent data, we should be especially concerned that it could increase it(Chen 2023).

162. When claims are made that there exists a scientific and medical consensus supporting gender affirming care for gender dysphoria, this rests on the assertions of a small group of physicians who are already personally invested in this type of care. Those already providing hormones and surgeries have extremely powerful reasons to want to believe affirmative care is effective, and thus they are biased. I know psychiatrists involved in this type of care and they are smart, compassionate physicians. I have no doubt they have received significant positive feedback from patients and families. This is consistent with multiple studies showing short term benefit in mood and social dysphoria from affirming treatment.

163. Yet when the enthusiasm for affirming procedures is this celebratory, it is also clear that the detransitioners and other patients with less optimal outcomes will not return to these affirmative providers. We need controlled studies because gender clinics staff's personal experience is thus potentially biased toward the good responders they continue to see, without clear tracking of the rest. Short term positives responses can also be explained by placebo effects, especially under the current conditions where most gender clinics offer multidisciplinary teams providing support and therapy along with hormones and medical procedures.

164. For these many reasons the “gender experts” are not neutral observers. This is why long term controlled studies are needed. Just over two decades ago a previous group of “experts” minimized the risks of opiates when they proposed pain as the 5th vital sign. This turned out to be a large scale social disaster instigated in large part by the medical community. When aligned with economic and ideological forces, a small group of physicians can wield disproportionate influence. The modern medical system does make serious mistakes at scale. We should be taking a cautious approach and encouraging rigorous open scholarly dialogue where physicians who doubt the merits of affirmative gender care can speak freely without being attacked as immoral.

165. Gender roles will always exist, as humans are a sexually dimorphic species. Gender roles are not problems to be solved, but we do need to acknowledge the trade-offs. Much of the ideological and political activism is a reaction against a perception that gender roles are too rigid or stifling. Many young people want more ability to express themselves as they please, and it is agreed that we need to create space for all in our society. Yet the recent overall rise in depression, anxiety and self-harm supports that we are not meeting the needs of our youth. Yet in the debate regarding treatments for gender dysphoria, the medical system should still apply rules of evidence and proceed with caution.

I declare, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. s. 1746, under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 17th day of February, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristopher E. Kaliebe MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristopher E. Kaliebe, M.D.

Attachment "A"

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Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D.

Publications

Kaliebe, Kristopher and Adrian Sondheimer. "The media: Relationships to psychiatry and children." *Academic Psychiatry* 26.3 (2002): 205-215.

Kaliebe, Kristopher "Rules of thumb: three simple ideas for overcoming the complex problem of childhood obesity." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 53.4 (2014): 385-387.

Kaliebe, Kristopher. "Dr Kaliebe Replies", *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, (2014) 53:10 1134.

Kaliebe, Kristopher "The Future of Psychiatric Collaboration in Federally Qualified Health Centers." *Psychiatric Services* (2016): appi-ps.

Kaliebe, Kristopher, and Josh Sanderson. "A Proposal for Postmodern Stress Disorder." *The American journal of medicine* 129.7 (2016): e79.

Osofsky, Howard J., Anthony Speier, Tonya Cross Hansel, John H. Wells II, **Kristopher E. Kaliebe**, and Nicole J. Savage. "Collaborative Health Care and Emerging Trends in a Community-Based Psychiatry Residency Model." *Academic Psychiatry* (2016): 1-8.

Yeh, Y. Y. and **K. Kaliebe.** "Impact of Nutrition on Neurocognition." *Southern medical journal* 109.8 (2016): 454.

K. Kaliebe Expanding Our Reach: Integrating Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Into Primary Care at Federally Qualified Health Centers. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 56.11 (2017)

Kiss, R. and **Kaliebe, K.**, Stress and Inflammation: New Perspectives on Major Depressive Disorder. *JAACAP Connect*, p.22. Winter 2020

Tamburello, A., Penn, J., Negron-Muñoz, R., & **Kaliebe, K.** (2023). Prescribing Psychotropic Medications for Justice-Involved Juveniles. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*.

Books, Textbook Chapters:

Weigle, P., **Kaliebe, K.**, Dalope, K., Asamoah, T., & Shafi, R. M. A. (2021). 18 Digital Media Use in Transitional-Age Youth: Challenges and Opportunities. Transition-Age Youth Mental Health Care: Bridging the Gap Between Pediatric and Adult Psychiatric Care, 357.

Invited Publications

“Telepsychiatry in Juvenile Justice Settings”, **K Kaliebe**, J Heneghan, T Kim, Child and Adolescent Clinics of North America, 20 (2011) 113-123

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) Committee on Telepsychiatry and AACAP Committee on Quality Issues. Clinical Update: Telepsychiatry With Children and Adolescents. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2017 Oct; 56(10):875-893. Epub 2017 Jul 25. PMID: 28942810.

Kaliebe, Kristopher and Paul Weigle. "Child Psychiatry in the Age of the Internet." (2017). Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, April 2018 Volume 27, Issue 2, Pages xiii–xv

Gerwin, Roslyn L., **Kristopher Kaliebe**, and Monica Daigle. "The Interplay Between Digital Media Use and Development." Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics 27.2 (2018): 345-355.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Kristopher Edward Kaliebe, MD

Associate Professor

University of South Florida, Morsani College of Medicine, Tampa Florida

Address

Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences
3515 E. Fletcher Avenue, MDC 14
Tampa FL 33613
Office: 813974-5460
Cellular: 504782-9070
kkaliebe@usf.edu

Citizenship

United States

Education

Graduate/Medical: St. George's University
School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies
Medical Doctor

January 1995- June 1999

Undergraduate: Columbia College,
Columbia University
New York, NY,
Bachelor of Arts, Biochemistry

September 1988-May 1992

Postgraduate Training

Clinical Fellowships:
Fellow, Forensic Psychiatry (PGY6)
Louisiana State University Medical Center
1542 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, LA 70112

July 2004 to June 2005

Fellow, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (PGY 4-5)
Louisiana State University Medical Center
1542 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, LA 70112

July 2002 to June 2004

Chief Resident in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

- Acted as liaison between Child Psychiatry Fellows and Administration
- Coordinated with Program Director lecture and rotation schedules

July 2003 to June 2004

Residency:

Resident, Psychiatry (PGY 2-3)
University of Medicine and Dentistry-
New Jersey Medical School
185 S Orange Ave, Newark, NJ 07103

July 2000- June 2002

Internship: (PGY 1)
University of Medicine and Dentistry-
New Jersey Medical School
185 S Orange Ave, Newark, NJ 07103

July 1999- June 2000

Diplomate, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology:

- Board Certification in General Psychiatry, awarded 2004, active
- Specialty Board Certification Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, awarded 2005, active
- Specialty Board Certification Forensic Psychiatry, awarded 2007, active

Awards, Honors, Honorary Society Memberships:

Department of Veterans Affairs Special Contribution Award for Clinical Service in
Psychiatry

February 22, 2002

Outstanding Resident Award, Presented at the American Academy of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry, Miami, Florida,

October 17, 2003

Inducted into Berkeley Preparatory School Athletic Hall of Fame, Tampa, Florida,
November 7, 2003

Fellow, Louisiana State University Academy for the Advancement of Educational
scholarship

October 2007 – 2016

Best Doctors, Louisiana in the subspecialty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Awarded 2007, 2008, 2009,
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013,
2014, 2015 and 2016

Best Doctors, in Tampa Florida

2017, 2018, 2019, 2020,
2021, 2022

Awarded status as a Distinguished Fellow of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

July 6, 2016

Appointments:

Associate Professor, University of South Florida Medical School, Department of Psychiatry. September 2016 to present

- Supervise one afternoon weekly of outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Silver Center Resident Clinic with USF General Psychiatry Residents and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellows who performed assessment, consultation, and treatment.

Tampa General Hospital Psychiatrist on Duty September 2016 to present
Manage the night, weekend and holiday clinical responsibilities of Tampa General Hospital including the over 1000 bed hospital and a 24-hour emergency room. Usually done in partnership with a psychiatric resident from the University of South Florida.

Facility Psychiatrist. Tampa Residential Facility September 2016 to present

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Florida's juvenile correctional system. Tampa Residential Facility is the most intensive level of mental health and substance abuse treatment, subcontracted to Truecore Solutions.

Facility Psychiatrist. Les Peters Academy Residential Facility May 2017 to present

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Florida's juvenile correctional system, subcontracted to Truecore Solutions.

Staff Psychiatrist, Orleans Parish Justice System March 2018 to July 2018

- Performed telepsychiatric evaluations and treatment in Orleans Parish Prison correctional system, subcontracted to Correct Care Solutions.

Facility Psychiatrist. Charles Britt Academy Residential Facility November 2019 to July 2022

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Florida's juvenile correctional system, subcontracted by Sequel.

Facility Psychiatrist. Columbus Youth Academy Residential Facility June 2020 to present

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Florida's juvenile correctional system, subcontracted by Sequel.

Louisiana State University Health Science Center Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry July 2005 to June 2017

Louisiana State University Health Science Center Associate Professor of Clinical
Psychiatry July 2016 - 2017

Mental Health Medical Director, St. Charles Community Health Center, Luling,
Louisiana July 2005 to 2016

- Evaluated and treated a primarily Medicaid and underserved population of adult, child and adolescent patients in a Federally Qualified Health Care Center.

Coordinator for Child and Adolescent Integrated Mental and Behavioral Health Services,
Louisiana Mental and Behavioral Health Capacity Project

September 2012 to July 2017

- Performed assessment, consultation, training, prevention, and education services to Federally Qualified Health Centers and community clinics in Coastal Louisiana.
- Evaluated and treat both on site and using remote video conferencing equipment (telehealth).

Staff Psychiatrist, Back-up coverage, Louisiana Juvenile Justice System July 2016 to
September 2022

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Louisiana's juvenile correctional system, subcontracted to Wellpath (formerly Correct Care Solutions).
- Back up on call coverage for on-site psychiatrists
- As needed evaluated and treated remote video conferencing equipment (telehealth).

Staff Psychiatrist, Louisiana Juvenile Justice System July 2010 to July 2016

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Louisiana's juvenile correctional system, subcontracted to Correct Care Solutions.
- Evaluated and treated both on site and using remote video conferencing equipment (telehealth).

Staff Psychiatrist on Duty October 2011 to July 2016
Children Hospital, Calhoun Campus. New Orleans, Louisiana

- Facilitated development of protocols and supervision regarding the training of Medical Students, General Psychiatry Residents and Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Fellows who utilize the Calhoun unit as primary training site for Child Psychiatry.
- Manage night and weekend clinical responsibilities for Children's Hospital emergency room and Inpatient Psychiatric Unit, including individually assessing all inpatients each weekend.

Staff Psychiatrist, Louisiana State University Juvenile Justice Program
July 2005 to August 2010

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment in Louisiana's juvenile correctional system at Bridge City Center for Youth and Jetson Center for Youth.
- Evaluated and treated both on site and using remote video conferencing equipment (telehealth).

Staff Psychiatrist, Florida Parish Juvenile Detention Center,

July 2007 to August 2010

- Performed psychiatric evaluations and treatment using remote video conferencing equipment (telehealth).

Medical Officer on Duty

July 2002 to July 2005

New Orleans Adolescent Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana

- Managed clinical responsibilities of Crisis Intervention Services, a 24-hour emergency mental health response team serving families, children and adolescents from the Southeast Louisiana region.
- Managed two psychiatric inpatient units including a twenty bed adolescent and ten bed children's unit after hours on call.
- On call physician for Crisis Respite, a short term residential facility for children and adolescents located on hospital grounds.

Psychiatrist on Duty

September 2003 to July 2005

New Orleans Veterans Administration Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

- Managed clinical psychiatric responsibilities of a 450 bed hospital
- Managed clinical psychiatric responsibilities of a 27 bed inpatient psychiatric unit
- Managed clinical psychiatric responsibilities of 24-hour emergency room

Psychiatrist on Duty

September 2001 to June 2002

New Jersey Medical Center Veterans Administration

- East Orange Medical Center, East Orange, NJ

Managed clinical psychiatric responsibilities of 24 hour emergency room along with a 295 bed hospital, 30 Nursing Home and 30 Domiciliary beds.

- Lyons Hospital, Lyons, NJ

Managed clinical psychiatric responsibilities of 356 bed hospital.

Teaching, Lecture

Undergraduate Medical Student

BMS6920.002, BMS6920.001 University of South Florida: Created five session elective: "Mind Body Medicine" Developed as part of University of South Florida medical school elective curriculum from 2017-current. Offered for up to 12 students as a credited elective including study guide, organizing readings, and experiential class learning.
2017 to present

At Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans:

4 one-hour lectures instructing all Medical Students (MS2) in Child and Adolescent mental health during Psychiatry Basic Science block

February 2004 to February 2016

LSU Physical therapy

Annual 2 two-hour lectures on a range of mental health topics annually

2012 to 2016

LSU Public Health

Annual 2 hour lecture on psychopharmacology to incoming Masters Level students in Public Health

2012 to 2016

Graduate Medical Teaching

MEL 8602 C65 M: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Resident Teaching:

Arranged and co-instructed Forensics Lecture Series, bi-annually 10 lecture hours and 4 hours of individual lectures.

2016 to present.

Teach various topics within residency training. 1 lecture per year.

2016 to present.

University of South Florida General Psychiatry Residency:

Co-Produced elective track for 2 residents per year within University of South Florida Psychiatry Residency. Supervision of Integrative Psychiatry residents within the University of South Florida's Integrative Psychiatry Track, biweekly sessions utilizing curriculum from the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine.

July 2020- present

Forensic Psychiatry Resident Teaching:

Teach child and corrections related forensic topics within residency training. 4 lectures per year.

2018 to present.

LSUHSC New Orleans, General Psychiatry Resident Teaching

- Created and taught one hour weekly (44 weeks per year) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy practicum for PGY 3 residents

2007 to 2016

- One hour lecture on evolution and mood disorder each year for PGY3 residents
2010 to 2016

LSUHSC New Orleans Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Resident Teaching

- One-hour didactic lectures on psychopharmacology for 8 weeks and cognitive behavior therapy for 4 weeks bi-annually
2008-2016
- Organized and taught majority of the year-long bi-weekly one hour didactic program entitled Special Topics including a wide range of topics including development, forensic psychiatry, evolution, anthropology, nutrition, effects of technology, electronic media, sleep, exercise and physical activity, wellness and systems of care.
2008 to 2016

LSU- Kenner Family Practice Residency:

Once yearly didactic lectures for 1 to 2 hours for Kenner Family Practice Residents
2009 to 2016

Created one session Mini-Course: “Optimizing Neurocognition through Nutrition.”
Developed and co-facilitated a module as part of Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine curriculum for medical students and other trainees with Annie Yeh, MD). Offered as a 1 credit elective for Tulane medical students including study guide, organizing readings, online webinar to be viewed prior to class, case studies during class and test.
2014

At Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans: Core Clinical Psychiatry Rotation Lecture, 1 hour lecture presented to MS3 students every six weeks to 3rd year medical students covering Child Psychiatry Basics.
October 2003 to June 2005

At University of Medicine and Dentistry- New Jersey Medical School, Department of Psychiatry

- Lecture: “The Media and Psychiatry” for General Psychiatry Residents, created as part of the Culture and Psychiatry Seminar
August 2001 and 2002

Teaching, Supervisory

At University of South Florida, Tampa Florida:

Medical Student supervision

University of South Florida -
MEL 8109 L69 M

2017 to present

BCC 7154 002 M Psychiatry / Neurology Clerkship. Medical Students rotation through clinic one afternoon weekly of outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Silver Center Resident Clinic

Psychiatry Elective, 2 to 4 week Medical Student rotation through Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Silver Center Resident Clinic

Graduate Medical Education Supervision

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency

Supervise one afternoon weekly of outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Silver Center Resident Clinic with USF Child and Adolescent Psychiatry residents who performed assessment, consultation, and treatment.

September 2016 to June 2021

Supervise one afternoon weekly of outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry correctional psychiatry with USF Child and Adolescent Psychiatry residents who observe clinical care in juvenile correctional facilities.

September 2016 to present

General Psychiatry Residency:

Supervise one afternoon weekly of outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Silver Center Resident Clinic with USF General Psychiatry Residents who performed assessment, consultation, and treatment.

September 2016 to present

Forensic Psychiatry Resident Teaching

Supervision of forensic psychiatry trainees within the University of South Florida forensic psychiatry training program. This includes review of resident competency evaluations along with co-evaluation of criminal defendants as individual cases arise.

2018 to present

At Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans

LSU- Kenner Family Practice Residency:

- One month, once weekly half day mental health rotation at St Charles Community Health Center for all Kenner Family Practice Residents

2008 to 2016

Clerkship/Residency Directorship:

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Training Director, Louisiana State University Medical Center. Oversaw and supervised resident physician training
Managed administrative, evaluation and scheduling issues within the training program
Collaborated with Louisiana State University psychiatric faculty to develop policies and procedures at various clinical site.

July 2010 to September 2012

Teaching Awards:

Association for Academic Psychiatry Honorary Fellow

October 2001- October 2002

Louisiana State University Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department Outstanding Teacher Award for the 2006-2007 academic year

Louisiana State University Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department Outstanding Teacher Award for the 2015-2016 academic year

Peer to Peer: Institutional Grand Rounds

“The Minds, They are a Changin’ – An Overview and Update on MDMA and Psilocybin
Grand Rounds University of South Florida Psychiatry Department, Tampa Florida
January 28 2022

“3 Simple Rules for Overcoming Obesity” University of South Florida Endocrinology Department, Tampa Florida

November 9, 2021

“A hard pill to swallow: psychotropic medications in foster care”, University of South Florida, Department of Public Health, Tampa Florida

November 3, 2017

“Rules of Thumb: The importance of heuristic and cognitive biases in pediatric physical and mental health” Grand Rounds Children’s Hospital, New Orleans

July 30, 2014,

Grand Rounds, Louisiana State University Department of Psychiatry, “Rules of Thumb, lifestyle interventions for mental health professionals.” New Orleans, Louisiana

January 23, 2014

“Just say No, the Case against Stimulant Medication” Grand Rounds Children’s Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana

May 19th, 2010

“Violence: Neurobiology, Risk Assessment and Beyond”, Grand Rounds Louisiana State University Department of Psychiatry, New Orleans, Louisiana

August 9, 2012

“Is ADHD a Nutritional Disorder”, Grand Rounds Louisiana State University
Department of Psychiatry, New Orleans, Louisiana

July 28, 2011

“Just say No, the Case Against Stimulant Medication”, Grand Rounds Louisiana State
University Department of Psychiatry, New Orleans, Louisiana

July 29th, 2010

Grand Rounds Department of Psychiatry, Louisiana State University School of Medicine,
New Orleans, Louisiana “The Application of Darwinian Principles to Child Custody
Evaluations”, New Orleans, Louisiana

May 26th, 2005

“Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder” Grand Rounds Department of Pediatrics,
Louisiana State University School of Medicine, New Orleans, Louisiana

May 25th, 2005

“The Media, Our New Social World, How Should Pediatricians Respond?” Grand
Rounds, Louisiana State University School of Medicine, Children’s Hospital, New
Orleans, Louisiana

June 2nd, 2004

“Attention Deficit Disorder” for Louisiana State University Health Science Center
Juvenile Corrections Program Continuing Medical Education Presentation via
telemedicine New Orleans, Louisiana

March 16th, 2004

“The Media, Relationships to Children and Psychiatry”, Grand Rounds, Department of
Psychiatry, Louisiana State University School of Medicine, New Orleans, Louisiana

June 4th, 2003

“The Media, Relationships to Children and Psychiatry”, Grand Rounds, New Orleans
Adolescent Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana

March 28th 2003

Lectures by Invitation

“The Media, Relationships to Children and Psychiatry” Grand Rounds, University of
West Virginia, Charleston, West Virginia, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral
Science

April 10th 2003

“The Media and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry –An Evolving Relationship” Chair and Presenter, Media Theatre, Annual Conference of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

October 21st, 2004

“The Media, Our New Social World, How Should Health Care Professionals Respond?” Continuing Medical Education Presentation Snowshoe Mountain Retreat, Snowshoe Mountain, West Virginia

September 19th, 2004

“The Application of Darwinian Principles to Child Custody Evaluations” Grand Rounds Department of Psychiatry, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida

October 31st, 2005

“The Evaluation and Treatment of Traumatized Children and Adolescents with ADHD” Web Cast Presentation and Grand Rounds sponsored by the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress Network’s Rural Consortium, New Orleans, Louisiana

January 25th, 2007

“Behavioral Disorder or Traumatized Child?” Louisiana Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, Children’s Mental Health Conference, Houma Louisiana

May 9th, 2008

“Behavioral Disorder or Traumatized Child?” Grand Rounds Tulane University Department of Child Psychiatry, New Orleans, Louisiana

March 13th, 2009

“Brother’s Little Helper: The Simpsons Satirizes Stimulant Medication as a Response to Childhood Behavior Problems” Media Theatre, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, New York Kristopher Kaliebe MD, K. Dalope, MD

October 30, 2010

“Violence Risk Assessment” Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA

March 2, 2013,

“Telepsychiatry in Juvenile Justice Settings” part of "Telepsychiatry: Challenges and Successes Across Settings." Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Orlando FL

October 22, 2013

“What are they Missing, When Electronic Media Displaces Sleep, Academics and Exercise” part of “Identifying and Treating Internet-Related Mental Health Problems: An Evidence-Based Approach” Clinical Perspectives. Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Toronto, Canada

October 24, 2014

“The Implications of the Pharmacological Treatment of Children” Michigan Drug Court Annual Conference, Lansing, Michigan

March 12, 2014

“Three rules to prevent and treat ADHD symptoms” as part of the Louisiana ADHD Symposium, organized by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals ADHD Task Force, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

December 9, 2014

“Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions for ADHD”, Invited Professorship: St George’s University School of Medicine Complementary and Alternative Medicine Selective, St George’s, Grenada, West Indies

August 28 – Sept. 3rd, 2014

“Screen Time and Childhood Behavior: Disruptive Influence or Easy Scapegoat” as part of “Caught in the Net, How Electronics effects Mental Illness” Chair and Presenter, Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, San Diego, California

October 30, 2014

“The Management of Childhood Obesity” and “Disordered Eating in Children and Adolescents” Oregon Psychiatric Medical Association Conference, Portland, Oregon
February 27 and 28, 2015

“Rules of Thumb: 3 Simple Rules to Optimize Physical and Mental Health” National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Louisiana Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana
April 17, 2015

“ADHD overdiagnosis in Louisiana, a child and adolescent psychiatrist’s perspective” Preventing Overdiagnosis Conference, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda Maryland

September 2, 2015

“An alternative to diagnosis-based practice in pediatric mental health” Preventing Overdiagnosis Conference: National Institutes of Health NIH Bethesda Maryland
September 2, 2015

“Shell Shocked: Growing up in the Murder Capital of America”. Discussant for Media Theatre, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Holly Peek, MD, Kristopher Kaliebe, MD San Antonio, Texas

October 29, 2015

“Screen Time and Childhood Behavior: Disruptive Influence or Easy Scapegoat” as part of “Caught in the Net, How Electronics effects Mental Illness” Chair and Presenter,

Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, San Antonio, Texas

October 31, 2015

“What are they (we) Missing? When Electronic Media Displaces Sleep, Academics, and Exercise” Grand Rounds University of South Florida Psychiatry Department, Tampa Florida

November 12th, 2015

ADHD overdiagnosis in Louisiana, a child and adolescent psychiatrist’s perspective, Louisiana Psychological Association, New Orleans, LA

May 20, 2016

“Rules of Thumb: 3 Simple Rules to Optimize Physical and Mental Health” Crohns and Colitis Association of America Regional Conference, New Orleans, LA,

June 12, 2016

“Evaluating and Assuring the Effective and Safe Use of Psychotropic Medications in Children” Webinar: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, with Judge Constance Cohen; Janie Huddleston and Dr. Joy Osofsky, Ph.D.

June 24, 2016,

“Psychotropic Medications 101: What Judges Need to Know for Effective Decision Making” Florida Child Protection Summit, with Melinda Szczepanski, Orlando FL

September 9, 2016

“Communicating With the Media and the Public as Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists Around Disaster and Highly Traumatic Events.” Workshop, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Media Training Workshop, New York, New York

October 27, 2016

“Evolutionary Biology is a Basic Science for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry” Special Interest Group, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, New York

October 28, 2016

“Is War Ever Really Over? War-Affected Youth From Home to Host country”, Discussant, Clinical Perspectives. Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, New York

October 28, 2016

“Psychotropic Medications 101: The pertinent essentials for all involved in the child welfare system” Florida Child Protection Summit, with Melinda Szczepanski, Orlando, Florida

August 30, 2017

“Safe Use of Psychotropic Medications in Children.” 2017 Safe Babies Court Teams Cross Sites Meeting, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

August 17, 2017

“Health Promotion in Pediatric Mental Health” Discussant, Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Washington, DC
October 23, 2017

“New Technologies, New Laws, New Childhood” as part of “Clinical Guidelines for Navigating Media Use” Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Washington, DC

October 24, 2017

“Screen Time and Childhood Behavior: Disruptive Influence or Easy Scapegoat” as part of “Caught in the Net, How Electronics effects Mental Illness” Chair and Presenter, Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Washington, DC

October 26, 2017

“The Business of News, the Role of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists in the Media, and Risk Communication.” Member Services Forum, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: Washington, DC

October 27, 2017

“Caught in the net: a child psychiatrist’s guide for navigating the internet age.”, Workshop, International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions, Prague, Czechoslovakia

July 27, 2018

Chair, Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, “Caught in the Net: How Digital Media Shapes Mental Illnesses in Youth and How Psychiatrists Should Respond.” Seattle, Washington

October 24, 2018

“Self-Care in the Child Welfare System” YMCA/Safe Children Coalition Conference, with Catarlyn Glenn, Sarasota Florida

April 18, 2019

“Psychotropic Medications 101: The pertinent essentials for all involved in the child welfare system” Florida Child Protection Summit, with Catarlyn Glenn, Orlando Florida

December 17, 2019

“Caught in the Net: How Digital Media Interacts with Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents”, Annual Conference of the Florida Psychiatric Society, Tampa, Florida

September 21, 2019

“Effective Strategies for Higher Education and Beyond” Clinical Perspectives, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Mastering Information Flow for Transitional-Age Youth (TAY): as part of “Promoting Digital Citizenship in Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) and College Students”, Chicago, IL
October 19, 2019

“Caught in the Net: How Digital Media Interacts with Mental Illness”, virtually presented at the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, Tucson, Arizona
April 1, 2020

“A deeper dive into child and adolescent psychopharmacology for families and professionals involved in the child welfare system” Florida Child Protection Summit, with Catarlyn Glenn. Orlando, FL
September 3, 2020

“Screenagers: Next Chapter – How Online Behaviors Affect Depression and Anxiety Disorders in Adolescents”, Media Theater (virtual) Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
October 19, 2020.

“Helping Child Psychiatrists Navigate the Internet Age”, “Career Focus: Setup Your Own Telepsychiatry Practice”, “COVID-19 Related Psychiatric Issues” Oasis Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Conference, Charleston, SC
May 17, 2021

“Conversation about health information, COVID, news, and related topics”, discussant and breakout group leader, Digital Media and Mental Health Research Virtual Retreat
May 24th 2021

“The Social Dilemma: Helping Families Navigate the Pull, Pulse, and Power of Social Media”, Media Theater, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Virtual
October 29, 2021

“Appealing Applications for Adolescent Mental Health: Social Media's Transformation During the COVID-19 Pandemic”, Discussant, Clinical Perspective, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Virtual
October 25, 2021

“Angry Young Men, Common Threads in Different Types of Extremist Groups” as part of Political Extremism & Hate Group Recruitment of Adolescents”, Clinical Perspective, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Virtual
October 26, 2021

“Angry Young Men: Boys and Adolescent Males with Disruptive and Aggressive Behavior”, “Nutritional Child Psychiatry” Oasis Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Conference, Charleston, SC

May 1st / 2nd, 2022

“Sexts, Lies & Videogames: Adolescent Boys, the Internet, & Mental Health” Chair and presenter on violence and young men: Clinical Perspective, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Psychiatry Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA

May 25, 2022

Clinical Activities or Innovation

Licensure:

Louisiana State Medical License, expires December 31st, 2022

Florida Medical License, expires January 31st, 2024

Federal DEA Controlled Substances License 12/31/2023

Louisiana license for Controlled Dangerous Substances expires 10/1/2022

Certification: ECFMG Certificate 0-573-532-9

Forensic Training:

Florida Forensic Examiner Training completed through the University of South Florida Department of Mental Health Law and Policy

August 15-17, 2019

Certifications in Psychotherapy:

Basic Practicum in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy completed at the Albert Ellis Institute in New York, NY

July 13, 2003

Advanced Practicum in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy completed at the Albert Ellis Institute in New York, NY

July 20, 2003

Associate Fellowship in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy completed at the Albert Ellis Institute in New York, NY,

July 15, 2005

Accelerated Resolution Therapy, Basic Training

April 1-3, 2017

Accelerated Resolution Therapy, Enhanced Training

Sept 31, October 1, 2018

Accelerated Resolution Therapy, Advanced Training

October 2,3, 2018

American Association of Medical Colleges Medical Education Research Certificate

October 13th, 2010

Scholarly Activity

Funded block grants

Co-investigator on the Mental and Behavioral Health Capacity Project from September 2012 to June 2017

Unfunded research

Supervisor mentoring Medical Students:

University of South Florida IRB: Faculty Advisor Co Investigator May 2021

What is the impact of coronavirus confinement on Japanese college students' mental health? Ivana Radosavljevic STUDY002335

University of South Florida IRB: Faculty Advisor Co Investigator May 2021

Changes in college aged students' metabolic health due to Covid-19 confinement
Matthew Udine, STUDY002341

PI as student supervisor, STUDY004118, IRB approved as Exempt Status, Palliative Care Patients' Attitudes & Openness to Psilocybin assisted Psychotherapy for Treatment of Existential Distress, Julia Wang

Journal Publications:

Peer Reviewed

Kaliebe, Kristopher and Adrian Sondheim. "The media: Relationships to psychiatry and children." *Academic Psychiatry* 26.3 (2002): 205-215.

Kaliebe, Kristopher "Rules of thumb: three simple ideas for overcoming the complex problem of childhood obesity." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 53.4 (2014): 385-387.

Kaliebe, Kristopher. "Dr Kaliebe Replies", *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, (2014) 53:10 1134.

Kaliebe, Kristopher "The Future of Psychiatric Collaboration in Federally Qualified Health Centers." *Psychiatric Services* (2016): appi-ps.

Kaliebe, Kristopher, and Josh Sanderson. "A Proposal for Postmodern Stress Disorder." *The American journal of medicine* 129.7 (2016): e79.

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Papers in Press:

Accepted for publication: Prescribing Psychotropic Medications for Justice-Involved Juveniles, *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, A Tamburello, J Penn, R Negron-Muñoz, **K Kaliebe**

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"Telepsychiatry in Juvenile Justice Settings", **K Kaliebe**, J Heneghan, T Kim, *Child and Adolescent Clinics of North America*, 20 (2011) 113-123

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Other Research and Creative Achievements:

Poster Presentations:

“Collaborative Child and Adolescent Psychiatry within Primary Care Clinics in Coastal Louisiana” Poster, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, **Kristopher Kaliebe MD**, Joy Osofsky, PhD; Howard Osofsky, MD, PhD; Lucy King, BA; Tonya Hansel, PhD, San Antonio, TX

October 29, 2015

“Benefits of Integrating Young Child Psychiatric Services Into Primary Care Clinics in Underserved Communities” Poster, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, NY Joy Osofsky, PhD; Howard Osofsky, MD, PhD; Lucy King, BA; Tonya Hansel, PhD, **Kristopher Kaliebe MD**

October 28, 2016

“Integrating child and adolescent psychiatry into community based primary care networks”, Poster, International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions, Prague, Czechoslovakia **Kristopher Kaliebe MD**

July 25, 2018

“ The Prevalence of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) in Florida Youth Referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice” Poster, Annual meeting of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, Greg Iannuzzi, MD, Mark Greenwald, PhD, **Kristopher Kaliebe MD**

October 25, 2018

Other articles:

“LSU’s *Breakfast Club* emphasizes education and recruitment into Child and Adolescent Psychiatry”, *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry News*,

January 2004

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News Stories on Suicide, Fictional Content may Increase Risk for Contagion, Hansa Bhargava and **Kristopher Kaliebe**, *American Academy of Pediatrics News, Mastering the Media Column*,

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Webinars and creation of enduring materials:

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.....

December 11, 2017

Florida's Center for Child Welfare Information and Training Resources, webinars series on pediatric mental health for child welfare professionals and caregivers, Kristopher Kaliebe with Catarolyn Johnson;

.....

June 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2020

“Don’t just sit there- Adapt and Optimize in a post Covid world” University of South Florida Global Health Conversation Series, presented virtually

September 22, 2020

Service

Membership in Professional Organizations:

Member, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP),
2000 to present

AACAP Media Committee member
2003 –2021

C0-Chair, AACAP Media Committee
2013-2021

Media Committee Liaison to the Complementary and Integrative Medicine Committee of the AACAP
2012 to 2019

Liaison to the Committee on Communications and Media of the American Academy of Pediatrics, from American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
2015 to present

Member Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
2004 – 2016

Member American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law
2004 to present

Member Zero to Three

2017 to 2021

Member Louisiana Council for Child Psychiatry (LCCP)

2003 to 2016

Louisiana Council for Child Psychiatry (LCCP)

Secretary-Treasurer

March 2010-March 2014

President

March 2014- June 2016

Member, American Psychiatric Association

2000 - 2012 , 2021 to present

LSUHSC Psychiatry Interest Group Faculty advisor

2008 to 2012

University of South Florida Medical School Integrative Medicine Student Interest Group
faculty advisor

January 2020 to present

University of South Florida Medical School Mindfulness and Meditation in Medicine
Group faculty advisor

January 2022 to present

University of South Florida Interdisciplinary (university wide) Psychedelics Interest
Group faculty advisor

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Editorial Posts and Activities:

Journal editorships, Reviewer

LSUHSC Institutional Review Board alternate reviewer 2008-2012

Safety Committee Member, Accelerated Resolution Therapy for Treatment of
Complicated Grief in Senior Adults, University of South Florida

2017-19

Expert reviewer for *Adolescent Psychiatry* Thematic Special Issue: Coming of Age
Online: Challenges of Treating the Internet Generation: (2), 4, 2014

Expert reviewer for *Academic Psychiatry* Media Column

June 2018

Expert Reviewer for *Pediatrics*

January 2021

Expert reviewer for *Academic Psychiatry* Media Column

March 2022

Expert Reviewer for *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*

May 2021

Co-editor: Kaliebe, Kristopher, and Paul Weigle. Youth Internet Habits and Mental Health, An Issue of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, E-Book. Vol. 27. No. 2. Elsevier Health Sciences. 2018

Member, Planning Committee for the Digital Media and Mental Health Research Retreat hosted by the nonprofit Children and Screens.

May 24th, 25th 2021.

Revised: October 2022

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TALLAHASSEE DIVISION
CASE NO. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

AUGUST DEKKER, et al.,
Plaintiffs,
VS.

JASON WEIDA, et al.,
Defendants.

_____ /

Remote via Zoom
March 20, 2023
10:10 a.m. - 4:04 p.m.

DEPOSITION OF KRISTOPHER KALIEBE, M.D.

Taken before Lilly Villaverde, RPR and Notary
Public in and for the State of Florida at Large,
pursuant to Notice of Taking Deposition filed in the
above-mentioned cause.

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I N D E X
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1 came out with a report regarding their assessment of how
2 to move forward with gender care and it was a Yahoo News
3 report, which led me to this organization which is --
4 seems like a quasi-governmental or public organization,
5 but I can -- I could find the name of that, but that was
6 the news report that I found.

7 Q. Okay. By any chance, is it the Society For
8 Evidence-Based Gender Medicine?

9 A. No, I had some -- but, no, this was a Yahoo
10 News report.

11 Q. Okay. When you talked to counsel, was anybody
12 else present in that call besides counsel?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Have you discussed the deposition with anyone
15 else besides counsel?

16 A. Have I discussed the details of my report, no.
17 Some people are aware that I'm testifying, but I have
18 not discussed the details of the testimony, except for
19 occasionally I've asked my wife a few questions. So I
20 have asked my wife some questions.

21 Q. Sorry, you've asked your wife what?

22 A. I have asked my wife to -- some questions
23 regarding the case.

24 Q. What questions have you discussed with your
25 wife regarding the case?

1 A. I asked my wife some questions about
2 endocrine-disrupting chemicals and their possible
3 effects on the developing brain.

4 I asked my wife about the effects of hormone
5 blockers and exogenous hormones on individuals being
6 treated for a number of conditions, including treatment
7 with regards to gender-affirming care.

8 Q. What's your wife's background or professional
9 background?

10 A. She's an endocrinologist, board-certified
11 endocrinologist.

12 Q. What did your wife say with regard to the
13 effects of puberty blockers on hormones?

14 A. She opined that the effects are unknown and
15 that she would have concerns regarding bone density,
16 especially as people age, teenage years, or when lay
17 down much of their bone and there can be significant
18 bone loss related to puberty blockers.

19 She gave me her assessment that providing
20 exogenous hormones could be -- could later cause a
21 number of cancers and that there -- in her opinion,
22 there's not really anything known about what cancers
23 could be brought forth by exogenous hormones.

24 She indicated also there could be
25 cardiovascular risks related to exogenous hormones. She

1 by listening to presentations at the conferences.

2 Q. So like lectures, some of these may be CME?

3 A. Yeah, I mean, all this stuff from the
4 conferences is CME, yes.

5 Q. Yeah. Okay. Let me ask you this, you have not
6 published any literature regarding gender dysphoria; is
7 that right?

8 A. That is correct.

9 Q. You have not published any literature regarding
10 transgender people; is that right?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. You have not published any literature regarding
13 gender identity; is that right?

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. All right. Let me talk a little bit about your
16 clinical experience and I think it might be helpful to
17 sort of separate a little bit the years at LSU with the
18 last seven years at -- at USF. How many patients would
19 you see on a weekly basis?

20 A. My clinical job changed frequently, but I know
21 that when I had my clinic at St. Charles Community
22 Health Center, which I did for 11 straight years, which
23 is a federally-qualified health center. I'm not sure if
24 you know what that is, but it's a community health
25 center that also provides mental health services.

1 clinics and we would have three or four residents per
2 day. I don't schedule my own patients during that time.
3 I'm there to -- I'm the, you know, physician of record.
4 So I have to see all the new people and I have to
5 supervise all the cases. We discuss them. So I don't
6 know the numbers of how many, you know, we see in an
7 afternoon, but that had a one-day-a-week Silver clinic
8 throughout my time at USF. I think -- if you want to
9 stick on that, so that has been my main outpatient child
10 psychiatry setting.

11 Q. Okay. And then I imagine you see or consult
12 with regards to the three juvenile facilities for which
13 you --

14 A. Correct, yes.

15 Q. How many patients have you diagnosed and
16 treated with gender dysphoria while at USF?

17 A. I would approximate a dozen.

18 Q. So in your last seven years you have diagnosed
19 and treated a dozen patients with gender dysphoria?

20 A. Correct, and it's an estimate. I can look.

21 Q. Okay. Where did you diagnose and treat these
22 patients as part of your clinical affiliations?

23 A. I have -- I have both within the Silver Child
24 Development Center and also within the juvenile
25 correctional system.

1 Q. What's the treatment you provide for these
2 patients with gender dysphoria?

3 A. With patients that I see at the Silver Child
4 Development Center, since I'm working with the
5 residents, I do the initial assessment with the resident
6 and then they usually are seeing the person. Although,
7 each year, when the new residents turnover, then I stay
8 with the patient usually and then they get a new
9 resident to work with the patient and we try to work in
10 a multidisciplinary way. So they may be also getting
11 care at other parts of the university, which could
12 include a gender clinic, but also, more frequently,
13 would include psychotherapy either outside of USF or by
14 a therapy provider within our -- within our system.

15 Q. Okay. So just to be clear, some of these
16 patients have been getting gender -- medical treatment
17 for gender dysphoria within the USF system?

18 A. I don't -- yes and no. Some of the patients
19 are -- some of the patients that I had have gone on, I
20 believe, to get gender treatment, because sometimes they
21 leave and don't come back and you don't really know, but
22 they were on a path towards getting medicalized
23 treatment. I can't say for sure once they leave the
24 clinic, but that could -- that seemed to be the plan, at
25 least some of the cases.

1 still be the physician of record on.

2 Q. So the ones -- of the 12 -- and I'm just trying
3 to get the numbers more or less.

4 A. Sure.

5 Q. So of the 12, there's one that presented as
6 prepubertal child, didn't continue care with you in
7 particular, so we don't know outcome or course of
8 treatment for that person. There's five or so -- and I
9 guess that these are not hard numbers. Five or so of
10 the 12 that have continued on to care with somebody
11 else. And then there are at least two to three that
12 have continued on where you have supervised and/or are
13 providing the treatment; is that right?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. So of the two or three, those are the
16 ones that have not gone on to medicalized care; is that
17 right?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. So we don't know really the outcome for the
20 other nine, as to medicalized care; is that right?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And you said that you provide -- they're not
23 necessarily interested in medical care and/or you are
24 treating other comorbidities, if you will, on these
25 patients. What's the treatment that you provide for the

1 dysphoria?

2 A. The treatment that is provided for the
3 dysphoria at that Silver Clinic would be in combination
4 with the residents that are marking this and we come up
5 with a plan of how we were going to help this patient in
6 the best way that we can.

7 So what we prefer is for them to be in
8 psychotherapy and to also have a consistent
9 psychotherapist that's seeing them. So that would be my
10 preferred mode of treatment, that they would have an
11 individual therapist and that we would be providing
12 medications and also our opinion, you know, whatever
13 else we can sort of add to the case.

14 In terms of gender dysphoria, obviously you
15 don't treat it directly with medicines, nor are we
16 involved with providing hormones or those type of
17 things. We provide supportive therapy, basically, is
18 what -- psychosocial support, that's what I would frame
19 our general approach as.

20 Q. Yeah. No, no. Thank you. I appreciate that.
21 I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm really trying to
22 understand your practice, if you will. I guess what
23 type of psychotherapy is being provided, right, and I
24 think you can agree with me that there are different
25 modes of thinking of what the psychotherapy should be or

1 could be. And so I'm curious as to what is the
2 psychotherapy that is being provided with regards to the
3 gender dysphoria or if I'm understanding you correctly,
4 you are not providing the psychotherapy, you recommend
5 that they see another therapist to provide the
6 psychotherapy?

7 A. Yes. I mean, I also -- I worked in many
8 settings where you have more than one provider and
9 usually they help each other and support. So we
10 wouldn't -- we don't mind if someone is getting
11 psychotherapy from, let's say, a social worker and
12 that's consistent, but when we see the patient we are
13 also providing some therapy of sorts of supportive.

14 I mean, mostly from -- in that clinic, it would
15 be just supportive therapy and I don't know that we
16 would say we were giving therapy for gender dysphoria,
17 if you understand what I'm saying.

18 Q. Okay. So you wouldn't be providing treatment
19 for the dysphoria at Silver Clinic?

20 A. I think we would not be directly addressing
21 gender dysphoria in psychotherapy. We would be doing
22 maybe some exploratory work with patients about what's
23 going on with their life and these patients all have
24 comorbidities, so they have depression or anxiety or
25 trauma or personality disorders or whatever. So we are

1 trying to provide them skills and sort of basic coping
2 mechanisms, self-regulation, all the standard things you
3 provide to someone who has emotional dysregulation or
4 behavioral problems or, you know, emotional problems,
5 standard care.

6 Q. Understood. Thank you. Let me ask you this,
7 you mentioned that some of these patients may present
8 with comorbidities. Let me just go at a basic level.
9 Would you agree with me that gender dysphoria is a very
10 real condition?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. So it wasn't a trick question. I was
13 just -- you would be surprised. I have other people
14 that say no, right.

15 So okay. So with that basic understanding,
16 then I guess my question is, the fact that somebody has
17 comorbidities doesn't necessarily mean or -- a person
18 with gender dysphoria doesn't necessarily flow from
19 those comorbidities, right?

20 A. Could you explain -- please rephrase or --

21 Q. Sure.

22 A. Let me listen --

23 Q. Yeah. So a patient may have more than one
24 condition, so they may have comorbid conditions, but the
25 conditions may be independent of each other, if you

1 will.

2 A. Yes, that is possible.

3 Q. Okay. So they're not necessarily related, is
4 what I am trying to get at?

5 A. It's possible, yes.

6 Q. And of course that -- it takes the work of,
7 sort of, assess, right, if that's the case in a
8 particular patient or not; is that right?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. So providing treatment for comorbidities
11 doesn't necessarily mean -- and I don't understand that
12 you were saying this, but just want to make sure that we
13 are on the same page. Providing treatment for
14 comorbidities doesn't necessarily address a patient's
15 gender dysphoria; would you agree with me on that?

16 A. Doesn't necessarily, correct, I would agree.

17 Q. All right. I did have a clarifying question
18 and I'm not -- this is not a gotcha. I'm just trying to
19 understand. Maybe this happened while you were at USF,
20 but it sort of, you know, came from the past. On
21 paragraph 11 of your report, you state that you have
22 been consulted to provide a second opinion and
23 coordinate care regarding a patient with gender
24 dysphoria in the Louisiana juvenile correction system.

25 A. Correct.

1 are not fully -- family --

2 A. I guess.

3 Q. In the context of the therapy that you provide,
4 understanding you are not doing the psychotherapy
5 directly would these patients, but just overseeing some
6 of their pharmacological care. Do you use the pronouns
7 that they -- that are consistent with their identity?

8 A. Yes. Although, I would also say I often, in
9 the correctional system, usually use the last name,
10 which is very common in those systems. So I don't use
11 -- I would use either the pronouns that they suggest
12 that they would like or I would use the last name. I
13 lean towards avoiding pronouns in direct conversation
14 with someone, but, yeah, yes, recommended pronoun.

15 Q. Let me just finish a particular line of
16 questioning here and then we can take a quick break.

17 You have not done any original scientific
18 research into gender dysphoria, gender identity disorder
19 or transsexualism; is that right?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. You have not done any original scientific
22 research with regards to transgender people?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. And you have not done any original scientific
25 research with regard to gender identity?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And you are not an endocrinologist; is that
3 right?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. Nor are you certified in pediatrics?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Or adolescent medicine?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Understanding that you have a child and
10 adolescent psychiatry certification, which is a
11 different one, but specific -- okay.

12 Let me ask you a little bit about the scope of
13 your testimony. Is the scope of your report limited
14 about the propriety of care to minors or is it -- does
15 it encompass also adults?

16 A. I definitely have more expertise and more
17 experience in child psychiatry. That has been more of
18 my professional home and I think the questions are more
19 grave related to child psychiatry and adolescent
20 psychiatry, yet I was asked to review and opine
21 generally. So I did my best to try to catch up on adult
22 literature and know more about adult issues, but I am --
23 I am, admittedly, more comfortable with child and
24 adolescent and young adult, which a lot of -- in child
25 psychiatry, you end up treating a lot of young adults.

1 So that would be more where I'm comfortable.

2 Q. All right. So I -- we'll get to some of the
3 specifics then, because I'm just -- I will be honest, I
4 wasn't clear if you were opining at large about medical
5 treatment for adolescent and adults or just adolescents
6 in certain parts of your report so?

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. We'll get to that.

9 All right. Let's take a quick five-minute
10 break. Come back at 11:25.

11 A. Okay.

12 MR. PRATT: Sounds good.

13 MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN: We can go off the record.

14 (Off the record.)

15 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

16 Q. Welcome back, Mr. Kaliebe. All right. So you
17 prepared an original report, which we've been discussing
18 a little bit, as well as a rebuttal report. Your
19 original report, does that contain the totality of the
20 opinions you are going to provide in this case
21 affirmatively?

22 A. Can you repeat the question?

23 Q. Sure. Your original report, does that contain
24 the totality of your opinions that you are providing
25 affirmatively?

1 about -- overall, to some degree or visibility, if you
2 will, about transgender people in this day and age, then
3 there was ten years ago, 20 years ago; is that right?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. So the fact that more people have been
6 showing up at clinics could be explained by the fact
7 that, A, the care is more available; and, B, more people
8 feel comfortable seeking the care?

9 A. Could be explained by that, but I don't believe
10 that's consistent with the evidence.

11 Q. Okay. And why don't you believe that that's
12 the case?

13 A. Well, very welcoming countries, such as Sweden
14 and Norway, have had the same explosive rise in gender
15 dysphoria presentations among youth. And they for many,
16 many years had very welcoming and open society, yet had
17 the same massive rise in people presenting for gender
18 dysphoria. So that -- so that, for one, belies that --
19 since it's been a worldwide phenomenon, that it would be
20 related to a more welcoming.

21 Plus the change to the presentation of these
22 youth that have so many comorbidities now. So the --
23 you know, we're especially seeing youth with significant
24 mental health problems presenting and identifying. And
25 once again, so that makes it seem like disproportionately

1 hundred thousand is in the 2013 DSM, that seems to be
2 more like the historical base rate and now we are
3 talking -- especially in the young generation, you can
4 even look in different generations, see the different
5 amounts.

6 Q. That also was citing to evidence before there
7 was a depathologization of identity within the DSM; is
8 that right?

9 A. That's one way to look at it. There's other
10 ways to look at it.

11 Q. But that is correct, though?

12 A. The DSM --

13 Q. The DSM depathologized identity and moved to
14 the gender dysphoria as the diagnosis, focused on the
15 stress as opposed to the identity?

16 A. It is correct that the DSM changed their
17 nomenclature and rates went up, yes.

18 Q. It wasn't just the nomenclature, though, right?
19 They changed the diagnostic criteria as well?

20 A. Well, it's a different entity now they're
21 calling it. So, yeah -- I mean, yes. The different
22 entity was -- uses different criteria, yes.

23 Q. Okay. On paragraph 30, you state, "Multiple
24 lines of evidence going to direct social influences and
25 online and social media contagions as a major

1 contributors to this increase in gender dysphoria."

2 What are the lines of evidence to which you
3 refer?

4 A. They would be cited further down in my paper
5 with all the explosion of social contagion of different
6 types occurred within the last two decades, as youth
7 gravitated towards social media.

8 Q. But none of those have to do with gender
9 dysphoria; is that right? With the exception of the
10 Littman article, which we will discuss.

11 A. They do not. Yes, it's very hard to get those
12 -- that type of data published regarding gender
13 dysphoria.

14 Q. You say it's hard to publish, but has anybody
15 studied it?

16 A. I think due to the current political
17 atmosphere, no one is like really allowed to study
18 things like that.

19 Q. We'll get to the political atmosphere in a
20 little bit, but I think it goes both ways, but I guess
21 my question is, you point to multiple lines of evidence,
22 but yet you point to studies that don't have to do with
23 gender dysphoria. So my question would be, at best, you
24 are hypothesizing, you are not citing to any studies
25 documenting that?

1 A. We are all hypothesizing, obviously. We've
2 never had a major social change like this go on. We are
3 not going to have any clear one source.

4 I would remind you that a poll at the American
5 Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry when they
6 asked child psychiatrists at the conference how many of
7 them believe that social media is influenced gender
8 identity, it was 82 percent said often or very often.

9 So my opinion seems consistent with other child
10 psychiatrists who have seen the same thing and in
11 talking to youth, they often identify and I've had
12 patients identify that part of this occurred after they
13 search things online. So I said -- I have the direct
14 experience with someone told me that.

15 Q. A single patient?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Since you mentioned the polls -- outlines are
18 the best things laid out and then you have to move
19 around.

20 Okay. Here we go. You state that -- on
21 paragraph 41, you state, "Psychiatrists also believe
22 social media has significantly contributed to the rise
23 in gender dysphoria."

24 A. Sure.

25 Q. You don't cite to any literature. So I'm

1 wondering is the evidence for that these two polls that
2 you cited?

3 A. Well, the French National Academy of Medicine
4 press release also raises similar concerns and all the
5 data about social contagions of other types and there
6 are a bunch of articles from child psychiatrists that
7 mention the influence. They are not studies, but there
8 is -- I didn't cite them all, but there are plenty of
9 articles of people in child psychiatry discussing
10 contagion issues and relating them to gender identity.

11 Q. What are those articles? Do you know them?

12 A. I could -- not off the top of my head. I can
13 provide them.

14 Q. Okay. And these are not studies, these are
15 just what, case reports?

16 A. Correct, or opinions.

17 Q. So opinion pieces, okay. Let me -- and then
18 you go on to say, "Yet most child and adolescent
19 psychiatrists admit to me they will not speak publicly
20 on this subject due to how sensitive the topic is and
21 also fears of hostilities from activists, along with
22 condemnation and retribution from others within their
23 universities or organization."

24 What's the basis for that statement?

25 A. The basis for that statement is that multiple

1 child psychiatrists have told me they will not speak in
2 public regarding gender dysphoria because of the things
3 that I listed, that people are quite hostile to you if
4 you voice any -- except, depending on what situation or
5 what university you are in, people are afraid to even
6 bring up the subject.

7 Plus, if -- we are in a profession where you
8 are trying to serve your patients and you don't want to
9 have negative interactions with them. And you have
10 patients who have all sorts of different opinions, some
11 of them -- on either side of an issue like this and when
12 you have to speak publicly on it, you are now
13 potentially polluting the relationship that you would
14 have.

15 So it is wise for any psychiatrist, if they
16 can, to try to stay out of these debates, it's because
17 you don't know what patient you are going to face and
18 what opinion they are going to have and it may be the --
19 express skepticism or positive feelings about this, you
20 can create a negative relationship.

21 I would also add that patients have -- child
22 psychiatrists have specifically said to me that they are
23 afraid of people in their university, you know, giving
24 them, you know -- affecting their job, affecting what
25 their ability would be to get promoted, if they voiced

1 said, No, I don't feel comfortable. I would never voice
2 my real opinion because of fears of retribution and --

3 Q. And all of your residents share your opinion?

4 A. No, certainly not.

5 Q. And you say "residents," I guess I'm wondering
6 -- let me show you Exhibit 4 briefly.

7 (Plaintiffs' Exhibit 4 was marked for
8 identification.)

9 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

10 Q. Do you see this document?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. This is a printout of the page "What is
13 Psychiatry" from the American Psychiatric Association
14 from today. And if we go down to the third page -- no,
15 I lied, fourth page, right here it says, "There are
16 about 45,000 psychiatrists in the United States," right?
17 Do you dispute that number?

18 A. No.

19 Q. So I guess my question is, how do you get from
20 a few anecdotal conversations with most child and
21 adolescent psychiatrists -- to talk about this?

22 A. I was asked to provide my opinion. I have
23 spoken with a wide range of psychiatrists, I've pulled
24 whatever sources I can from, let's say, the polls and
25 other -- and asked other people's opinions about what

1 they think. So that's based on my experience --

2 Q. Well --

3 A. -- and based on my conversations, that's my
4 opinion.

5 Q. Okay. But there's a difference between the
6 majority of the folks that you have spoken to most
7 adolescents -- child and adolescents psychiatrists,
8 right? Your conversations are not a representative
9 sample of all childhood adolescent psychiatrists; would
10 you agree with that?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Okay. And going back to these polls that you
13 cited, let's talk about the first one on paragraph 42.
14 When was the presentation at issue in that paragraph?

15 A. This was the Social Media Institute at the
16 American Academy of Childhood and Adolescents annual
17 conference.

18 Q. So the presentation or workshop, it was called
19 the Social Media Institute?

20 A. Correct. Institutes are high profile, one day
21 long special presentations that the -- at the Child
22 Psychiatry conference.

23 Q. Okay. Are there presentations within the
24 institute?

25 A. Yes, so because of COVID, we -- this time did

1 Childhood Adolescent Psychiatry can give you the
2 information. The vast majority are child psychiatrists,
3 but it would include pediatricians occasionally, family
4 practice, other people who deal with child psychiatry
5 issues, but it was not super well attended by other
6 specialties.

7 Q. And you would agree that a poll like this at a
8 presentation during a conference is not a scientific
9 study of any kind, right?

10 A. I think it's just -- I mean, it's very similar
11 to a lot of the science, as you cited, in this case,
12 where people do online polls. In fact, I think it's a
13 lot better than a lot of what I've seen cited in this
14 case.

15 Q. Did you do any regression analysis? Did you do
16 any statistical significance? I mean, it's not the same
17 as --

18 A. The data speaks for itself. But, no, you don't
19 -- I did not.

20 Q. Okay. And you would agree it's not a
21 representative sample?

22 A. Perhaps, and it was people who are attending an
23 academic conference --

24 Q. People that --

25 A. -- representative.

1 Q. Well, it's -- all the survey tell us and that
2 poll tells us is the views of the attendees of that
3 particular seminar?

4 A. Okay. Yes, it does.

5 Q. Would you agree with that?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. The same with the one on paragraph 43;
8 is that right?

9 A. Yes, that one we can say for sure those are all
10 psychiatrists.

11 Q. They were all psychiatrists --

12 A. Excuse me, child psychiatrists.

13 Q. Okay. So those are all child psychiatrists,
14 but all that tells us is the views of those that
15 attended that particular --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- session?

18 And isn't it equally -- the survey just asks
19 how often do you see teens who seem to be influenced by
20 social media in regards to their sexual and/or gender
21 identity. Isn't it part, as to these two polls,
22 non-scientific polls, if you will, that it is not
23 shocking that teens find like-minded teens online and
24 they speak to each other about their similar
25 experiences?

1 A. No, it's not. Correct.

2 Q. And would you agree with me that, in
3 particular, small populations that tend to be isolated
4 and/or discrete tend to turn to social media actually as
5 a way to connect and find one another?

6 A. Yes, I concur.

7 Q. And earlier you cited the -- made reference to
8 the press release from the French academies; do you
9 recall that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. A press release is not peer-reviewed or
12 scientific literature; is that right?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay. You conclude in your report,
15 specifically on paragraph -- on page 16, at the end of
16 paragraph 40, you conclude, "The French National Academy
17 of Medicine has concluded that the epidemic-like rise in
18 gender dysphoria is tied to social media," but the
19 release which you quote in that same paragraph, what it
20 says is, Whatever the mechanism involved in the
21 adolescent, hyphen, overuse of social networks, greater
22 social acceptability or example in the entourage, dot,
23 dot, dot.

24 That doesn't seem, to me, to attribute any
25 conclusion as to social media, it just says that it's a

1 interventions for adolescents?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. The corrections actually had to do with
4 the fact that clarifying the study, unlike the original
5 version, wasn't pointing out to some phenomenon that was
6 observed in adolescents. It was pointing out to
7 observations collected from parents.

8 A. I believe it was clear in the original study
9 that it was from parents, but, yes, that was the area of
10 contention that led to the review.

11 Q. And the study doesn't incorporate, address or
12 speak to the actual experiences of the adolescents in
13 question; is that right?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. And so the study actually doesn't reach any
16 conclusions as to social contagions, at best, from the
17 study, it actually raises hypothesis?

18 A. Okay. Yes, correct.

19 Q. And the corrected study states, quote,
20 Limitations of parental report include information that
21 parents may not be aware of and parental biases, close
22 quote; did you read that when you were reviewing this?

23 A. Yes, that's correct.

24 Q. So you were aware of all of these critiques,
25 right, about the Littman article when you were

1 into a discussion of what's the evidence base and for
2 what care for what person. So I'm not --

3 Q. Yeah. I'm focused on adult.

4 A. -- care --

5 Q. I'm focused on adults in my question.

6 A. And what care --

7 Q. We --

8 A. Are you speaking of surgeries? Are you
9 speaking of hormone?

10 Q. Hormones and surgery, right. The care for
11 adults. We have longitudinal studies going back
12 40 years for adults in the United States, longitudinal
13 studies in the United States.

14 A. Yeah, there are --

15 MR. PRATT: Object to form.

16 THE WITNESS: Yeah, what -- I guess since --
17 what is your question?

18 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

19 Q. Well, I guess my question is what is the basis
20 for you to say that there's no studies or showing it's
21 safe or effective?

22 A. Well, I never claimed that there's no studies.
23 I do think the quality in adults, which, you know, has
24 -- as I've been reviewing this case and the literature,
25 I have mostly focused on children, adolescents and young

1 adults. And I will admit that I know less about and am
2 less up to date everything about adult transgender care.
3 What I have reviewed, you know, still is equivocal, in
4 terms of the strength of the evidence. And so,
5 therefore, you know, I think that is a debate about
6 what's the right care or what type of care is
7 appropriate for that group.

8 Q. All right. 12:34, let's take a -- let's take a
9 ten-minute break. Come back at 12:45, if that's all
10 right.

11 A. Yeah, fine with me.

12 Q. Actually, let me ask this, would you prefer to
13 do lunch now? We can do another hour where we come back
14 and then lunch after, let me ask that -- actually, let's
15 go off the record.

16 (Off the record.)

17 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

18 Q. Welcome back, Mr. Kaliebe. Thank you so much.

19 Mr. Kaliebe, we left off discussing a little
20 bit the evidence base, if you will, in some of the
21 studies regarding care. On paragraph 45 you state, "My
22 review of the research concludes that the evidence base
23 for gender dysphoria treatment is mixed and generally
24 low quality."

25 I guess, I know that you looked at reviews

1 published by governmental agencies in Sweden and Finland
2 and the Cass review in the UK and you cite to the
3 Brignardello assessment attached -- commissioned by
4 Florida Medicaid and attached to the GAPMS report, and
5 by GAPMS I mean G-A-P-M-S, generally accepted
6 professional medical standards. None of those are
7 published, peer-reviewed literature; is that right?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Okay. Did you actually review the studies in
10 question?

11 A. Yes, I think that the low quality was -- it's
12 right in the Endocrine Society's own practice guidelines
13 that the evidence is all -- or treatment, it's all low
14 quality or very low, all in the --

15 Q. No, no. But I'm asking if you reviewed the
16 actual studies?

17 A. I reviewed many studies, which -- you would
18 have to say which study.

19 Q. Yeah. I'm sorry, I'm not -- just to be clear,
20 right, like there are many published literature, some of
21 them are review of literature, some of them are opinion
22 pieces, some of them are letter to the editor, but there
23 are actual designed, original scientific research
24 studies, right, that look at either from an
25 observational, cross-sectional or longitudinal follow-up

1 basis the care, medical care for gender dysphoria.

2 And so my question is, how many of those
3 studies did you look at?

4 MR. PRATT: Objection, form.

5 THE WITNESS: I would estimate, I don't know,
6 dozens. I mean, at least a couple -- I looked
7 through many actual original studies, in addition to
8 reading reviews.

9 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

10 Q. Okay. Because I went through your bibliography
11 and there's only four studies that are cited. Those
12 being the Dhejne, the Branstrom, the Kaltiala and the
13 Chen study.

14 So none of them have to do with puberty
15 blockers. Two have to do with hormones in adolescents,
16 and two have to do with surgery in adults. So I guess
17 I'm curious as to which study did you look at to come to
18 your conclusion?

19 A. Well, my conclusion about low quality reviews
20 were the best guide for me to use that exact word,
21 because that's what I said, even the Endocrine Society
22 review uses low quality. So I'm using their words, so.

23 Q. How do you get to mixed?

24 A. Mixed would mean that there are positive
25 studies and there are negative studies and, therefore, I

1 Q. You state, With regards to the assessment
2 authored by Dr. Brignardello-Peterson and Dr. Wiercioch,
3 that the conclusions fit the data and are logically
4 sound. You are not an expert on systematic reviews; is
5 that right?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And you are not an expert on grading of
8 evidence; is that right?

9 A. I am just as capable as other physicians of
10 grading evidence.

11 Q. Sure. Let me rephrase. By grading of
12 evidence, I mean the actual grade system.

13 A. I am familiar with it.

14 Q. Have you conducted a grade evaluation of any
15 particular studies before?

16 A. No.

17 Q. We already established that the
18 Brignardello/Wiercioch paper attached to the GAPMS
19 report has not been published or been subject to peer
20 review; is that right?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And neither have been the reports from Sweden,
23 Finland or the Cass review in the United Kingdom; is
24 that correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And the latter three, in fact, all of them that
2 we've been discussing, they're focus on assessments of
3 the evidence pertaining to youth, not adults; is that
4 right?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. And the rule at issue here prohibits coverage
7 for medical care for adults as well; isn't that right?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. So these assessments don't really -- would you
10 agree with me that these assessments do not speak to the
11 question of care for adults?

12 A. Well, I think they provide some evidence
13 regarding care for adults, but they are not -- I would
14 agree that they are not specifically tailored for --
15 certainly the international reviews are not tailored
16 towards adults.

17 Q. Okay. And with regards to these countries,
18 none of them have provided -- have stopped providing
19 this care for adolescents?

20 A. You are saying completely stopped, it's my
21 understanding that that would be correct.

22 Q. And in fact, all of these countries, which have
23 nationalized health care systems, provide coverage for
24 medical treatment for gender dysphoria in adolescence in
25 certain circumstances, which they have tied it; is that

1 correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. All right. You are not an expert on the
4 development of clinical practice guidelines; is that
5 right?

6 A. Just like other physicians, I am very familiar
7 with how they're used, but I'm not sure what you mean by
8 an expert.

9 Q. Well, in the development of them.

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. On paragraph -- starting on paragraph 61 to 66,
12 you discuss SOC-8 and by SOC-8, I refer to the Standards
13 of Care For the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse
14 People, Version 8, published by the World Professional
15 Association For Transgender Health; is that right?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. And you seem to apply that the SOC-8 was not
18 based on a systematic review of the literature and the
19 grading of evidence. Did I understand your report
20 correctly?

21 A. Well, they used a quasi-process where they
22 obviously have some elements of a proper review, but
23 then didn't follow it all the way through its full
24 conclusion.

25 Q. You say that SOC -- that, "Despite the

1 Q. And just so -- for clarity of record, I think I
2 get what you mean by body affirmation. I just wanted to
3 clarify as to that, but what you mean by "body
4 affirmation" is to -- for somebody to be comfortable
5 with what could be termed their sex assigned at birth or
6 their natal sex or whatever that may be; is that right?

7 A. Well, you are more speaking of their gender
8 identity, where I am more speaking of their body. So I
9 don't think you need to challenge someone's gender
10 identity to help them come to peace with or learn to
11 love and accept their body more, because they're really,
12 at the end of the day, you know, if you are comparing
13 something, you know, we can help with that. Plus body
14 affirmation can help with comorbidities, right. So --

15 I apologize, my dog is barking.

16 Sort of general therapy approaches are often
17 helpful for depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidality,
18 all that kind of stuff.

19 So, yes, I think we need more studies to see
20 how we can help people cope best with whatever reality
21 they are facing and it can include targeting any of
22 those things, but I do think people learning to accept
23 and live in their body that they have could be an
24 important therapy approach that I did not see, really,
25 anyone explore, nor have I really seen much exploratory

1 on any other therapy.

2 Q. I'm not trying to be dense here. This is why I
3 asked the clarify question. I haven't heard of the body
4 affirmation paradigm that's being suggested here before.
5 So I'm trying to see if it's, you know, something by
6 another name or if it's something new that we're
7 discussing.

8 And so if I'm understanding you correctly, and
9 please correct if I'm wrong, what you are referring to
10 as "body affirmation" doesn't deal with that person's
11 gender identity. It is purely about them being
12 comfortable with their body. So it could be somebody
13 that identifies as female, but being completely
14 comfortable with their stereotypically male body,
15 notwithstanding that they identify as female; is that
16 what you are saying?

17 A. It could be, yes. I mean, these are all sort
18 of ideas that people have floated around about how --
19 what approaches might typically work, you know, and as
20 we all know, we don't really know what approaches may or
21 may not work. And so, yeah, I don't think directly
22 challenging someone's gender identity is wise or
23 indicated. Then again, if we could resolve someone's
24 gender dysphoria or their gender identity, you know,
25 depending on how you see it, normalizes or returns to

1 their cis body or their born body, I mean, wouldn't that
2 be a great outcome, right.

3 So are there ways and are there sub segments,
4 since we have lots of different populations, you know,
5 especially now with all the developmental disorders and
6 trauma population, you have personality disorder, you
7 have depression and anxiety, you know, among those,
8 perhaps, there are certain therapy approaches that are
9 going to be quite helpful.

10 We know that in trauma therapies, when we do
11 trauma specific therapy, the comorbidities get better.
12 So we know that you can just treat the trauma and the
13 depression and anxiety and other things, you know, that
14 the patient has, often go away. Sometimes go away
15 completely, once they've done a whole course of
16 trauma-focused therapy.

17 So, you know, are there -- we don't really --
18 like I said, we haven't explored. There's all sorts of
19 possibility.

20 Q. Let me ask you this, and I'm exploring the
21 possibility with you here in conversation, right. So
22 let me ask you this follow-up, how does getting somebody
23 to be comfortable with their body not challenging their
24 identity? How does that resolve the dysphoria? Because
25 isn't part -- and so let me ask this first question

1 before I ask that one, which isn't part of somebody's
2 gender dysphoria the distress associated with that
3 incongruence due in part to how they are perceived by
4 others in the world?

5 A. I think, yes, it can be, and my answer to the
6 question is we -- if we could help people become more
7 comfortable in the body that they are in, you know,
8 perhaps, that would mean that they could be somewhat
9 more comfortable and maybe the gender dysphoria never
10 goes away, but we might be able to help them with their
11 depression or anxiety or self-harm or other things. We
12 don't really know, until we explore some of these
13 things, what is more amendable to treatment and what is
14 less amendable to treatment and which approaches maybe
15 work with --

16 Q. But in the gender-affirming care model, isn't
17 it true that it is recommended that other mental health
18 concerns be managed and addressed, including
19 comorbidities? Like the fact that somebody is getting
20 medical care, that addresses the dysphoria, that doesn't
21 address other mental health concerns. And so it is
22 recommended that they get therapy for other mental
23 health concerns to the extent that they are present.

24 A. Well, it is recommended, but, once again, we
25 don't really have data on these populations about what

1 But, no, I have not participated. I see a lot
2 of their work product in the presentations and stuff,
3 but I have not participated.

4 Q. Again, you state at paragraph 77, "Most
5 physicians are weary of the very concept that it can be
6 beneficial to give cross-sex hormones to still
7 developing minors."

8 Where do you get "most physicians" from? Is
9 this based on anecdotal evidence as we discussed before?

10 A. Yes, that is my impression anecdotally.

11 Q. You mention on paragraph 81 a communication
12 with the other of the Journal For American Academy For
13 Psychiatry and the Law; do you recall that?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. What was the context of that e-mail?

16 A. I had written a letter to the editor regarding
17 a -- an article and I was aware that I had written a
18 pretty strong letter to the editor that made a lot of
19 important points that I thought the readership should be
20 able to hear and the letter to the editor -- the editor
21 chose not to publish. So since I was aware that I had
22 written a quite strong letter and they weren't going to
23 publish it, I wanted to ask why. So I sent an e-mail
24 asking how come you did not --

25 Q. Can I ask a quick clarify -- I apologize I

1 I thought was very, you know, poorly reasoned and
2 inappropriate. So, and that article was a -- was an
3 article towards research related to gender issues that
4 include gender dysphoria, but it was -- I don't think it
5 included perspectives on transgender care and how we
6 should address research based on the perspective of and
7 it was interviews with non-binary individuals at a
8 clinic, I believe. So it was curated by some
9 professionals, but included the view points of --

10 Q. And it was a commentary piece, the article --

11 A. Correct. It was commentary, yes.

12 Q. Okay. Did you seek to have your paper or
13 response published elsewhere?

14 A. No.

15 Q. In paragraph 82 you say, "I have not found a
16 single skeptical or even ideologically balanced article
17 in any of these journals. Have you reviewed all the
18 literature pertaining to gender dysphoria or transgender
19 people?

20 A. I really tried to catch up on it within those
21 journals. I have reviewed a lot of articles from all
22 those journals, yeah. I don't know if I've caught every
23 article.

24 Q. Are you aware that the Endocrine Society has
25 published critical letters, including to their own

1 guidelines authored by Dr. Laidlaw and Dr. Kearns?

2 A. Correct, they did.

3 Q. Okay. So that's an example of a skeptical or
4 contrary article being published by one of these
5 journals; isn't that right?

6 A. It is one example, correct.

7 Q. There's actually two letters that they've
8 published, at least, right?

9 A. Yes, I think -- and I think there was another
10 article -- another letter to the editor -- no, it's not
11 in one of those journals, sorry.

12 So the Endocrine Society did publish a critical
13 letter to the editor.

14 Q. Okay. So I -- it would be fair to say that
15 your sentence, I have not found a single skeptical or
16 ideologically balanced article in any of these journals,
17 to be a little bit inaccurate --

18 A. In my defense, I had not come across that
19 Laidlaw article at that time. So I just recently saw
20 that.

21 Q. Okay. Then you say on paragraph 89,
22 "Thankfully, journals outside of medicine have not
23 allied themselves to one view point and are willing to
24 embrace open scholarly dialogue." And you cite to two
25 articles as an example, those being Abbruzzesse 2023 and

1 primary concern is not assessing and accumulating more
2 evidence.

3 Q. Okay. All right. Let's go to paragraph 105.
4 You state at the beginning of that paragraph, "While I
5 have little direct experience with the Endocrine
6 Society, my assessment that many endocrinologists, and
7 perhaps most, also believe their professional
8 organization is also too strongly influenced by activist
9 physicians."

10 What is the basis for your statement?

11 A. Well, my wife is an endocrinologist and I
12 actually go sometimes to their meetings and I interact
13 socially with a number of endocrinologist and I see the
14 dynamics that have occurred within endocrinology, which
15 I've seen, on my smaller scale view point, that mirror a
16 lot of the dynamics that have happened also in
17 psychiatry and child psychiatry. So I am making the
18 assumption that many of the things are similar in
19 endocrinology to what I've seen in psychiatry.

20 Q. Okay. You also state that the Endocrine
21 Society statement mischaracterizes puberty delaying
22 medication as a safe reversible conservative approach.

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. You do not provide medical treatment for gender
25 dysphoria; is that right?

1 A. Medicines, correct.

2 Q. Yeah. And we established earlier that you are
3 not an endocrinologist?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. You actually consulted with your wife as to the
6 side effects of some of these medications; is that
7 right?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. So you really don't have any firsthand
10 knowledge as to whether puberty delaying medication is
11 safe, reversible or conservative approach?

12 A. Well, I wouldn't need firsthand knowledge,
13 because I have reviewed the literature. So the
14 literature would be what determines whether something is
15 a safe, reversible and conservative approach.

16 Q. How is it not reversible?

17 A. How are puberty blockers not reversible?

18 Q. Correct.

19 A. Because any time that you provide someone a
20 medicine that stops a process in the human body, you
21 have multiple effects that go on and even when you stop
22 that medicine, things will start, but you will have
23 missed a period of time when you are not -- don't have
24 the hormones you would have had and that can't -- you
25 can't change it. You can't go back in time.

1 even if they don't really agree, they assume that other
2 people agree, whether or not that's true or not. So a
3 leadership or people making, you know, strong claims can
4 induce -- can stop dialogue and induce many of the
5 people in the middle, who is really people we like to
6 hear more from, to be silent.

7 So there is a literature on that. I can't
8 remember how much of that is in the Peters article I
9 cited.

10 Q. Okay. In paragraph 123, you cite -- you say,
11 "Thus we are in the curious situation where in private,
12 but not in public, most psychiatrists will acknowledge
13 there are doubts regarding gender-affirming care."

14 Just for completeness of record, is this based
15 on the anecdotal evidence we have talked about earlier?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. You then state, "Most child and adolescent
18 psychiatrists consider automatic affirmation
19 inappropriate, even though many are willing to use
20 affirmative approached selectively. Most psychiatrist
21 are willing to admit we don't have enough research to
22 really know how to proceed."

23 Again, is this based primarily on your
24 anecdotal evidence?

25 A. Correct.

1 A. I didn't cite any evidence base, but my
2 understanding is that that's pretty well established,
3 that sexual orientation seems to be a relatively fixed
4 -- fixed relatively early on.

5 Q. I'm going to show you what's been marked as
6 Exhibit 8.

7 (Plaintiffs' Exhibit 8 was marked for
8 identification.)

9 BY MR. GONZALEZ-PAGAN:

10 Q. Do you see this?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. This is an article published in the
13 Journal of Neuroendocrinology. It titled, "Neurobiology
14 of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation." It was
15 published in 2018. Have you encountered this article in
16 your research?

17 A. I've seen it cited. I do not believe I've read
18 it. Yeah. So, no.

19 Q. Okay. Just going to go to page 4. Here
20 speaking specifically -- and obviously this is the
21 review of existing research. It's not an original
22 article or original research, if you will.

23 Just going to zoom in a little bit.

24 The last sentence of the first paragraph
25 states, "Several extensive reviews by Dick and Swaab and

1 of an individual's sexual identity and sexual
2 orientation"; did I read that correctly?

3 A. You did, yes.

4 Q. Okay. Let's go to paragraph 136 of your
5 report. There you speak of CBT or cognitive behavioral
6 therapy; is that right?

7 Are you suggesting that CBT could be an
8 effective treatment for gender dysphoria?

9 A. Well, CBT could be an effective -- I don't know
10 that it's been studied. I know CBT could be effective
11 for the depression, anxiety, suicidality and other
12 comorbidities that are seen, but those have been shown
13 to.

14 Q. Okay. So you are state -- as I understand it,
15 part of what you are stating is that CBT has been shown
16 to be effective in treating some of the comorbidities
17 associated with gender dysphoria, including anxiety and
18 depression; is that right?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. Okay. But you are not saying that CBT has been
21 shown to be effective to treat gender dysphoria?

22 A. It's not been studied, as far as I know.

23 Q. Next paragraph you discuss gender exploratory
24 therapy as a mode of treatment; is that right?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. I know the answer to this question, but I'm
2 going to ask it anyway. There any evidence that gender
3 exploratory therapy is safe or effective?

4 A. No.

5 Q. In gender exploratory therapy, they consider
6 self-identification as transgender to be more suspect or
7 deserving of exploration than self-identification as
8 cisgender?

9 A. Once again, I know that I speak for those who
10 perform exploratory therapy, because it's a proposed
11 thing that I don't know how it's being operationalized.

12 My understanding is that if someone's gender
13 dysphoria can resolve, that that's a good thing. And so
14 we would want people's gender dysphoria to resolve. If
15 transgender status resolves, that's perfectly good. If
16 it doesn't resolve, I think that's perfectly good also.

17 Q. Okay. Let me ask you this, what do you make of
18 the distress of adolescent or youth who are truly trans
19 who will experience ongoing distress during the
20 exploratory therapy, do they have to engage in this
21 process, even though it's actually exacerbating their
22 distress?

23 A. Are you saying that the therapy would
24 exacerbate stress?

25 Q. Well, the thoughts that the therapy would cause

1 generally disagree.

2 Q. Let me ask you this, I just -- the part that I
3 get a little bit confused by is where does -- I'm truly
4 curious as to your position or view on this, but -- let
5 me ask it this way, would you agree that there are some
6 people who are helped by gender-affirming medical
7 treatment?

8 A. Well, I think everything in life is trade-offs
9 and cost versus benefits. I think that some people --
10 we don't know what would have happened with an
11 alternative. So it's hard to say how people's life
12 would have gone would they have not -- we've never
13 really done controlled studies on this. So we can't say
14 for sure in the long run how -- affect people's lives.

15 I would say, yes, it's consistent with the
16 literature that a lot of people are very happy with
17 gender-affirming care, especially in the first, you
18 know, part of it. And so I think we're definitely
19 seeing trade-offs and that there are lots of people who
20 identify as having a positive response from it.

21 Q. Thank you. Paragraph 142 of your report, you
22 conclude, this is page 59, "Yoga and other somatic
23 therapies should be studied as a component of
24 comprehensive treatment for gender dysphoria."

25 I believe you mentioned it at least once

1 earlier today during our conversation. What's the basis
2 for your statement?

3 A. Well, yoga has lots of, you know, studies.
4 Once again, it's not that well studied, not a lot of
5 money in studying yoga, but it has -- to the degree it
6 has been studied, it's very good for mood. It helps
7 with anxiety. It includes a number of components of
8 well-established, proven mental health techniques, like
9 mindfulness, breathing exercises.

10 It is physically, because you twist and turn
11 your body. A lot of stress and trauma gets stored in
12 the body and it seems that this is a way for people's
13 bodies to feel good and to release. And a lot of
14 people, especially people who are traumatized don't want
15 to feel their body anymore. So if you don't want to
16 feel your body, you block what's going on in your body
17 and it seems that yoga has the ability to get people to
18 tune into their bodies better and feel more comfortable
19 in their body.

20 So I have no idea what the strength of the
21 intervention would be, but it seems to me that that --
22 the type of -- rather than just talking therapy, because
23 many of the experts in trauma actually really like these
24 mind-body therapies that are not talking therapies,
25 they're experiential. And so it seems to me that this

1 would be -- make a good part of any treatment and it
2 increases physical health. Your body is stronger,
3 healthier you feel better. So I would say that this is
4 a really interesting thing to study in this context.

5 Q. Let me just ask you, you noted some of the
6 positive attributes, effects possibly attributable to
7 yoga and other somatic therapies. Has yoga been shown
8 to effectively resolve any mental health conditions?

9 A. Well, as I mentioned, there are not studies on
10 yoga. But, no, there's not a lot of studies directly
11 targeting mental health.

12 Q. Okay. Paragraph 152, you state, I believe it's
13 the second sentence, "The burden of proof is on those
14 who propose hormones and surgery on minors to conduct
15 long-term studies and show these practices to be safe
16 and effective."

17 I think we discussed a little bit, but I'm
18 curious -- I think we discussed this to some extent, but
19 I'm curious, assuming for purposes of just the question
20 that these studies do not exist, how can you conduct
21 them if the care is prohibited?

22 A. Well, obviously they would have to be -- the
23 care would have to be available in order to study.

24 Q. Okay. And are you aware -- we discussed some
25 of these before, but you are aware that there are some

1 and correct me, but I take your criticism then to be not
2 specific to the promulgation of guidelines within the
3 context of gender dysphoria. It is also somewhat more
4 generic about how guidelines are promulgated generally
5 within the medical profession?

6 A. Correct. I feel like some of the weaknesses of
7 how we create guidelines has -- which has been problems
8 for other guidelines we are seeing in these guidelines.
9 So it is not -- I have criticisms of other guidelines,
10 especially, once again, in the context of
11 multi-morbidity. So there's a guideline for your
12 depression, for your high blood pressure and there's a
13 guideline for your high cholesterol and there's a
14 guideline for your sedentary behavior and there's a
15 guideline and, you know, you end up -- especially when
16 you have someone who has mutli-morbidity, which are the
17 guidelines you follow and how you integrate them, it's a
18 complex problem.

19 Q. Yeah. And let me ask you this, the Standards
20 of Care 8 were posted for public comment on
21 December 2021. Did you submit public comment?

22 A. I was not aware of the Standards of Care 8 were
23 coming out at that time and so, no, I didn't know they
24 had come out until they were already.

25 Q. And just for clarity of record, you know, we

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TALLAHASSEE DIVISION**

AUGUST DEKKER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

**REBUTTAL EXPERT REPORT OF
KRISTOPHER KALIEBE, M.D.**

I, Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D., declare that the facts contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that the opinions expressed herein represent my own.

1. I have been asked by counsel for the Defendants to respond to the expert reports of Dan Karasic, M.D. My qualifications, publications, prior expert testimony, and compensation are discussed in my prior expert report served on February 17, 2023, and my curriculum vitae, which is attached to that report.

2. The bases for my opinions expressed in this report are my review of Dr. Karasic's report, my professional experience as a psychiatrist, and my knowledge of the pertinent scientific literature, including those publications listed in the attached bibliography.

Response to Dr. Karasic

3. In Section 8 of his report, Dr. Karasic claims that the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) created "internationally accepted guidelines designed to promote the health and welfare of transgender, transsexual, and gender variant persons." While WPATH has created guidelines, it would be inaccurate to describe these as "internationally accepted". WPATH is a special interest society and highly influenced by ideological and political considerations. WPATH is not a medical organization and the Standards

of Care (SOC) WPATH created are developed by self-appointed experts. As I will detail below, WPATH does not use the best standards of examining evidence. As a special interest society with non-professional members, WPATH has a particularly high risk of bias because WPATH's membership is ideologically in favor of affirmative medical care.

4. WPATH members' professional and personal prestige can be affected negatively within WPATH if they acknowledge facts that undermine the evidence base supporting affirmative care. This dynamic is amplified as WPATH has a role as an advocacy group. This dual role as advocacy group and developer of guidelines creates a conflict of interest and undermines trust in their guidelines. Many of the creators of WPATH SOC derive their professional prestige and income from providing transgender care and are not impartial. Furthermore, as WPATH long ago staked its reputation on the ethics and evidence base of affirmative treatment, this organization cannot be expected to undertake a fair review of the evidence.

5. In fact, whenever WPATH guidelines are reviewed they are noted to have significant problems, as was found in a recent systematic review. (Dahlen 2021). Dahlen et al. noted that WPATH SOC7 "contains no list of key recommendations nor auditable quality standards" and WPATH SOC 7 cannot be

considered “gold standard”. The WPATH review scored poorly on editorial independence, applicability, and rigor of development.

6. The SOC 7 and 8 guidelines are frequently referenced. Gender affirming medicine is a new area of medicine and WPATH is the most prominent international organization creating guidelines. I am not aware of which countries have adopted SOC 8 outright, but it is clear the SOC 8 guidelines are at odds with the stated policies of most countries. As multiple countries who have undertaken thoughtful reviews are realizing harms associated with gender affirming care, they are turning away from the approach suggested by WPATH SOC 8. Therefore the guidelines should not be thought of as “internationally accepted”.

7. In Section 22 Dr. Karasic provides his opinion endorsing the phrase “sex assigned at birth”. This misleading phrase distorts scientific reality by making the claim that biological sex can be “assigned”. The sex of the infant is already a fact, and can be noted by lay persons or physicians, but it cannot be assigned. Dr. Karasic invokes this distorting phrasing in an apparent attempt to frame biological sex as a faulty construct and thus create the impression that better frameworks exist.

8. Dr. Karasic further goes on to display an ideological rather than scientific view by reiterating the claim the biological sex, biological male, and biological female are “imprecise and should be avoided”. This is again a claim

based on ideology, and especially dubious when compared with the non-biological and subjective idea of gender identity. Dr. Karasic repeatedly references self-identified gender which is a much more imprecise and poorly defined construct than biological sex. If a medical doctor disputes the reality of male and female sexes in the sexually dimorphic species of humans, it displays an influence of ideology over science.

9. Biological sexes of male and female have been fundamental facts of life for our pre-human ancestors and early humans prior to large scale societies.

10. In paragraph 23 of his report, Dr. Karasic claims that gender identity has a biological basis. This is not referenced, and can only be accurate in the most reductionist framework, and that all human experiences are on some level biological. This is conjecture which is at odds with large variations in gender identity evidence of heavy influences of generational factors, ideology and cultural influence (Marianowicz-Szczygiel 2022, Littman 2018).

11. He further makes a claim that “gender identity is not a product of external influences and not subject to voluntary change.” The statement is at odds with recent explosive growth in young people voicing a gender nonconforming identity. There is currently not enough knowledge to have any confidence in this statement; we know that gender identity frequently does change, and it appears quite likely that external influences do play a sizable role.

12. Dr. Karasic indicates medical authorities claim that “efforts to change gender identity are ineffective, can cause harm and are unethical”. This opinion reflects an ideology that conflates sexual orientation and gender identity. Dr. Karasic is further making an extraordinary claim that it is unethical to help a person come to accept the reality of their biological sex. Approaches to get patients to accept and live comfortably with their bodies has a longstanding tradition in mental health treatments. Body positivity and body acceptance are laudable goals and should be compared against the use of hormones and surgeries in order to determine which is a more effective and humane treatment.

13. Logic demands that self-acceptance should be the mainstream approach, especially among youth who are still developing all aspects of themselves, including their self-concept with regard to sex and gender. Further research may well find psychotherapies or mind-body approaches with better results than gender affirmation through hormones and surgery. That research needs to be done but, unfortunately, many within the gender medicine community have used authoritarian rhetoric to quash open discussion and research into the full range of logical approaches.

14. In paragraph 26 of his report, Dr. Karasic notes that gender dysphoria causes distress and those with gender dysphoria typically have comorbid mental health problems. This is accurate; however in most cases it appears that individuals

who express gender dysphoria usually already have significant psychopathology. Dr. Karasic also claims that gender dysphoria is highly amenable to treatment and the treatment is highly effective. As noted by multiple systematic reviews, the evidence is mixed and of low quality. (Brignardello-Peterson 2022, PALKO / COHERE Finland 2020, Cass Review 2020, Sweden NBHW 2022). Therefore, there is not evidence to support Dr. Karasic's framing of gender dysphoria being "highly amenable" or the treatments being "highly effective".

15. Dr. Karasic claims that the risks decline when transgender individuals live according to their gender identity, but he does not specify what risks increase and which risks decrease. The evidence that gender affirming hormone treatments reduce psychopathology is only supported by low-quality evidence and hormone treatments have not been reliably shown to reduce suicidality. These are the conclusions of multiple reviews, including WPATH's own. (Baker 2021)

16. Dr. Karasic claims that with medically indicated care, gender dysphoria resolves. As shown by the various systematic reviews cited previously, this is a complex area where more study is needed. In childhood, most gender dysphoria spontaneously resolves without treatment. This appears less so in adults, yet many aspects of gender dysphoria remain poorly understood. There has never been adequate study of the full range of treatment options for gender dysphoria in adults, so this is an unanswered question.

17. Without better studies, it will remain unclear what other treatments could also resolve gender dysphoria. Especially with the massive recent rise in youth with gender dysphoria, we clearly need studies to evaluate the costs, benefits and risks involved with all treatments, including medicalization. Dr. Karasic appears to dismiss the possibility that patients expressing gender dysphoria can come to accept and be satisfied with the bodies they reside in. We will need to research various treatments to better understand which approaches best resolve gender dysphoria. We do not currently know which approaches have the best balance of risks and benefits. This is especially important when it involves still developing minors.

18. In paragraph 28 of his report, Dr. Karasic claims that WPATH SOC 8 incorporates recommendations on clinical practice guideline development. This is partially true. In fact, SOC 8 did commission systematic reviews.

19. The British Medical Journal Investigations Unit undertook analysis of the evidence for transgender treatments including the WPATH SOC 8. (BMJ 2023;380:p382). The BMJ investigators interviewed Gordan Guyatt, MD, an internationally recognized leader on systematic reviews and, in fact, the co-developer and first author of the original GRADE guidelines. BMJ also interviewed expert Mark Helfand, professor of medical informatics and clinical epidemiology at Oregon Health and Science University. Helfand noted that

“WPATH’s recommendations lack a grading system to indicate the quality of the evidence—one of several deficiencies.”

20. This same BMJ article notes: *“Both Guyatt and Helfand noted that a trustworthy guideline would be transparent about all commissioned systematic reviews: how many were done and what the results were.”* It reports that: *“Helfand noted that the review incorporated elements of an evidenced based guideline. Helfand also noted several instances in which the strength of evidence presented to justify a recommendation was ‘at odds with what their own systematic reviewers found.’”*

21. My review of SOC 8 mirrors what is observed by these distinguished experts: WPATH SOC did not clearly document what reviews were attempted, raising the possibility that unfavorable reviews were stopped or buried upon unfavorable results. Burying unfavorable studies is most common when those commissioning the research have a vested interest in positive results. Relatedly, this seems to have occurred when those at the Tavestock Clinic unsuccessfully attempted to replicate the Dutch model (Biggs 2022). WPATH SOC 8 obscures the most important element required for a trustworthy clinical practice guideline: the assessment of the strength of the evidence used to make recommendations. Hiding the strength of evidence hides critical data from readers trying to make sense of SOC 8’s recommendations. Again from the BMJ investigation: *“For*

minors, WPATH contends that the evidence is so limited that “a systematic review regarding outcomes of treatment in adolescents is not possible.” But Guyatt counters that ‘systematic reviews are always possible,’ even if few or no studies meet the eligibility criteria. If an entity has made a recommendation without one, he says, ‘they’d be violating standards of trustworthy guidelines.’” (BMJ 2023;380:p382).

22. My analysis mirrors that of Drs. Guyatt and Helfand, the authors of WPATH SOC 8 have violated the standards of trustworthy guidelines. WPATH SOC 8 leadership must know a systematic review is possible, but seem to claim that that it is not. One can only surmise that WPATH avoided a systematic review on minors because they were aware the results would be unfavorable, and subsequently provided a deceptive excuse.

23. The BMJ investigators also detail how WPATH SOC 8 violate typical standards for a systematic review: *“For example, one of the commissioned systematic reviews found that the strength of evidence for the conclusions that hormonal treatment ‘may improve’ quality of life, depression, and anxiety among transgender people was ‘low,’ and it emphasised the need for more research, ‘especially among adolescents.’ The reviewers also concluded that ‘it was impossible to draw conclusions about the effects of hormone therapy’ on death by suicide.”*

24. The BMJ investigation article continues: *“Despite this, WPATH recommends that young people have access to treatments after comprehensive assessment, stating that the ‘emerging evidence base indicates a general improvement in the lives of transgender adolescents.’”*

25. The review concludes that there is low-quality evidence that hormone treatment “may improve” quality of life, depression, and anxiety, and it is impossible to draw conclusions about suicide. That is the WPATH’s own systematic review, but WPATH ignores these results and claims there is “strong evidence”. The article continues:

And more globally, WPATH asserts, “There is strong evidence demonstrating the benefits in quality of life and well-being of gender-affirming treatments, including endocrine and surgical procedures,” procedures that “are based on decades of clinical experience and research; therefore, they are not considered experimental, cosmetic, or for the mere convenience of a patient. They are safe and effective at reducing gender incongruence and gender dysphoria.” Those two statements are each followed by more than 20 references, among them the commissioned systematic review. This stood out to Helfand as obscuring which conclusions were based on evidence versus opinion. He says, “It’s a very strange thing to feel that they had to cite some of

the studies that would have been in the systematic review or purposefully weren't included in the review, because that's what the review is for."

26. For many reasons I agree with these prestigious scholars, Drs Helfand and Guyatt, that WPATH used deceptive practices in the SOM 8 and WPATH's guidelines do not meet the standard for a trustworthy clinical practice guideline.

27. In paragraph 30, Dr Karasic quotes WPATH SOC 8: "Gender identity change efforts (gender reparative or gender conversion programs aimed at making the person cisgender) are widespread, cause harm to TGD people, and (like efforts targeting sexual orientation) are considered unethical." (Coleman, et al., 2022).

28. As mentioned above, an ideology has become popular which takes the authoritarian stance that the mental health and medical community should never explore any effort to help those with gender dysphoria to accept their bodies and biological sex. This is not science-based, but rather seems to be part of an organized effort to promote gender affirming care. Elsewhere in mental health and medicine, studying multiple treatment approaches and comparing the results is standard practice. This creates an extraordinary situation where low-quality evidence is being promoted and the only solution. WPATH and others are attempting to shut down exploration and research on a wide range of feasible and clinically appropriate approaches to gender dysphoria.

29. I'm reminded of major depressive disorder and the pharmaceutical industries' manipulations to promote antidepressants. When funders support research, multiple mechanisms cause the research to obtain a result desired by the funders. (Sismondo 2008). Most psychiatrists who created the depression treatment guidelines were being paid by the pharmaceutical industry. Not surprisingly when research obtained unfavorable or neutral results on antidepressant medications, thus results were often never submitted, were delayed (known as time lag bias) or buried in an obscure journal. (Turner 2008). It wasn't just financial incentives, but doctors' egos combined with desires to relieve suffering, and this distorted science. Similarly, the WPATH, Trevor Project or other advocacy organizations may serve valuable needs, but advocacy groups cannot be considered scientifically neutral when involved in collecting data or financially supporting research.

30. Dr. Karasic notes that a clinical practice guideline from the Endocrine Society (the Endocrine Society Guidelines) provides similar protocols for treatment of gender dysphoria. (Hembree, et al., 2017). The Endocrine Society did create a clinical practice guideline using GRADE, and in doing so revealed that all of their treatment recommendations for adolescents are based on *low* or *very low* quality evidence. Yet, in opposition to what would be expected by a clinical

practice guideline, the Endocrine Society decided to make aggressive treatment recommendations in the face of low-quality evidence.

31. Again British Medical Journal Investigations Unit’s review of evidence for transgender care solicited clinical practice guideline experts to opine.

Guyatt, who co-developed GRADE, found “serious problems” with the Endocrine Society guidelines, noting that the systematic reviews didn’t look at the effect of the interventions on gender dysphoria itself, arguably “the most important outcome.” He also noted that the Endocrine Society had at times paired strong recommendations—phrased as “we recommend”—with weak evidence. In the adolescent section, the weaker phrasing “we suggest” is used for pubertal hormone suppression when children “first exhibit physical changes of puberty”; however, the stronger phrasing is used to “recommend” GnRHa treatment.

32. Guyatt noted that strong recommendations accompanying low-quality evidence are discouraged by GRADE. Guyatt even emailed the Endocrine Society asking why the recommendations are stronger than the evidence, but the Endocrine Society refused to provide a specific answer. (BMJ 2023;380:p382). My review echoes Dr Guyatt’s concerns regarding the trustworthiness of the Endocrine Society Guidelines.

33. Dr. Karasic claims that “Each of these guidelines are evidence-based”. I do not believe this is an accurate statement as I have shown. Again, the British Medical Journal Investigations Unit’s review of evidence for transgender care solicited Dr. Helfand. Dr. Helfand took issue with the claims of WPATH and Endocrine Society because they overstate the evidence, and in fact are based on factors other than research evidence: “*consensus based guidelines are not unwarranted, says Helfand. ‘But don’t call them evidence based.’*” (BMJ 2023;380:p382).

34. These guidelines are based mainly on “expert consensus” and “clinical experience” which can fool physicians into believing various treatments were effective. Without high quality research it is impossible to determine long-term outcomes, the cause of the positive response they observe, or to track negative outcomes or dropouts from treatment. These factors which could create an observed positive response could include social factors, therapeutic support and placebo effects, which are all particularly relevant (Clayton 2022).

35. In paragraph 34, Dr. Karasic notes that WPATH SOC and Endocrine Society Guidelines are cited in statements from major medical organizations. Yet this is within a highly ideological and politicized context where self-appointed and biased “experts” in gender medicine have systematically adopted the role of “content expert” in an area of medicine where most physicians believe practice is

ideological, experimental, and has a questionable evidence base. The medical professional organizations have been coopted by exaggerated claims of evidence and moralized statements which silences most physicians despite their doubts. Once American medical professional organizations' leadership endorsed affirmative care as both evidence-based and ethical, these organizations chose advocacy over science. Their journals are no longer scientifically neutral. I have directly observed efforts to quash scholarly debate via presenter intimidation at meetings and via the silencing of dissenting voices in medical journals. The highly politicized and ideological nature of gender dysphoria care has distorted scholarly dialogue within American professional medical organizations and medical journals, creating a false impression of medical consensus.

36. Most physicians have doubts about a gender medicine, a highly ideological and politicized topic with low-quality evidence. Gender medicine has seen an explosive rise of patients (Marianowicz-Szczygiel 2022) and is dependent on a "felt sense". Furthermore, this felt sense of gender identity is claimed to be immutable and biologically determined, despite the fact that the data and our lived experiences show psychosocial influences. Proponents of gender affirming care consistently distort the strength of evidence; many make celebratory proclamations and actively dissuade colleagues or society from pursuing full range of treatment options. These medical treatments are directed at normal tissue where typically a

higher degree of caution would be granted. Again, these treatments are for a “felt sense”, and it is well-established that human beings have an immense ability to fool themselves, over-trust their emotions and be socially influenced.

37. In paragraph 36, Dr. Karasic claims that providing gender affirming care reduces “depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicidality.” Yet the WPATH’s own review, along with many other reviews cited above, show there is not sufficient evidence to support that hormone treatments reduce suicidality.

38. In paragraph 37, Dr. Karasic opines that “For patients for whom gender-affirming medical care is indicated, no alternative treatments have been demonstrated to be effective.” This is an interesting use of language, because there is no dispute that systematic reviews show gender affirming care to be supported by only low-quality evidence. Thus it remains unclear if gender-affirming care itself is effective. Furthermore, until other types of care are studied, we do not know if there are safer or more successful approaches to resolve gender dysphoria. Unfortunately, there is not high-quality evidence to guide the treatment of gender dysphoria.

39. Dr. Karasic refers readers to the American Psychological Association (APA) statement that gender identity change efforts provide no benefit and instead do harm. (American Psychological Association, 2021). It is accurate that this referenced APA document states: “GICE (gender identity change efforts)

are not supported by empirical evidence as effective practices for changing gender identity and are associated with psychological and social harm”. The cited studies which purport to support this claim do not and rather cite a few instances of decades-old small uncontrolled studies and other articles filled with opinion, theory, and ideology (the Japanese and Dutch language references not review). In fact this document cited a 10-Year Research Review in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (Bradley 1997) which acknowledges this extreme lack of research, in large part to the extreme rarity of patients -- between 1978 and 1995 the author’s clinic received only 52 adolescents. The authors acknowledge their eclectic therapy with adolescents did not tend to modify cross-gender feelings, yet the authors also acknowledged case reports of success in psychotherapy. (Loeb 1992, Loeb 1996, Zucker 1995).

40. In paragraphs 39-46, Dr. Karasic provides his description of the treatments endorsed by WPATH and Endocrine Society, including treatments for adolescents. Dr. Karasic does not mention the low quality of evidence supporting these treatments. He makes the claim puberty blockers are reversible, which is not accurate. (Jorgensen, 2022, Clayton, 2022).

41. Dr Karasic opines that “The treatment protocols for gender dysphoria are comparable to those for other mental health and medical conditions.” In my opinion, these treatments are not comparable. Affirmative treatments for gender

dysphoria mostly arise from ideological perspective on gender, not from a medical or mental health tradition. No other treatment for a mental health condition calls for surgery or hormonal treatment on healthy tissue.

42. In paragraph 49, Dr Karasic details the WPATH recommendations for assessment of adults, which do not clarify which specific patient populations are acceptable for treatment. He notes that “*medical or surgical treatment should only be recommended when ‘gender incongruence is marked and sustained,’ when there is capacity for consent, when other conditions that might affect outcomes have been assessed*” yet all of these avoid any actual statement of an specifics. Readers are left to guess what would make a patient inappropriate for treatment, what precisely is “marked and sustained” and which markers of capacity for consent should be utilized, what type of assessment is needed for “other conditions” is needed. A trustworthy guideline would provide specific actionable parameters for treatment.

43. In paragraph 51, Dr Karasic claims that “Affirming care for transgender youth does not mean steering them in any particular direction, but rather supporting them through their period of exploration of gender expression and increasing self-awareness of their identity”. Yet “affirming” does steer transgender youth toward remaining transgender and thus is not neutral. Gender identity can be fluid and the brain is still developing into the early twenties. The

affirming approach creates pressures for youth to adopt and maintain transgender status. Throughout history humans have been recognized by their biological sex, and social affirmation of self-assigned gender identity has never been used at scale. Thus proponents of affirming children and adolescents propose a grand social experiment with unknown costs and benefits. Dr. Karasic claims that some youth “need” medical interventions, and it can be agreed that some youth would prefer these treatments. Yet it is frequently the responsibility of the medical community to prevent patient-driven care with low-quality evidence and significant risk for harm. Affirming medical interventions for minors are still experimental; they cannot be called a “need”.

44. In paragraph 52, Dr. Karasic reports details of the Endocrine Society Guideline, and in doing so displays the imprecise and imprudent mental health recommendations made by these endocrinologists. The Endocrine Society Guideline do recommend a full assessment, but also make no specific contra-indications for hormones or surgeries. This leaves it entirely up to practitioners to guess what needs “treatment” or referral. Even in “severe psychopathology” it says “clinicians should assist the adolescent in managing these other issues.” This shows the Endocrine Society is unwilling to specifically state which problems under which circumstances would prevent hormones and surgeries.

The Endocrine Society do not even use medical language, suggesting providers “assist” an adolescent with severe psychopathology in “managing” their “issues”. Most importantly, they refuse to state any parameters for contra-indicate to affirming hormones and surgeries.

Thus enthusiasts for affirming care can read these guidelines in any way they prefer, and use hormones and surgeries even in youth with extremely high risk of poor outcomes. In the context of massive increase of patients reporting gender dysphoria and low-quality evidence I believe this set of recommendations are irresponsible.

45. In paragraph 53, Dr. Karasic notes how the leadership of many professional organizations have come out in support of hormones and surgeries for gender dysphoric patients. I have detailed in my prior report to the court how politicized these issues have become and how many physicians currently feel unable to voice their concerns due to fears of retribution. Support for affirming care initially coalesced in small committees filled with self-selected enthusiasts. These advocates convinced the medical leadership to support affirming care in large part by framing medicalized treatments for gender dysphoria as a “rights” and “discrimination” issue rather than an examination of evidence. This successfully moralized and tribalized gender medicine and thereby stifled open exchange and silenced skepticism within medical journals. As these medical

organizations had put their prestige and influence behind this type of care, those overseeing conference programs, newsletters, press statements and the editors of journals systematically distorted scholarly dialogue by promoting affirming treatments. Moralizing and advocacy silenced concerned physicians, but most didn't even know their organizations had staked out such extreme stances. Thus the membership of these professional medical organizations have never had an opportunity to observe, or participate in, open and honest dialogue regarding the evidence for transgender care. As such, the support of these organizations reflects mostly a tribal mentality and the politicizing of gender affirming care. It does not reflect memberships which have had a sober review of the evidence base and decided celebratory support of gender affirming care is warranted.

46. In paragraph 54, Dr. Karasic reports "There is substantial evidence that gender-affirming medical and surgical care is effective in treating gender dysphoria. This evidence includes scientific studies assessing mental health outcomes for transgender people who are treated with these interventions, including adolescents, and decades of clinical experience." Dr. Karasic again overstates the depth and quality of evidence supporting hormones and surgeries.

47. In paragraph 55, Dr. Karasic claims that "The research and studies supporting the necessity, safety, and effectiveness of medical and surgical care for gender dysphoria are the same type of evidence-based data that the medical

community routinely relies upon when treating other medical conditions.” As already cited above, the concept of gender dysphoria, as well as its assessment and treatment, has not undergone the typical rigorous scholarly debate expected in the field of medicine. Proponents have been able to exaggerate the evidence base, and medical organizations have quashed scholarly dialogue. This is very different than other scholarly topics. As such the research relied upon and the consensus recommendations are highly subject to bias and ideological influence.

48. In paragraphs 56-60, Dr. Karasic provides his opinion as to the evidence supporting affirmative care. He selected a number of positive studies to support this viewpoint including one review. This amalgam of studies and his personal experience cannot be relied upon to claim affirmative treatments are evidence-based. Sweden, England, and Finland have all reviewed the evidence and reorganized their approach. These are countries with medical systems that have better tracking, more organized care, and compassionate attitudes toward gender non-conforming persons. Many American states are also recognizing that it is particularly important to protect developing young people. As the Finish review stated (PALKO / COHERE Finland 2020): “The first-line treatment for gender dysphoria is psychosocial support and, as necessary, psychotherapy and treatment of possible comorbid psychiatric disorders.”

49. In paragraph 61, Dr. Karasic reports “As part of the treatment process for gender dysphoria, patients provide informed consent to their care.” Yet Dr. Karasic is not a child psychiatrist, nor a forensic psychiatrist, so he may not be aware of the nuances related to informed consent in teenagers. Firstly, there is longstanding literature showing that minors do not have fully developed emotional and cognitive skills. Teens are particularly susceptible to peer influence, and can be impulsive, emotionally volatile, and reactive to stress. (Icenogle, 2019). Thus the average adolescent does not have the same self-control or foresight as a mature adult. Considering some combination of autism, ADHD, depression, trauma, anxiety, self-harm and emerging personality disorders present in most gender dysphoric teens, this issue of consent is much more concerning. Furthermore, many gender medicine enthusiasts downplay risks associated with affirmative treatment, placing children and families at significant risk (Levine 2022).

50. In fact, the 2022 American Psychological Association Resolution on the Imposition of Death as a Penalty for Persons Aged 18 Through 20, Also Known As the Late Adolescent Class goes into significant detail regarding their position on brain immaturity through at least age 21:

WHEREAS developmental neuroscience, including research on both the structure and function of brain development, establishes that significant maturation of the brain continues through at least age 20, especially in the

key brain systems implicated in a person's capacity to evaluate behavioral options, make rational decisions about behavior, meaningfully consider the consequences of acting and not acting in a particular way, and to act deliberately in stressful or highly charged emotional environments, as well as continued development of personality traits (e.g., emotional stability and conscientiousness) and what is popularly known as 'character'.

I removed the many citations, which can be found in the document.

51. The APA Resolution continues:

WHEREAS it is clear the brains of 18- to 20-year-olds are continuing to develop in key brain systems related to higher-order executive functions and self-control, such as planning ahead, weighing consequences of behavior, and emotional regulation. Their brain development cannot be distinguished reliably from that of 17-year-olds with regard to these key brain systems.

52. Thus it is clear the American Psychological Association understands that the entire cohort of minors submitting to irreversible hormones and surgeries have under-developed abilities to understand the risks and meaningfully consider the consequences. I agree with the American Psychological Association that these deficits maintain up until at least age 21, and the courts should take these impairments seriously.

53. In paragraph 68, Dr Karasic provides his opinion on the harms of denying gender-affirming care. In paragraph 77, he discusses increases in insurance coverage. I discuss both below.

54. The prospect of aligning people's bodies to fit their view of themselves remains a controversial concept within medicine, especially with regard to developing youth. Changing patients' bodies to fit their view of themselves is not a medical service that has been routinely provided at scale. There is a confounding factor of large increases of adolescent onset gender dysphoria patients flooding clinics who surely don't match the previous populations studied. Recall that just a few decades ago the Toronto gender clinic in 17 years had only 52 adolescent patients compared with 275 child patients (Bradley 1997). Only very recently is medicalized gender affirmation for youth being provided. Not providing these services would be a continuation of prudent long-standing practices in American medicine. With such low-quality evidence and so much controversy, it is reasonable for medical systems to wait for further higher-quality data along with rigorous scholarly dialogue on the risks and benefits of transgender care. Dr. Karasic correctly indicates that there are risks of not providing affirmative care. But there are also significant risk of providing affirmative care. Within medical journals, a rigorous weighing of the risks versus benefits of transgender care has not been explored.

55. I note that in paragraph 73, Dr Karasic cites a recent NIH-funded study where in just the span of 2 years, and only 315 patients receiving affirmative care, there were 2 completed suicides (Chen 2023). This displays an extremely high rate of completed suicide when receiving hormones and other affirming care. The journal title and press statement seemed to ignore the most important outcome measure of all.

56. In paragraph 88, Dr Karasic cites continuation of gender dysphoria in a carefully selected cohort of 70 with minimal co-morbidities who received affirmative treatments. (De Vries 2011). He also cites another review from the Netherlands of those in treatment. (van der Loos 2022). These treatment groups indicates that those adolescents provided hormones and other affirming treatment tend to continue to express gender dysphoria. Yet this information does not provide information about the natural history of standard adolescents with gender dysphoria. It certainly appears medical endorsement and support of the concept of gender dysphoria continues it, since gender dysphoria appear to be extremely rare when the medicalization bureaucracy and/or societal messages are absent.

57. In paragraph 93, when referencing Dr. Cantor, Dr. Karasic correctly reports that United Kingdom is currently considering changes which decentralize care and increase access. Yet Dr. Karasic did not provide the context of how the United Kingdom's Gender Identity Service was flooded with unexpected patients,

provided haphazard care, and became the center of controversy due to de-transitioners.

58. Also not mentioned is the controversy related to the Tavistock Clinic Gender Identity Service's attempted replication study of the Dutch model of treatment of adolescents. Preliminary presentations at the WPATH conference were negative. A recent review compares the British data to the Dutch data, displaying the worse British results and a failure to replicate the original findings which spurred interest worldwide in early transition. (Biggs 2022). This study was never published. Considering the ideology and personal prestige intermixed with gender medicine, it is likely the unfavorable results were quietly hoped to disappear so that the narrative about great results from early hormone treatment would not be disrupted.

59. Dr. Karasic seems to indicate there are no significant changes in the United Kingdom. Yet due to public concerns, the UK government commissioned an analysis of gender affirming care. The October 2020 review of evidence by the national health service of England as part of Hillary Cass's Independent Review into gender identity services for children and young people. The executive summary details the findings (Cass Review 2020):

‘The key limitation to identifying the effectiveness and safety of gender-affirming hormones for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria is the lack of reliable comparative studies.’

“All the studies included in the evidence review are uncontrolled observational studies, which are subject to bias and confounding and were of very low certainty.”

“A fundamental limitation of all the uncontrolled studies included in this review is that any changes in scores from baseline to follow-up could be attributed to a regression-to-the-mean.”

“Most studies included in this review did not report comorbidities (physical or mental health) and no study reported concomitant treatments in detail. Because of this it is not clear whether any changes seen were due to gender-affirming hormones or other treatments the participants may have received.”

“Furthermore, participant numbers are poorly reported in some studies, with high numbers lost to follow-up or outcomes not reported for some participants. The authors provide no explanation for this incomplete reporting.”

“Any potential benefits of gender-affirming hormones must be weighed against the largely unknown long-term safety profile of these treatments in children and adolescents with gender dysphoria.”

60. So Dr. Karasic chose to ignore the important conclusions from the review in England, that providers of gender care for youth are using “very low” quality evidence.

61. In paragraph 94, Dr Karasic references the Swedish and Finnish national health authorities when critiquing Dr. Cantor, but fails to acknowledge their reviews of the evidence which led to restricting care.

I declare under penalty of perjury, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on March 8, 2023.

/s/Kristopher Kaliebe

Kristopher Kaliebe, M.D.

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Interrogating Gender-Exploratory Therapy

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Abstract

Opposition to gender-affirmative approaches to care for transgender youths by some clinicians has recently begun to consolidate around “gender exploratory therapy” as a proposed alternative. Whereas gender-affirmative approaches follow the client’s lead when it comes to gender, gender-exploratory therapy discourages gender affirmation in favor of exploring through talk therapy the potential pathological roots of youths’ trans identities or gender dysphoria. Few detailed descriptions of the approach’s parameters have been offered. In this article, I invite clinicians to reflect on gender-exploratory therapy through a series of questions. The questions are followed by an exploration of the strong conceptual and narrative similarities between gender-exploratory therapy and conversion practices. Finally, the ethical dimensions of gender-exploratory therapy are discussed from the lenses of therapeutic neutrality, patient-centered care, loving attention, and therapeutic alliance, suggesting that the approach may be unethical.

Keywords

assessment/diagnosis, clinical ethics, conversion practices, culture/diversity, gender exploration, sex/gender, transgender

Challenging trans health’s convergence on gender affirmation, some clinicians working with trans youths have begun advocating for what they call “gender exploratory therapy” as a distinct clinical paradigm (Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021; Spiliadis, 2019). The approach is presented as a neutral ground between the “radical” gender-affirmative model and “unethical” conversion practices (D’Angelo et al., 2021). Its proponents describe it as an “agenda-free, neutral therapy” and “ethical non-affirmative” approach—contrasting it with gender-affirmative approaches, which they characterize as political and agenda-driven to the detriment of adolescents (D’Angelo et al., 2021). Gender-affirmative approaches follow clients’ lead when it comes to gender, emphasizing the importance of respecting clients’ desires regarding social gender affirmation, which includes gender identity, gender expression, name, and pronouns; supporting clients’ free, self-directed gender exploration; and scaffolding their decision-making surrounding transition-related medical interventions (Ashley, 2019b; St. Amand & Ehrensaft, 2018).

The conceptual fulcrum of the gender-exploratory approach lies in gender exploration through talk therapy, with the goal of identifying why youths have gender dysphoria and/or believe themselves to be trans. Gender

dysphoria and self-identification as trans are approached with suspicion and associated by proponents of the approach with unprocessed trauma, childhood abuse, internalized homophobia or misogyny, co-occurring mental illness, social contagion, autism, sexual fetishism, and unconscious drives (D’Angelo et al., 2021; Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021; Gender Exploratory Therapy Association [GETA], 2021; Lemma & Savulescu, 2021; Marchiano, 2017; Withers, 2020). Until gender exploration is completed, youths are not offered transition-related medical services, and social gender affirmation is typically discouraged. In many cases, medical transition and social gender affirmation will be pushed back even further because psychotherapy “should be the first-line treatment for all cases of gender dysphoria” and transition-related medical care “should be avoided if possible” (GETA, 2021). The mandatory nature of gender exploration is what distinguishes gender-exploratory therapy from gender-affirmative approaches, which often hold space for gender exploration and encourage

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individuals to explore what gender means to them while simultaneously providing transition-related medical services and social gender affirmation (Ashley, 2019b). Gender-exploratory therapy does not include every clinical approach that facilitates gender exploration.

Critics of the paradigm have emphasized that affirmation is far more neutral than the proposed alternatives because it emanates from clients rather than being imposed on them and have argued that there is no evidence to support nonaffirmation. Although couched in the language of exploration, gender-exploratory therapy seems more akin to interrogation or perhaps even inquisition. Gender-exploratory therapy also sits uneasily with the dominant view among scientists that being trans is not pathological (American Psychological Association, 2021; Coleman et al., 2012, p. 168). Describing trans identities as commonly or always being a pathological or maladaptive response is a long-standing view that has been extensively criticized in the scientific literature and for which no compelling evidence exists (Arnoldussen et al., 2020; Ashley, 2020; Bauer et al., 2022; Olson et al., 2016; Rae et al., 2019; Serano, 2020). The surge of gender-exploratory therapy coincides with ongoing attempts to criminalize gender-affirming care for trans youths, sometimes masquerading as a compromise between gender-affirmative care and conversion practices and at other times functioning as the intellectual arm of political movements calling for the criminalization of gender-affirming care (e.g., Brejcha & Breen, 2021).

The literature on gender-exploratory therapy has focused predominantly on criticizing gender-affirmative approaches and defending the need for psychotherapeutic gender exploration. Detailed discussions of the parameters of this therapeutic mode—how it is done, what it looks like in practice—are, by contrast, scarce. In this article, I offer questions for clinicians and then offer my personal reflections on gender-exploratory therapy. These questions, which form the first section, aim to foster self-reflection and spark ongoing critical discussions around gender-exploratory therapy. Readers should not merely skim through the questions but instead sit with them. Writing down answers or walking through them with a colleague may be helpful. I readily acknowledge that they are leading questions but hope that proponents of the approach will nonetheless approach answering them in good faith. In the second section of the article, I offer reflections of my own as an expert on conversion practices and scholar of clinical ethics. I emphasize the conceptual and narrative parallels between gender-exploratory therapy and conversion practices and explore the approach's ethical dimensions from the lenses of therapeutic neutrality, patient-centered care, loving attention, and therapeutic alliance.

Questions for Clinicians

1. What do you do if a client refuses to engage in gender exploration with you? Do you refuse them gender-affirming care, even if it may be necessary to their well-being?
2. How long does gender-exploratory therapy last? How do you know if it has gone on long enough? Do you go until you find a “root cause” of the client's trans identity or gender dysphoria?
3. How do you distinguish, for example, trauma that caused someone to be trans from trauma that a trans person happens to have? Do you trust the client's views? Would you equally trust clients' view that their gender identity or gender dysphoria is and is not grounded in trauma? Why or why not?
4. If you conclude that trans identity or gender dysphoria is rooted in, for example, trauma, how do you assess whether this response is adaptive or maladaptive? How do you determine whether the person can safely and effectively be encouraged or helped to reidentify with the gender they were assigned at birth? Is there any evidence that gender-exploratory therapy is safe or effective?
5. If clients eventually come to identify as cisgender, do you wind down gender-exploratory therapy, or do you continue at a similar pace to ensure that their reidentification is genuine and not itself a coping or adaptive/maladaptive response? Why or why not?
6. Relatedly, do you consider self-identification as transgender more suspect or deserving of exploration than self-identification as cisgender? Why or why not? How is this reflected in gender-exploratory therapy?
7. Is it possible that the, for example, trauma permanently altered the person's sense of self?
8. If the psychotherapeutic attempt to treat gender identity and/or gender dysphoria proves unsuccessful, would you consider recommending gender-affirming care? Under what conditions?
9. Do you see refusing to affirm someone's expressed sense of self and experiences of gender as an appropriate response to individuals who may be experiencing trauma? Does nonaffirmation conflict with trauma-informed care's emphasis on fostering clients' sense of choice, empowerment, and acceptance (Levenson et al., 2021)? Do you think nonaffirmation poses risks of retraumatization?
10. Is there any evidence that gender-exploratory therapy leads to better outcomes, however you define them, than gender-affirming approaches?

- Is there any evidence that it can successfully identify youths who are not “truly” trans, whose identification is maladaptive, or who would be harmed by gender-affirming interventions?
11. Do you believe that gender-exploratory therapy can create psychological, social, and emotional pressures to reidentify with one’s gender assigned at birth? Do you believe that it can create pressures to misreport reidentification or alleviation of gender dysphoria? Do you believe that it can create pressures to identify specific factors, for example, trauma as a cause of trans identity or gender dysphoria?
 12. Do you believe that gender-exploratory therapy can create pressures to lie, misrepresent, or otherwise engage in gender-exploratory therapy in bad faith to obtain gender-affirming care? Do you believe it can lead clients to suppress their doubts and worries and, as a result, make decisions regarding gender-affirming care that are less informed and thoughtful?
 13. What do you make of the distress of the numerous youths who are “truly” trans, who will experience ongoing distress during gender-exploratory therapy, and who form a strong majority of individuals seeking gender-affirmative care? High-end estimates of detransition are around 3% (Brik et al., 2020; Narayan et al., 2021). There are some suggestions that up to 76% of people who detransition do not tell their clinicians that they have done so (Littman, 2021). Even if one assumes, for the sake of argument, that these upper-bound estimates are accurate, one is left with a large 88% of individuals who do not detransition. Detransition seems rare.
 14. What pronouns and gendered terms do you use during gender-exploratory therapy? Do you use terms desired by clients or terms that reflect their gender assigned at birth, or do you avoid pronouns and gendered terms altogether? Do you see using terms reflecting the client’s gender assigned at birth as a neutral option? Why or why not?
 15. Do you believe that transition-related medical interventions, such as hormones, can be offered in parallel to exploratory therapy either as a means of reducing current gender dysphoria and/or as a way of helping clients explore their gender identity and ascertain whether gender-affirming care is right for them? Do you think social and medical transition being temporary is an inherently undesirable outcome? Why or why not? Is this related to a belief that bodies that have undergone medical transition are less desirable and should be avoided if possible?
 16. Given concerns that premature affirmation may foreclose gender identity and exploration and considering that puberty blockers arguably have far less of a foreclosing impact on gender than endogenous puberty, do you think that clinicians should offer and encourage puberty blockers for all questioning and even perhaps all cisgender kids? Would your answer change if you were absolutely certain that puberty blockers had no negative long-term side effects?

Exploring Perspectives

Conversion practices

Critics consider gender-exploratory therapy a form of conversion practice, and opponents of proposed bans on conversion practices have claimed that the laws would prohibit gender-exploratory therapy (Ashley, 2022; Brejcha & Breen, 2021; Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021). Conversion practices that aim to change, discourage, or repress someone’s gender identity have been associated with serious risks of severe psychological distress and suicidality (Green et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Turban et al., 2020). As someone with extensive scholarly and policy experience surrounding conversion practices, I am struck by how much gender-exploratory therapy and conversion practices resemble one another from a conceptual and narrative standpoint.

Conversion practices have long associated same-sex attraction with pathological causes, often focusing on childhood trauma and sexual assault (e.g., Nicolosi & Nicolosi, 2002). Other proposed causes include family dynamics, disrupted relationships to femininity and masculinity, co-occurring mental illness, social contagion, and unconscious drives. Survivor Peter Gajdics explained how his therapist tried to depict his sexual orientation as a by-product of trauma, telling him that his

history of childhood sexual abuse had created a false homosexual identity and so my therapy’s goal would be to heal old trauma in order, as he said, to correct the error of my sexual orientation and revert to my innate heterosexuality. (House of Commons of Canada, 2020; see also Gajdics, 2017).

Proponents of conversion practices contrast them with mainstream practices that promote affirming sexual orientation, which they describe as politically motivated and ideologically captured:

A 16-year-old young man came into my office, concerned that he might be homosexual. I told him that if he was, he could choose Gay Affirmative Therapy, or he could seek to grow out of homosexuality. . . .

The young man had been confused by the popular rhetoric that assumes that if you are homosexual, then the only honest response is to live out the gay identity. Believing this, he was surprised to hear that there are men who, out of the fullness of their identities, choose a different struggle. . . . The mental health profession is largely responsible for the neglect of the non-gay homosexual. In its attempt to support the liberation of gays, it has pushed underground the other population. (Nicolosi, 1991, pp. 4–6)

The passage bears a striking resemblance to the narrative surrounding gender-exploratory therapy, which includes claims that “trans activists want to silence detransitioners or deny their existence” and portrays gender-affirming care as “an overcorrection” that is being “pushed by activists” (Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021). And just as proponents of gender-exploratory therapy depict clinicians as being “afraid of being cast as transphobic bigots by their local colleagues and referral sources if they engage in gender exploring therapy,” (Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021) so did Joseph Nicolosi claim that “the sexual revolution and the ‘rights’ movements—civil rights, minority rights, feminist rights—have resulted in an intimidating effect upon psychology” (Nicolosi, 1991, p. 9).

Proponents of conversion practices often appeal to the accounts of “ex-gay” clients to bolster their claim that same-sex attraction can be and therefore frequently is caused by trauma or other external factors—a move that is reminiscent of how proponents of gender-exploratory therapy select and deploy detransitioners’ accounts. For instance, Joseph Nicolosi described how one of his clients never believed his orientation to be ingrained and quoted another as saying that “embracing a homosexual lifestyle has been like living a lie” and that “only since I have started to look at what is behind these homosexual feelings have I really begun to find peace and self-acceptance” (Nicolosi, 1991, p. 5; see also Fetner, 2005). Compare this passage with the research of Lisa Littman (2021), which draws on detransitioners’ reports as evidence that their trans identity or gender dysphoria was caused by trauma, abuse, mental-health problems, or internalized homophobia. Such reliance on self-report contrasts with the distrust proponents of gender-exploratory therapy have displayed toward self-report when clients assert a trans identity or when they reject the suggestion that their gender dysphoria is a pathological response.

Studies and collated anecdotal accounts from detransitioners often represent a subgroup that is particularly hostile to gender-affirming care (Leveille, 2021; Restar, 2020). Ky Schevers (2021b), who was heavily involved in detransitioner advocacy for 6 years, described the

subculture as “heavily invested in transphobic radical feminist ideology.” Schevers explained that people in radical feminist detransitioned women’s communities were “encouraged to see themselves as women struggling with gender dysphoria and to see any sense of being a gender other than woman as a symptom to be managed, not an identity to express” and that she came to believe that “my being trans was a result of trauma and misogyny” (Schevers, 2021a, 2021b). The accuracy of detransition narratives being promoted is sometimes dubious. For instance, detransitioner Keira Bell has advocated against access to gender-affirming care on account that she was “rushed” into medical transition. However, this narrative eludes important facts. She was assessed over 21 months in addition to being on the clinic’s waitlist—which is now 26 months long—seemingly contradicting the claim that she was rushed. More critically perhaps, she identified challenges to her gender identity as entrenching her decision to transition, telling the court that

the psychiatrist attempted to talk of the gender spectrum as a way of persuading me to not pursue medical transition. I took this as a challenge to how serious I was about my feelings and what I wanted to do and it made me want to transition more. Now I wish I had listened to her. (*Bell v. Tavistock*, 2020)

Suspicion toward Bell’s gender identity seems to have backfired and played a foreclosing role on gender exploration, in contradiction to the conceptual underpinnings and justifications of gender-exploratory therapy.

Detransition is a heterogeneous and complex experience that is frequently obscured by ideological commitments. Contrary to the assumption that detransition necessarily reflects the individual’s authentic identity, Ky Schevers now identifies as a “genderqueer transmasculine butch,” regrets having detransitioned, and views the subculture’s ideology as akin to conversion practices (Schevers, 2021a, 2021b). This not to say that detransitioners are generally misguided trans people or victims of internalized transphobia. My point is more mundane: The deployment of detransition narratives by proponents of gender-exploratory therapy belies the complexity of detransitioners’ experiences. The suggestion by proponents of gender-exploratory therapy that gender-affirmative approaches are to blame for detransition is unconvincing, especially once one considers how detransitioners’ stories are being curated in ways reminiscent of how ex-gay narratives are used to support conversion practices.

The attempt to distance and distinguish gender-exploration therapy from conversion practices is also

familiar. After California banned conversion practices, Joseph Nicolosi wrote an essay claiming that his reparative therapy did not directly aim at altering same-sex attraction but, rather, encouraged inquiry and exploration into its underlying cause. The positive-sounding language of inquiry and exploration sanitizes his approach despite him viewing “most same-sex attractions as reparations for childhood trauma” (Nicolosi, 2015). “Exploring, isolating and resolving these childhood emotional wounds will often result in reducing unwanted same-sex attractions,” he explained.

His son, Joseph Nicolosi, Jr., also sought to distance himself from conversion practices, coining a new approach termed “reintegrative therapy” that he insists is not equivalent to conversion therapy (Nicolosi, Jr., 2018). Reintegrative therapy is described as a form of “sexual attraction fluidity exploration” and is purported to “significantly decreases unwanted sexual behaviors while improving psychological well-being” (Reintegrative Therapy Association, 2021). Paralleling the rhetoric around gender-exploratory therapy, proponents of reintegrative therapy describe it as a “sexual orientation-neutral approach, designed to treat trauma and addiction for males and females regardless of the client’s sexual orientation” and use the positive-sounding language of “exploration” in explaining it (Nicolosi, Jr., 2018, p. 61). According to Nicolosi, Jr. (2018), “the protocol involves exploring the client’s attractions from a neutral stance of curiosity and then seeking to resolve the trauma memories which lie beneath with standard trauma treatments” (p. 61). According to him, reintegrative therapy is distinct from conversion practices because conversion practices “seek to modify the sexuality,” whereas reintegrative therapy only alters sexual orientation “as a byproduct [*sic*] of resolving the core unmet need” (p. 66). This may seem like a distinction without a difference. After all, clinicians have always justified conversion practices by claiming that same-sex attraction is rooted in underlying trauma, psychological disturbances, and other pathological factors. The insistence that reintegrative therapy is practiced in the same way regardless of whether the person is gay, bisexual, or straight also falls flat given Nicolosi, Jr.’s father’s recognition that in the history of psychiatry no “heterosexual ever sought treatment for distress about his heterosexuality and wished to become homosexual” (Nicolosi, 1991, p. 9).

Descriptions of reintegrative therapy by people who offer it are reminiscent of how gender-exploratory therapy is described by its proponents. Clinicians promoting gender-exploratory therapy have notably insisted that the approach is “not the same as ‘conversion,’ as the latter implies a therapist agenda and an aim for a fixed outcome” (D’Angelo et al., 2021, p. 10)

and emphasized that they “do not aim to change someone’s gender or sexuality related feelings but rather engage in a dialogue exploring the meaning-making around identity development” (Spiliadis, n.d.). Such statements overlook the fact that gender-exploratory therapy is predicated on suspicion toward trans identities and gender dysphoria and is neither developed for nor applied to cisgender individuals who do not report gender dysphoria.

I leave readers to conclude for themselves whether reintegrative therapy is tantamount to conversion practices. In any case, the conceptual and narrative similarities between reintegrative therapy and gender-exploratory therapy are hard to miss.

Clinical ethics

Proponents of gender-exploratory therapy situate their approach as neutral, agenda-free, and more in line with foundational principles of psychotherapy (D’Angelo et al., 2021). Yet approaching trans identities and gender dysphoria from a position of suspicion—suspicion that, regardless of indication, they may be attributable to pathological causes and should be explored as such—is incompatible with therapeutic neutrality. One of the sources quoted by D’Angelo and colleagues (2021), for instance, explained therapeutic neutrality as “knowing one’s place and staying out of the patient’s personal life,” allowing “for the patient’s agenda to be given primary consideration” (Simon, 1992, p. 273). However, gender-exploratory therapy seems to interject itself into clients’ lives by doubting that their gender identity and experience of gender dysphoria are authentic and not pathological. Gender-exploratory therapy also fails to give primary consideration to the client’s agenda of self-actualization by placing undue weight on the risk of detransition. As I showed with the psychiatrist who tried to convince Keira Bell not to transition, discouraging or delaying transition can severely undermine the therapeutic relationship and foreclose the client’s free, self-directed gender exploration. On that account, gender-exploratory therapy seems inconsistent with therapeutic neutrality.

Therapeutic neutrality is a complex and fraught concept. Not all agree on whether and how it should be pursued. According to psychiatrists Frank Yeomans and Eve Caligor (2016), therapeutic neutrality comes only after a treatment frame is set in place. Neutrality vis-à-vis treatment goals and approach is fundamentally different from neutrality in treatment because clinicians may view clients’ goals as unacceptable—Yeomans and Caligor gave the example of suicide. Historically, therapeutic neutrality is intertwined with psychoanalysis and was developed as a response to risks associated with

transference and countertransference (Meissner, 1998). Therapeutic neutrality referred to “a point equidistant from the id, the ego, and the superego” (Anna Freud, as cited in Greenberg, 1986). Critics of therapeutic neutrality have also pointed out that the concept can be counterproductive insofar as clinicians may obscure and fail to examine how they project, impart, and impose their own values onto clients by appealing to therapeutic neutrality (Fancher, 2015; Humphries, 1982; Meissner, 1998; Wachtel, 1986; see also Ashley, 2019a). This remark is particularly salient given the conceptual and normative relationship that gender-exploratory therapy entertains with gender dysphoria and being trans. Although neutrality can be a beneficial aspiration, it is prone to distortions and misuse and cannot stand alone as a consideration for clinical ethics. Appeals to therapeutic neutrality in highly politicized contexts are too often a preemptive rejoinder to potential critics, cynically turning the concept against its very purpose. As psychoanalyst Paul L. Wachtel (1986) wrote, “one cannot stay outside the field, one cannot avoid influencing what one is observing” (p. 61). Unless situated in a broader normative philosophy, therapeutic neutrality is neither a helpful nor a realistic goal. Neutrality, much like the cake, is a lie.

The notions of patient-centered care, loving attention, and therapeutic alliance are more promising conceptual tools for reflecting on models of care in trans health. Patient-centered care is, in a way, an elaboration on the concept of therapeutic neutrality. Patient-centered care is “characterized by responsiveness to patient needs and preferences, using the patient’s informed wishes to guide activity, interaction and information-giving, and shared decision-making” (Pelzang, 2010, p. 912) and represents “a shift from a traditional, paternalistic, provider-driven and disease-focused approach towards one that fully integrates the patient’s perceptions, needs and experiences” (Fix et al., 2018, p. 301). Patient-centered care is a philosophical and normative orientation rather than a problem-solving algorithm. Its application to particular contexts can be difficult without the aid of additional conceptual tools, notably because of the wide range of care contexts in which it is used.

From a patient-centered standpoint, it is crucial to realize that most individuals who enter a clinical relationship because they are trans or experience gender dysphoria do so for the express purpose of securing access to gender-affirming care and, accordingly, living out their felt gender in everyday life. Although some may view their own trans identity or gender dysphoria as a pathological response, they are a minority. There is little basis for doubting clients who believe that their gender identity or gender dysphoria is nonpathological given the rarity of regret and the absence of proven

indicators or validated assessment techniques that could accurately predict future regret (Brik et al., 2020; Bustos et al., 2021; Deutsch, 2012; In re: Kelvin, 2017; Lawrence, 2003; Narayan et al., 2021; Pimenoff & Pfäfflin, 2011; Wiepjes et al., 2018). Imposing gender exploration on clients seems manipulative or coercive and incompatible with patient-centered care. Although patient-centered care is not against exploration or assessments, it emphasizes the importance of centering clients’ desires and perspectives as much as possible. Without a clear and compelling justification, suspicion and paternalism run afoul of patient-centered care. Instead, a patient-centered approach would facilitate access to gender-affirming care; scaffold clients’ self-directed and autonomous gender exploration, including through medical transition; and offer health-care services tailored to the needs of detransitioners (Ashley, 2019b; Hildebrand-Chupp, 2020). Rather than imposing gender exploration, patient-centered therapists support clients in their decision-making process and foster a space for them to explore their gender on their own terms, should they want to do so.

The concept of loving attention, drawn from feminist philosophy, can help operationalize patient-centered care in the trans health context by specifying what it means to be responsive to clients’ needs and preferences and to use them in the development of a clinical model. Philosopher E. M. Hernandez (2021) explained that loving attention entails perceiving and attending to people on their own terms rather than on the clinicians’ terms. Loving attention stands in opposition to arrogant, paternalistic outlooks in which clinicians purport to know better what is in the person’s best interest and whether their self-understanding and desires align with that interest. Loving attention offers a critical outlook on paternalism, good intentions, and benevolence, understanding that—as the saying goes—the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Instead of drawing on their own understanding of the desirability of gender-affirming care, of the client’s gender identity and gender dysphoria, and of their sources, clinicians working from a stance of loving attention “[seek] the other person through critical checking and questioning of one’s self, not suppressing the perceiver’s wants and desires but recognizing how they lead one astray” (Hernandez, 2021, p. 622). It is not enough to avoid active rejection by adopting a “neutral” stance that neglects differences between persons. Loving attention requires respect for individuals on their own terms, which entails adopting and affirming their self-understanding of gender and desires for gender-affirming care. Hernandez (2021), for instance, pointed out that applying the gender-neutral “they” to a trans woman who uses the pronoun “she” fails to

reflect loving attention even if the person calls everyone “they.” Gender-exploratory therapy fails to embody loving attention because it approaches being trans and gender dysphoria with suspicion and a mind turned toward pathological roots even if there is no clear, immediate, or compelling reason to believe that the client’s self-understanding is wrong, besides, perhaps, stereotypes. Gender-exploratory therapy fails to appreciate trans communities on their own terms and thus falls short of loving attention. By contrast, gender-affirmative approaches’ emphasis on trans individuals’ self-understanding and on supporting them on their own terms clearly reflect a form of loving attention.

Therapeutic alliance is another concept that helps one appreciate the flaws of gender-exploratory therapy. Fostering an atmosphere of trust, comfort, and autonomy in clinical relationships is critical to decision-making and long-term well-being (Ardito & Rabellino, 2011; Ashley & Domínguez, 2021; Kukla, 2021; Martin et al., 2000). Clinicians who are perceived as erecting barriers to gender-affirming care can undermine the client’s decision-making by making them suppress doubts and worries, misrepresent their experiences, react defensively, and even initiate medical interventions earlier than they may otherwise have because of fear that they could be taken away. Whether gender-exploratory therapy falls under the umbrella of conversion practices, even its proponents admit that the approach is commonly experienced as nonaffirmative and that its practitioners are perceived as “transphobic bigots” (D’Angelo et al., 2021; Edwards-Leeper & Anderson, 2021). Gender-exploratory therapy positions the clinician as an antagonist, a gatekeeper of gender-affirming care that clients must overcome if they want to access the desired interventions. The testimony of Keira Bell before the High Court of England and Wales, discussed earlier, attests to this phenomenon. The oppositional dynamic that flows from conceptual and narrative foundations of gender-exploratory therapy can severely undermine the therapeutic alliance. “No one trusts the doctors as the place to work things out,” explained Dean Spade (2006, p. 326; see also MacKinnon et al., 2020). If individuals seeking gender-affirming care do not trust clinicians with their doubts and worries, the quality of their decision-making is undermined, and free, self-directed gender exploration is foreclosed. In addition, fear or hesitancy discussing mental-health needs can create barriers to psychotherapeutic care and keep trans people away from needed mental-health services. By contrast, gender-affirmative approaches can foster greater trust, comfort, and autonomy, reducing the stakes of gender exploration and thus creating more space for it should clients want to explore their gender. The therapeutic alliance cultivated by gender-affirming care can also

foster access to mental and physical health-care services for needs unrelated or tangential to gender, such as sexual health services and trauma-informed therapy.

Patient-centered care, loving attention, and therapeutic alliance converge onto gender-affirmative approaches as the most ethical paradigms of trans care, casting doubt on the ethics of gender-exploratory therapy. Approaching trans identities and gender dysphoria from a stance of suspicion under the guise of curiosity and neutrality fails to accord with principles of clinical ethics. It betrays value-laden assumptions that are incompatible with therapeutic neutrality. Clients’ self-described needs and understandings are the starting point of ethical therapy.

Conclusion

Gender-exploratory therapy is an emergent and under-defined paradigm in trans health care. Despite appealing to positive notions such as curiosity, neutrality, and exploration, proponents of gender-exploratory therapy leave many critical questions unanswered and strike a conceptual and normative pose that seems incompatible with evolving understandings of clinical ethics and trans identities. Being trans is not undesirable and should not be approached as if it were.

Proponents of gender-exploratory therapy acknowledge that some consider it a form of conversion practice, paradoxically resenting the suggestion while opposing bans on conversion practices on account that it would prohibit their approach. As for critiques of gender-exploratory therapy, they are presented as evidence of trans health care’s ideological capture. Yet a close comparison of gender-exploratory therapy and conversion practices reveals many conceptual and narrative similarities. How proponents talk about gender-exploratory therapy is nearly identical to how individuals offering conversion practices targeting sexual orientation frame their own work. Despite the language of exploration, gender-exploratory therapy shares more with interrogation, if not inquisition.

When you begin from the premise that trans identities are suspect and often rooted in pathology, your therapeutic approach soon becomes indistinguishable from conversion practices. As a scholar of conversion practices, the uncanny resemblance cannot but give me pause.

Transparency

Action Editor: Tina M. Lowrey

Editor: Klaus Fiedler

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared that there were no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

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Acknowledgments

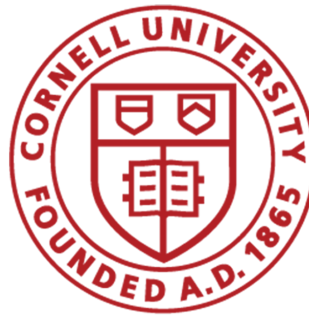
I thank A. J. Eckert, Emma D. Klein, Lee Leveille, Elliot Marrow, and Maeve Lillian Palmer for their insightful feedback and help polishing the article.

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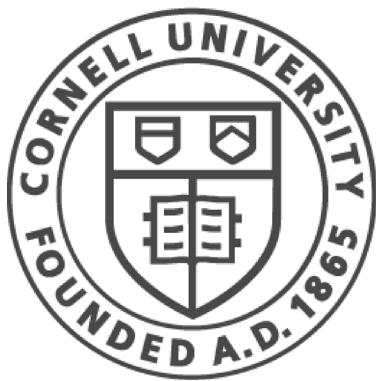
What does the scholarly research say about the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being?

Overview: We conducted a systematic literature review of all peer-reviewed articles published in English between 1991 and June 2017 that assess the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being. We identified 56 studies that consist of primary research on this topic, of which 52 (93%) found that gender transition improves the overall well-being of transgender people, while 4 (7%) report mixed or null findings. We found no studies concluding that gender transition causes overall harm. As an added resource, we separately include 17 additional studies that consist of literature reviews and practitioner guidelines.

Bottom Line: This search found a robust international consensus in the peer-reviewed literature that gender transition, including medical treatments such as hormone therapy and surgeries, improves the overall well-being of transgender individuals. The literature also indicates that greater availability of medical and social support for gender transition contributes to better quality of life for those who identify as transgender.

Research Findings

1. The scholarly literature makes clear that gender transition is effective in treating gender dysphoria and can significantly improve the well-being of transgender individuals.
2. Among the positive outcomes of gender transition and related medical treatments for transgender individuals are improved quality of life, greater relationship satisfaction, higher self-esteem and confidence, and reductions in anxiety, depression, suicidality, and substance use.
3. The positive impact of gender transition on transgender well-being has grown considerably in recent years, as both surgical techniques and social support have improved.
4. Regrets following gender transition are extremely rare and have become even rarer as both surgical techniques and social support have improved. Pooling data from numerous studies demonstrates a regret rate ranging from .3 percent to 3.8 percent. Regrets are most likely to result from a lack of social support after transition or poor surgical outcomes using older techniques.
5. Factors that are predictive of success in the treatment of gender dysphoria include adequate preparation and mental health support prior to treatment, proper follow-up care from knowledgeable providers, consistent family and social support, and high-quality surgical outcomes (when surgery is involved).
6. Transgender individuals, particularly those who cannot access treatment for gender dysphoria or who encounter unsupportive social environments, are more likely than the general population to experience health challenges such as depression, anxiety, suicidality and minority stress. While gender transition can mitigate these challenges, the health and well-being of transgender people can be harmed by stigmatizing and discriminatory treatment.
7. An inherent limitation in the field of transgender health research is that it is difficult to conduct prospective studies or randomized control trials of treatments for gender dysphoria because of the individualized nature of treatment, the varying and unequal circumstances of population members, the small size of the known transgender population, and the ethical issues involved in withholding an effective treatment from those who need it.
8. Transgender outcomes research is still evolving and has been limited by the historical stigma against conducting research in this field. More research is needed to adequately characterize and address the needs of the transgender population.



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Search Methodology

Search Methodology for Research Analysis on the Effect of Gender Transition on Transgender Well-being:

We conducted a comprehensive literature review of all scholarly articles published in English between 1991 and June 2017 that addressed the following question: *What does the scholarly research say about the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being?*

Our research protocol was developed in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) Guidelines. We used the PICOS (Participants, Interventions, Comparisons, Outcomes, and Study Design) criteria to organize our approach to this research question:

- **Participants:** Adults who have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, who have transitioned gender, or who self-identify as transgender
- **Interventions:** Any medical service that affirms the individual's self-identified gender identity; a relevant medical service was any service, treatment, or procedure indicated for the treatment of gender dysphoria in the accepted expert *Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming Individuals* maintained by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (version 7, 2011)
- **Comparisons:** No specific comparison design was required so long as the study investigated the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being
- **Outcomes:** Assessment of a transgender individual's mental or social well-being, such as successful functioning, mental status, quality of life, or life or relationship satisfaction
- **Study Design:** Any peer-reviewed study that undertook an evaluative (quantitative or qualitative) assessment of relevant outcomes for the population of interest; we did not impose requirements regarding minimum length of follow-up or other aspects of the study design

To identify eligible studies, we began by searching PubMed using the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) "transgender persons," "transsexualism," "sex reassignment procedures," "sex reassignment surgery," and "health services for transgender persons" in conjunction with text words such as "transgender men," "transgender women," "male to female," "female to male," "quality of life," and "outcomes."

This search returned 4347 non-duplicate articles. We then performed a hand-search of journals known to address transgender issues as well as existing literature reviews on the topic of gender transition and transgender well-being. From this search, we selected additional studies that appeared to address our research question. On the basis of title reviews, we narrowed our list to 589 studies that appeared to address our research question. We then read the abstracts of those studies and further narrowed our list based on whether the studies directly assessed well-being in the context of gender transition. This process yielded 124 studies.

The final step of our search was for two reviewers to independently read the full text of each article to determine if it directly addressed our research question. We eliminated studies, for instance, that did not assess the outcomes of gender transition, that investigated minors instead of adults, and that evaluated physical rather than mental health outcomes (because we did not want to conflate assessments of specific surgical techniques, for example, with the broader question of whether gender transition improves well-being).

We identified 56 peer-reviewed studies consisting of primary research that met all the above criteria. We then classified them according to whether they found improved well-being, had mixed or null findings, or found that gender transition causes harm, and reported both the number of studies in each category, as well as eight findings that emerged from our review of the literature.

Separately from the 56 studies we evaluated, we included in our portal 16 additional articles that consist of literature reviews and practitioner guidelines that we did not count in our tally. We provide these as an added resource for researchers, practitioners, journalists, policymakers and the public with an interest in transgender care issues.

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WHAT WE KNOW



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**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Tallahassee Division**

AUGUST DEKKER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-
MAF

EXPERT REPORT OF JOHANNA OLSON-KENNEDY, M.D., M.S.

I, Johanna Olson-Kennedy, M.D., M.S., hereby declare and state as follows:

1. I have been retained by counsel for Plaintiffs as an expert in connection with the above-captioned litigation.
2. I am over the age of 18. I have actual knowledge of the matters stated herein. If called to testify in this matter, I would testify truthfully and based on my expert opinion.

BAKCGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

3. I have been retained by counsel for Plaintiffs in the above-captioned lawsuit to provide an expert opinion on gender identity; the treatment and diagnosis of gender dysphoria; the *Florida Medicaid Generally Accepted*

Professional Medical Standards (GAPMS) Determination on the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria published by Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) in June 2022, along with its attachments; and Fla. Admin. Code. R. 59G-1.050(7) which prohibits Medicaid coverage of puberty blockers, hormone and hormone antagonists, "sex reassignment" surgeries, and any other procedures that alter primary or secondary sexual characteristics.

A. Qualifications and Experience

4. I am a Double Board Certified Physician in Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. I specialize in the care of transgender youth and gender diverse children. I am a recognized expert in this field.

5. The information provided regarding my professional background, experiences, publications, and presentations is further detailed in my curriculum vitae ("CV"). A true and correct copy of my most up-to-date CV is attached as **Exhibit A.**

6. I received my Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree from the Chicago Medical School in 1997. In 2000, I completed my residency in pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Orange County, California, and from 2000 to 2003, I was a Fellow in adolescent medicine at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

7. I have been a licensed physician in California since 2000. I am currently the Medical Director of the Center for Transyouth Health and Development, in the Division of Adolescent Medicine at the Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, California. The Center is the largest clinic in the United States for transgender youth and provides gender diverse youth with both medical and mental health services, including consultation for families with gender diverse children and routine use of medications to suppress puberty in peri-pubertal youth (i.e., youth at the onset of puberty), gender-affirming hormone use for masculinization and feminization, as well as surgical referrals. Under my direction, the Center conducts rigorous research aimed at understanding the experience of gender diversity and gender dysphoria from childhood through early adulthood.

8. Over the course of my work with this population during the past 16 years, I have provided services for approximately 1000 young people and their families, and currently have an active panel of around 650 patients of varying ages, up to 25 years old.

9. I have been awarded research grants to examine the impact of early interventions including puberty-delaying medication (commonly known as puberty blockers) and gender-affirming hormones on the physiological and

psychosocial development of gender diverse and transgender youth. I have lectured extensively, across the United States and internationally on the treatment and care of gender diverse children and transgender adolescents, the subjects including pubertal suppression, gender-affirming hormone therapy, transitioning teens and the adolescent experience, age considerations in administering hormones, and the needs, risks, and outcomes of hormonal treatments. I have published numerous articles and chapters, both peer reviewed, and non-peer reviewed, on transgender health-related issues.

10. I am currently the principal investigator on a multisite National Institutes of Health grant to continue, for an additional 5 years, an ongoing study examining the impact of gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth on physiologic and psychological health and well-being. The first five years have already been completed. This is the first study of its kind in the U.S. to determine longitudinal outcomes among this population of vulnerable youth. The study to date has yielded approximately 26 manuscripts.

11. I am an Associate Professor at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California and attending physician at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. I have been a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) since 2010, and a Board Member of the U.S.

Professional Association for Transgender Health (USPATH) since 2017. I was recently appointed to the Executive Board of the USPATH. I am also a member of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition, I am a member of the LGBT Special Interest Group of the Society for Adolescent Health and Development.

12. I am the 2014 Recognition Awardee for the Southern California Regional Chapter of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

13. In 2019, I was invited by the University of Bristol as a Benjamin Meaker visiting professor, the purpose of which is to bring distinguished researchers from overseas to Bristol in order to enhance the research activity of the university.

B. Previous Testimony

14. In the last four years, I have testified as an expert at trial or by deposition in the following cases: *Fain v. Crouch*, No. 3:20-cv-00740 (S.D. W.Va.); *Kadel v. Folwell*, Case No. 1:19-cv-00272-LCB-LPA (M.D.N.C.); *Miller v. Purdue* (Colorado); *In the interest of JA.D.Y. and JU.D.Y., Children*, Case No. DF-15-09887 (255th Jud. District Ct., Dallas Cty., Tex.); and *Paul E. v. Courtney F.*, No. FC2010-051045 (Superior Ct., Maricopa Cty., Ariz.).

C. Compensation

15. I am being compensated for my work on this matter at a rate of \$200.00 per hour for preparation of declarations and expert reports, as well as any pre-deposition and/or pre-trial preparation and any deposition testimony or trial testimony. My compensation does not depend on the outcome of this litigation, the opinions I express, or the testimony I may provide.

D. Bases for Opinions

16. In preparing this report, I have relied on my training and years of research and clinical experience, as set out in my curriculum vitae, and on the materials listed therein. See **Exhibit A**. It documents my education, training, research, and years of experience in this field and includes a list of publications.

17. I have also reviewed the materials listed in the attached bibliography. See **Exhibit B**. The sources cited therein are authoritative, scientific peer-reviewed publications. I generally rely on these materials when I provide expert testimony, and they include the documents specifically cited as supportive examples in particular sections of this declaration.

18. In addition, I have reviewed the Florida Medicaid Generally Accepted Professional Medical Standards (GAPMS) Determination on the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria published by Florida's Agency for Health Care

Administration (AHCA) in June 2022, along with its attachments, including the “assessments” of Dr. Romina Brignardello-Petersen and Dr. Wojtek Wiercioch (Attachment C), Dr. James Cantor (Attachment D), Dr. Quentin Van Meter (Attachment E), Dr. Patrick Lappert (Attachment F), and Dr. G. Kevin Donovan (Attachment G) (hereinafter, “GAPMS Memo”); and Fla. Admin. Code. R. 59G-1.050(7) which prohibits Medicaid coverage of puberty blockers, hormone and hormone antagonists, “sex reassignment” surgeries, and any other procedures that alter primary or secondary sexual characteristics. I may rely on these documents, as well as those cited in my curriculum vitae and the attached bibliography, as additional support for my opinions.

19. The materials I have relied upon in preparing this report are the same types of materials that experts in my field of study regularly rely upon when forming opinions on the subject. I reserve the right to revise and supplement the opinions expressed in this report or the bases for them if any new information becomes available in the future, including as a result of new scientific research or publications or in response to statements and issues that may arise in my area of expertise.

EXPERT OPINIONS

A. Gender Identity

1. The term gender identity was originally coined in 1964 by American psychiatrist Robert J. Stoller, a noted psychoanalyst who studied sexual orientation, gender identity, and differences in sexual development.¹ Gender identity is a distinct characteristic and is defined as one's internal sense of being male or female (or rarely, both or neither). It has a strong biological basis. Every person has a gender identity.

2. The concept of gender identity is contemporaneously understood both colloquially and within the domain of science and medicine to denote someone's gender. It is a concept well-understood and accepted in medicine and science. Indeed, gender identity information is commonly collected and reported on within the context of scientific research.²

3. The term cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender refers to a person whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth.

¹ Stoller, R.J. (1964). A Contribution to the Study of Gender Identity, *The International journal of psycho-analysis*, 45, 220–226.

² Clayton JA, Tannenbaum C. (2016). Reporting Sex, Gender, or Both in Clinical Research? *JAMA*. 316(18): 1863–1864.

4. Historically, “gender” was equated with a person’s sex assigned at birth, which refers to the sex assigned to a person when they are born, generally based on external genitalia. However, a more contemporary understanding of gender shows that one’s gender identity may differ from one’s sex assigned at birth.

5. While both gender identity and sex are often assumed and treated as binary and oppositional, they are more accurately experienced as along a spectrum. For example, there are multiple sex characteristics, such as genitalia, chromosomal makeup, hormones, and variations in brain structure and function. For some of these characteristics there is significant variance as reflected by the dozens of intersex mechanisms and varying gender identities. Additionally, not all sex characteristics, including gender identity, are always in alignment. Accordingly, the Endocrine Society Guidelines state that, “As these may not be in line with each other (e.g., a person with XY chromosomes may have female-appearing genitalia), the terms biological sex and biological male or female are imprecise and should be avoided.”³

³ Hembree, W.C., Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., Gooren, L., et al. (2017). Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline, *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 102(11): 3869–3903.

6. As early as 1966 it has been understood that gender identity cannot be changed.⁴ Efforts to do so have been shown to be unsuccessful and harmful.

B. Gender Dysphoria and its Treatment

7. Gender Dysphoria (GD) is a serious medical condition characterized by distress due to a mismatch between assigned birth sex and a person's internal sense of their gender. GD was formerly categorized as Gender Identity Disorder (GID) but the condition was renamed in May 2013, with the release of the American Psychiatric Association (APA)'s fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).⁵ In announcing this change, the APA explained that in addition to the name change, the criteria for the diagnosis were revised "to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."⁶ The APA further stressed that "gender nonconformity is not in itself a mental disorder. The critical element of gender dysphoria is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition."⁷

⁴ Benjamin, H. (1966). *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. New York: The Julian Press, Inc. Publishers.

⁵ A text revision to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition was published in 2022 ("DSM-5-TR").

⁶ DSM-5.

⁷ *Id.*

8. On May 25, 2019, the World Health Assembly approved International Classification of Diseases (ICD) version 11 that had been published by the World Health Organization in 2018.⁸ In this newest version of the ICD, all trans-related diagnostic codes were removed from the chapter “Mental and Behavioral Disorders,” and the code “Gender incongruence” was included in a new chapter “Conditions related to sexual health.” These codes replaced the outdated “Gender Identity Disorder of childhood” (F64.2), “Gender Identity Disorder not otherwise specified” (F64.9), “transsexualism” (F64.0), and “Dual-role transvestism” (F64.1), which perpetuated the idea that patients seeking and undergoing medical interventions for a medical condition are mentally ill.⁹

9. For a person to be diagnosed with GD, there must be a marked difference between the individual’s expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign to the individual, present for at least six months. In children, the desire to be of the other gender must be present and verbalized.¹⁰ The

⁸ World Health Organization. (2018). Gender Incongruence. In International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision.

⁹ Suess Schwend A. (2020). Trans health care from a depathologization and human rights perspective. *Public health reviews*, 41, 3.

¹⁰ Notably, the DSM-IV included a separate diagnosis for GID in children, which required the child to display a number of behaviors stereotypical of the non-natal gender. That diagnosis, and its list of behavioral requirements, have been deleted from the DSM-5 and replaced by updated and more precise diagnostic criteria.

condition must cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

10. The World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) has clear recommendations for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming people in what is now the Standards of Care version 8 (SOC 8).¹¹ The SOC are based on the best available science and expert professional consensus. Importantly, SOC 8 is based on the best available science and expert professional consensus in transgender health; its recommendation statements were developed based on data derived from independent systematic literature reviews, background reviews, and expert opinions; and its grading of recommendations was based on the available evidence supporting interventions, a discussion of risks and harms, as well as the feasibility and acceptability of these. SOC 8 continues to recommend the provision of medical interventions, such as puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and surgery, as treatment for gender dysphoria, based on an individual patient's needs.

11. The WPATH SOC have been endorsed and cited as authoritative by most major medical associations in the United States, including the American

¹¹ Coleman, et al. (2022) (SOC 8).

Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the Endocrine Society, the Pediatric Endocrine Society, the American College of Physicians, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, among others.

12. The UCSF Center for Excellence in Transgender Care as well as the Endocrine Society have both published comprehensive guidelines for the care of transgender and non-binary individuals that are largely consistent with the WPATH SOC.¹²

13. The GAPMS Memo and some its attached “assessments” discuss a number of approaches to care, though they fail to properly describe them and to discuss their limitations.

14. One of the approaches discussed by Dr. Van Meter is **“reparative” or “corrective”** therapy. See Attachment E to GAPMS Memo, at 6 (“Van Meter”). “Conversion” or “reparative” therapy refers to the practice of attempting to change an individual’s sexual orientation and attractions from members of the same sex to those of the opposite sex. A similar model of therapy

¹² Deutsch, M.B. (ed.). (2016). Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People (2d ed.). San Francisco, CA: UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, <https://transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines> (UCSF Guidelines); Hembree, et al. (2017) (Endocrine Society Guidelines).

for individuals with a transgender identity or experience has historically been an approach promoted by some individuals, notwithstanding its ineffectiveness and harmful effects. Accordingly, 20 states and the District of Columbia have banned reparative therapy for youth, and major medical organizations have issued statements deeming the practice to be unethical.¹³

15. A Williams Institute report published in 2019 estimates that just under 700,000 LGBT individuals in the United States have undergone “conversion therapy” at some point in their lifetime, about half of those during adolescence.¹⁴ Because some psychiatrists and sexologists working in the 1960’s and 70’s perpetuated the idea that being transgender was likely the result of a pathological early childhood experience, many professionals and lay community members continue to believe that gender is malleable. Tactics have ranged from simple redirection, thought pattern alteration or hypnosis to aversion techniques including induction of vomiting, nausea, paralysis or electric shock, have been employed in order to change the expression, behavior, and assertion of one’s

¹³ Movement Advancement Proj., *Conversion “Therapy” Laws*, https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy (last updated Jan. 30, 2023).

¹⁴ Mallory, C., Brown, T. N.T., Conron, K.J. (2019). *Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth: Update*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

authentic gender.¹⁵ However, multiple studies show that gender identity has a strong biological basis and cannot be changed. As such, reparative therapy is both ineffective and harmful for transgender and gender diverse youth.

16. **“Redirection”** – Under this approach, advocated by people like Dr. Van Meter, a mental health therapist would encourage caregivers to use positive reinforcement to try to “redirect” children toward behavior that is more typical of their birth-designated sex or less gender specific. Underlying this approach is the assumption that a child’s gender identity is malleable through social interventions. The goal of redirection is thus to eliminate gender-diverse desires and expressions over time, and to try to prevent the transgender child from being transgender. This approach is not recommended because negative reinforcement (e.g., shaming the child for gender diverse expression) has substantial negative mental and social health consequences.¹⁶ It also ignores that gender identity is innate and cannot be changed.

17. **Wait-and-see** – The wait-and-see approach (also called watchful waiting) involves waiting to see if the child’s gender identity will change as the

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Turban, J.L., & Ehrensaft, D. (2018). Research Review: Gender identity in youth: treatment paradigms and controversies. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, and allied disciplines*, 59(12), 1228–1243; Ehrensaft, D. (2017). Gender nonconforming youth: current perspectives. *Adolescent health, medicine and therapeutics*, 8, 57–67.

child gets older. This approach typically recommends that caregivers prohibit a prepubertal social transition but may allow cross-gender play and clothing within the home or support both masculine and feminine activities as the child explores their interests in other social settings. The wait-and-see approach assumes that gender is binary and becomes fixed at a certain age; it pathologizes gender diversity and fluidity. It is distinguished from following the child's lead, an affirming approach that allows the child to present in the gender role that feels correct and moves at a pace that is largely directed by the child. This approach ignores evidence that young children thrive when given permission to live in the gender that is most authentic to them and are at risk for symptomatic behaviors if prevented from doing so.¹⁷

18. **Affirmation** – The affirmative approach considers no gender identity outcome: transgender, cisgender, or otherwise, to be preferable.¹⁸ It permits a child to explore gender development and self-definition within a safe setting. A fundamental concept of this approach is that gender diversity is not a mental illness. The gender-affirmative model is defined as a method of therapeutic care that includes allowing children to speak for themselves about

¹⁷ Ehrensaft (2017).

¹⁸ Turban and Ehrensaft (2018).

their self-experienced gender identity and expressions and providing support for them to evolve into their authentic gender selves, no matter at what age. Under this model, a child's self-report is embedded within a collaborative model with the child as subject and the collaborative team including the child, parents, and professionals. Support is not characterized by "encouraging" children or youth to be transgender or not, but rather by allowing children who express a desire to undergo a social transition (which may include changing names, pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, etc.) to do so. **For children who have not yet reached puberty, medical intervention is unnecessary and unwarranted.** After the onset of puberty, medical interventions such as puberty blockers, and later hormones and surgery, may be appropriate.

19. While some argue that gender affirmation leads a child or adolescent down a path of inevitable transgender identity, no such evidence exists, either in the scientific or the clinical setting. To the contrary, studies show that gender identification does not meaningfully differ before and after social transition.¹⁹

¹⁹ Rae, J. R., Gülgöz, S., Durwood, L., DeMeules, M., Lowe, R., Lindquist, G., & Olson, K. R. (2019). Predicting early-childhood gender transitions. *Psychological Science*, 30(5), 669-681.

20. Under both the “wait and see” and affirmative care models, as understood in the scientific literature, medical care is recommended following the onset of puberty.²⁰

21. The most effective treatment for adolescents and adults with GD, in terms of both their mental and medical health, contemplates an individualized approach. Medical and surgical treatment interventions are determined by the care team (usually a medical and mental health professional) in collaboration with the patient, and the patient’s family, if the patient is a minor. These medical decisions are made by the care team in conjunction with the patient and, if the patient is a minor, the patient’s family, and consider the patient’s social situation, level of gender dysphoria, developmental stage, existing medical conditions, and other relevant factors. Sometimes treatment begins with puberty delaying medications (also referred to as puberty blockers), later followed by gender-affirming hormones. Most youth, and certainly all adults, accessing treatment are already well into or have completed puberty.

²⁰ Ehrensaft (2017).

1) Puberty Blockers

22. The beginning signs of puberty in transgender youth (the development of breast buds in assigned birth females and increased testicular volume in assigned birth males) is often a painful and sometimes traumatic experience that brings increased body dysphoria and the potential development of a host of comorbidities including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-harming behaviors, social isolation, high-risk sexual behaviors, and increased suicidality.

23. Puberty suppression, which involves the administration of gonadotrophin-releasing hormone analogues (GnRHa), essentially pauses puberty, thereby allowing the young person the opportunity to explore gender without having to experience the anxiety and distress associated with developing the undesired secondary sexual characteristics. In addition, for parents/guardians who are uneducated about gender diversity and/or who have only recently become aware of their child's transgender identity, puberty blockers provide additional time and opportunity to integrate this new information into their own experience and to develop skills to support their child. Puberty suppression also has the benefit of potentially rendering obsolete some gender-affirming surgeries down the line, such as male chest reconstruction, tracheal shave, facial

feminization, and vocal cord alteration, which otherwise would be required to correct the initial “incorrect” puberty.

24. Puberty suppression has been used safely for decades in children with other medical conditions, including precocious puberty, and is a reversible intervention.²¹ If the medication is discontinued, the young person continues their endogenous puberty. The “Dutch protocol,” developed from a study conducted in the Netherlands and published in 2006, calls for the commencement of puberty blockers for appropriately diagnosed and assessed gender dysphoric youth as early as 12 years of age.²² Both the Endocrine Society and the WPATH’s SOC, however, recommend initiation of puberty suppression at the earliest stages of puberty (usually, Tanner 2) (assuming someone has engaged in services before or around this time), regardless of chronological age, in order to avoid the stress and trauma associated with developing secondary sex characteristics of the natal sex.

²¹ Mul, D. & Hughes, I. (2008). The use of GnRH agonists in precocious puberty. *European journal of endocrinology / European Federation of Endocrine Societies*. 159 Suppl 1. S3-8.

²² de Vries, A.L.C., McGuire, J. K., Steensma, T. D., Wagenaar, E. C. F., Doreleijers, T. A. H., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2014). Young Adult Psychological Outcome After Puberty Suppression and Gender Reassignment. *Pediatrics*, 134(4), 696-704; Biggs M. (2022). The Dutch Protocol for Juvenile Transsexuals: Origins and Evidence. *Journal of sex & marital therapy*, 1–21.

25. A growing body of evidence, including peer-reviewed cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, demonstrates the positive impact of pubertal suppression in youth with GD on psychological functioning including a decrease in behavioral and emotional problems, a decrease in depressive symptoms, and improvement in general functioning.²³

26. The initial follow-up studies evaluating the use of puberty suppression in relation to psychological well-being in adolescents with GD came from the Netherlands and demonstrated that behavioral and emotional problems and depressive symptoms decreased and general functioning significantly improved during treatment.²⁴

²³ See for example: de Vries, A.L., Steensma, T.D., Doreleijers, T.A., & Cohen-Kettenis, P.T. (2011). Puberty Suppression in Adolescents with Gender Identity Disorder: A Prospective Follow-Up Study. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 8(8), 2276-2283; Turban, J.L., King, D., Carswell, J.M., & Keuroghlian, A.S. (2020). Pubertal Suppression for Transgender Youth and Risk of Suicidal Ideation. *Pediatrics*, 145(2):e20191725; van der Miesen, A.I., Steensma, T.D., de Vries, A.L., *et al.* (2020). Psychological Functioning in Transgender Adolescents Before and After Gender-Affirmative Care Compared with Cisgender General Population Peers. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 66(6), 699-704; Achille, C., Taggart, T., Eaton, N.R., *et al.* (2020). Longitudinal Impact of Gender-Affirming Endocrine Intervention on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Transgender Youths: Preliminary Results. *International Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology*, 2020(8), 1-5; and Costa, R., Dunsford, M., Skagerberg, E., Holt, V., Carmichael, P., & Colizzi, M. (2015). Psychological Support, Puberty Suppression, and Psychosocial Functioning in Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. *The journal of sexual medicine*, 12(11), 2206–2214..

²⁴ de Vries, *et al.* (2011); de Vries, *et al.* (2014).

27. A study from the United Kingdom demonstrated that psychological support and puberty suppression were associated with improved global psychosocial functioning in adolescents with gender dysphoria with a combination of psychological support and puberty suppression, attributing to a greater improvement than psychological support only.²⁵

28. A more recent cross-sectional study from the Dutch team demonstrated that transgender youth undergoing pubertal suppression had better psychological functioning than those youth who had not yet begun puberty blockade.²⁶

29. Achille et al. demonstrated a positive effect of puberty blockade on mental health in a small, prospective investigation. The study characterized a treatment cohort over progressive interventions moving from puberty blockade to GAH treatment.²⁷

30. Overall, this growing body of evidence is consistent with and supports clinical experience demonstrating a significant positive effect of puberty blockade in youth with gender dysphoria.

²⁵ Costa, et al. (2015).

²⁶ Van der Miesen, et al. (2020).

²⁷ Achille, et al. (2020).

31. Puberty blockers, thus, afford youth the opportunity to undergo a single, congruent pubertal process and avoid many of the surgical interventions previously necessary for assimilation into an authentic gender role. It is a simple reversible intervention that has the capacity to improve health outcomes and save lives. Over the course of my work in the past sixteen years with gender diverse and transgender youth, I have prescribed hormone suppression for over 350 patients. All of those patients have benefitted from putting their endogenous puberty process on pause, even the small handful who discontinued GnRH analogues and went through their endogenous puberty. Many of these young people were able to matriculate back into school environments, begin appropriate peer relationships, and participate meaningfully in therapy and family functions. Children who had contemplated or attempted suicide or self-harm (including cutting and burning) associated with monthly menstruation or the anxiety about their voice dropping were offered respite from those dark places of despair. GnRH analogues for puberty suppression are, in my opinion, a sentinel event in the history of transgender medicine, and have changed the landscape almost as much as the development of synthetic hormones.

2) Gender-Affirming Hormones

32. Cross-gender or gender-affirming hormone therapy involves administering steroids of the experienced sex (i.e., their gender identity) (estrogen for transfeminine individuals and testosterone for transmasculine individuals). The purpose of this treatment is to attain the appropriate masculinization or feminization of the transgender person to achieve a gender phenotype that matches as closely as possible to their gender identity. Gender-affirming hormone therapy is a partially reversible treatment in that some of the effects produced by the hormones are reversible (e.g., changes in body fat composition, decrease in facial and body hair) while others are irreversible (e.g., deepening of the voice, breast tissue development). Eligibility and medical necessity should be determined case-by-case, based on an assessment of the youth's unique cognitive and emotional maturation and ability to provide a knowing and informed consent. The decision would be made only after a careful review with the youth and parents/guardians of the potential risks and benefits of hormone therapy. The youth's primary care provider, therapist, or another experienced mental health professional can help document and confirm the patient's history of GD, the medical necessity of the intervention, and the youth's readiness to transition medically.

33. As with the use of puberty blockers, the data demonstrating the positive effects of gender affirming hormones (GAH) is well established and growing.

34. The Dutch team at The Center of Expertise on Gender Dysphoria at the VU University Medical Center Amsterdam continued to report out the improvement within their cohort of youth with gender dysphoria after GAH. De Vries et al reported in 2014 that their cohort of young adults who began care in adolescence had steadily improving mental health (including depression, anxiety, anger, internalizing and externalizing psychopathologic symptoms) following puberty blockade, GAH and gender affirming surgery.²⁸

35. A German observational study reported that among the participants at follow-up, adolescents in the gender-affirming hormone (GAH) and surgery (GAS) group reported emotional and behavioral problems and physical quality of life scores similar to the German norm mean.²⁹

²⁸ de Vries, et al. (2014).

²⁹ Becker-Hebly, I., Fahrenkrug, S., Campion, F., Richter-Appelt, H., Schulte-Markwort, M., & Barkmann, C. (2021). Psychosocial health in adolescents and young adults with gender dysphoria before and after gender-affirming medical interventions: A descriptive study from the Hamburg Gender Identity Service. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(11), 1755–1767.

36. Also from Germany, Neider et al. reported that among a group of 75 adolescents with gender dysphoria satisfaction improved the further along the treatment course had progressed.³⁰

37. From the United States, Kuper et al. carried out a prospective study and reported their cohort of transgender and non-binary youth starting either pubertal blockade or GAH demonstrated improvement at follow up (around a year) in depression, anxiety and body esteem.³¹

38. While small, Grannis et al. demonstrated decreased depression and anxiety in a group of transmasculine youth taking testosterone versus an untreated control group.³²

39. Most recently our team at the Trans Youth Care United States (TYC-US) reported in the New England Journal of Medicine an improvement among

³⁰ Nieder, T. O., Mayer, T. K., Hinz, S., Fahrenkrug, S., Herrmann, L., & Becker-Hebly, I. (2021). Individual treatment progress predicts satisfaction with transition-related care for youth with gender dysphoria: A prospective clinical cohort study. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 18(3), 632–645.

³¹ Kuper, L. E., Stewart, S., Preston, S., Lau, M., & Lopez, X. (2020). Body dissatisfaction and mental health outcomes of youth on gender-affirming hormone therapy. *Pediatrics*, 145(4).

³² Grannis, C., Leibowitz, S. F., Gahn, S., Nahata, L., Morningstar, M., Mattson, W. I., Chen, D., Strang, J. F., & Nelson, E. E. (2021). Testosterone treatment, internalizing symptoms, and body image dissatisfaction in transgender boys. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 132, 105358, 1-8.

315 youth in positive affect and life satisfaction as well as a decrease in depressive and anxiety symptoms after two years of GAH.³³

40. The data documenting the efficacy of hormone treatment in transgender adults is as robust and goes back even further. Numerous longitudinal studies document improvement in various mental health parameters including depression, anxiety, self-confidence, body image and self-image, general psychological functioning.³⁴

³³ Chen D, Berona J, Chan YM, Ehrensaft D, Garofalo R, Hidalgo MA, Rosenthal SM, Tishelman AC, Olson-Kennedy J. (2023). Psychosocial Functioning in Transgender Youth after 2 Years of Hormones. *New England Journal of Med.* 2023 Jan 19;388(3):240-250.

³⁴ See for example: Colizzi, M., et al. (2014). Transsexual patients' psychiatric comorbidity and positive effect of cross-sex hormonal treatment on mental health: results from a longitudinal study. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 39, 65–73; Colizzi, M., et al. (2013). Hormonal treatment reduces psychobiological distress in gender identity disorder, independently of the attachment style. *The journal of sexual medicine*, 10(12), 3049–3058; Corda, E., et al. (2016). Body image and gender role perceived in gender dysphoria: Cross-sex hormone therapy effects. *European Psychiatry*, 33(S1), S589-S589; Fisher, A. D., et al. (2016). Cross-Sex Hormone Treatment and Psychobiological Changes in Transsexual Persons: Two-Year Follow-Up Data. *The Journal of clinical endocrinology and metabolism*, 101(11), 4260–4269; Heylens, G., et al. (2014). Effects of different steps in gender reassignment therapy on psychopathology: a prospective study of persons with a gender identity disorder. *The journal of sexual medicine*, 11(1), 119–126; Keo-Meier, C. L., et al. (2015). Testosterone treatment and MMPI-2 improvement in transgender men: a prospective controlled study. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 83(1), 143–156; Manieri, C., et al. (2014) Medical Treatment of Subjects with Gender Identity Disorder: The Experience in an Italian Public Health Center, *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 15:2, 53-65; Motta, G., et al. (2018). Does Testosterone Treatment Increase Anger Expression in a Population of Transgender Men?. *The journal of sexual medicine*, 15(1), 94–101; Oda, H., & Kinoshita, T. (2017). Efficacy of hormonal and mental treatments with MMPI in FtM individuals: cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. *BMC psychiatry*, 17(1), 256; and Turan, Ş., et al. (2018). Alterations in Body Uneasiness, Eating Attitudes, and Psychopathology Before and After Cross-Sex Hormonal Treatment in Patients with Female-to-Male Gender Dysphoria. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 47(8), 2349–2361.

41. An established and growing body of evidence combined with decades of clinical evidence demonstrate the positive effect of gender affirming hormones in adolescents and adults with gender dysphoria.

3) Gender-Affirming Surgeries

42. Some transgender individuals need surgical interventions to help bring their phenotype into alignment with their gender. Surgical interventions may include vaginoplasty, tracheal shave, liposuction, breast implants, and orchiectomy for transfeminine individuals and chest reconstruction, hysterectomy, oophorectomy, salpingectomy, construction of a neoscrotum, and metoidioplasty or phalloplasty for transmasculine individuals.

43. The current WPATH SOC recommend that surgical interventions may occur when appropriate for an individual.

44. Decades of research confirms that gender confirmation surgery is therapeutic and therefore an effective treatment for gender dysphoria.³⁵ In a 1998

³⁵ See, e.g., Almazan, A. N., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2021). Association Between Gender-Affirming Surgeries and Mental Health Outcomes. *JAMA surgery*, 156(7), 611–618; Almazan, et al. (2021); Murad, M. H., et al. (2010). Hormonal therapy and sex reassignment: A systematic review and meta-analysis of quality of life and psychosocial outcomes. *Clinical Endocrinology*, 72(2), 214-231; Smith, Y., et al. (2005). Sex reassignment: Outcomes and predictors of treatment for adolescent and adult transsexuals. *Psychological Medicine* 35(1): 89-99; and Pfafflin, F., & Junge, A. (1998). Sex reassignment: Thirty years of international follow-up studies after sex reassignment surgery, a comprehensive review, 1961-1991.

meta-analysis, Pfafflin and Junge reviewed data from 80 studies, from 12 countries, spanning 30 years. They concluded that “reassignment procedures were effective in relieving gender dysphoria. There were few negative consequences and all aspects of the reassignment process contributed to overwhelmingly positive outcomes.”³⁶

45. Subsequent studies confirm this conclusion. Researchers reporting on a large-scale prospective study of 325 individuals in the Netherlands concluded that after surgery there was “a virtual absence of gender dysphoria” in the cohort and “results substantiate previous conclusions that sex reassignment is effective.”³⁷ The authors of the study concluded that the surgery “appeared therapeutic and beneficial” across a wide spectrum of factors and “[t]he main symptom for which the patients had requested treatment, gender dysphoria, had decreased to such a degree that it had disappeared.” Similarly, a recent systematic review that included data from 1,052 transmasculine patients who obtained chest surgery found that pooled overall postoperative satisfaction was 92%.³⁸

³⁶ Pfafflin & Junge (1998).

³⁷ Smith, et al. (2005).

³⁸ Bustos, V. P., Bustos, S. S., Mascaro, A., Del Corral, G., Forte, A. J., Ciudad, P., Kim, E. A., Langstein, H. N., & Manrique, O. J. (2021). Regret after Gender-affirmation Surgery: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Prevalence. *Plastic and reconstructive surgery. Global open*, 9(3), e3477.

46. With regards to transgender adolescents, peer-reviewed research has also shown improvements in mental health following gender-affirming chest surgery for transgender males with gender dysphoria where medically indicated.³⁹

* * *

47. Recognizing the importance of individualized care, the SOC 8 has this to say about all gender affirming interventions: “The SOC-8 guidelines are intended to be flexible to meet the diverse health care needs of TGD people globally. While adaptable, they offer standards for promoting optimal health care and for guiding treatment of people experiencing gender incongruence. As in all previous versions of the SOC, the criteria put forth in this document for gender-affirming interventions are clinical guidelines; individual health care professionals and programs may modify them in consultation with the TGD person. Clinical departures from the SOC may come about because of a patient’s unique anatomic, social, or psychological situation; an experienced health care professional’s evolving method of handling a common situation; a research

³⁹ Mehringer, J. E., et al. (2021). Experience of Chest Dysphoria and Masculinizing Chest Surgery in Transmasculine Youth. *Pediatrics*, 147(3), e2020013300; Olson-Kennedy, J., et al. (2018). Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Minors and Young Adults: Comparisons of Nonsurgical and Postsurgical Cohorts. *JAMA pediatrics*, 172(5), 431–436.

protocol; lack of resources in various parts of the world; or the need for specific harm-reduction strategies. These departures should be recognized as such, explained to the patient, and documented for quality patient care and legal protection.”

48. Gender-affirming medical interventions are considered medically necessary and are recognized as such by many major professional organizations. The denial of this care results in negative health consequences.

49. There are those (see GAPMS Memo at 12-13) who would make the argument that the recent uptick in youth presenting for services related to GD is the result of “social contagion.” But if social contagion theory applied to gender and gender identity, there would be zero transgender people, because of the consistent exposure to an overwhelming majority of cisgender people. The social contagion argument that is posited by some confuses the relationship between one’s recognition of their gender and their exposure to gender related information and community, particularly with regard to internet activity, asserting that youth are declaring themselves to be transgender or gender diverse because they were exposed to this online, or they have multiple friends who are also experiencing GD. Adolescent development includes finding like groups of peers, which extends to finding friend groups who are also gender diverse. Finally, attributing

GD to “social contagion” is a simplistic perspective that discounts that the process of doing something about one’s gender dysphoria is complex and difficult and involves parental consent for minors.

50. There is no scientific evidence that one develops gender dysphoria from being exposed to people with GD. To the contrary, most evidence shows that gender identity has a biological basis⁴⁰ and is affixed by early childhood.⁴¹

C. Critiques of the GAPMS Memo and the Attached “Assessments”

51. The GAPMS Memo and the attached assessments contain a number of inaccurate assertions or misrepresentations, in addition to those noted above.

Misunderstandings and Misrepresentations of Desistance

52. The GAPMS Memo falsely states that “the majority of young adolescents who exhibit signs of gender dysphoria eventually desist and conform to their natal sex and that the puberty suppression can have side effects.” (GAPMS Memo at 14). This is a blatant misrepresentation of the scientific literature. The studies pertaining to desistance upon which the GAPMS Memo

⁴⁰ Korpaisarn, S., & Safer, J. D. (2019). Etiology of Gender Identity. *Endocrinology and metabolism clinics of North America*, 48(2), 323–329. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecl.2019.01.002>; Saraswat, A., Weinand, J.D., & Safer, J. (2015). Evidence supporting the biologic nature of gender identity. *Endocrine practice*, 21 2, 199-204.

⁴¹ Slaby, R., Frey, K. (1975). Development of Gender Constancy and Selective Attention to Same Sex Models, *Child Development*, 46(4): 849-856.

relies pertain to *pre-pubertal* youth, not adolescents. In fact, contrary to the GAPMS Memo’s assertion, studies show that if gender dysphoria is present in adolescence, it usually persists.⁴²

53. To be sure, there are a significant number of *pre-pubertal* children who demonstrate an interest or preference for clothing, toys, and games that are stereotypically of interest to members of the “other” gender. Some of these children are transgender and some are not. It is the study of such *pre-pubertal* children that has created confusion about the persistence of gender dysphoria into adolescence and adulthood. Specifically, the *pre-pubertal* children who were the subject of research endeavors in the late 20th century included both children who are transgender and children who are not, i.e., those who would have met current criteria for a diagnosis of “Gender Dysphoria in Children” and those who would be considered “sub-threshold” for this diagnosis.

54. At the time of these studies, the diagnosis of “Gender Dysphoria in Children” did not exist and therefore the study subjects did not need to meet criteria B, which is “the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition.” In addition, the criteria for the then-used “gender identity disorder

⁴² de Vries, et al. (2011).

in children” diagnosis did not require a child to have “a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one’s assigned gender),” which the current “Gender Dysphoria in Children” diagnosis requires.

55. Thus, given the broader criteria used at the time, it is unsurprising that some of the research undertaken toward the end of the 20th century demonstrated that most children who exhibited gender-nonconforming behavior did not go on to have a transgender identity in adolescence. Yet, notwithstanding its inapplicability and faulty underpinnings, this “evidence” has been used to argue against gender affirmation for children and adolescents.

56. What is more, these arguments about desistance in *pre-pubertal* children are wholly irrelevant to the question of coverage and provision of medical care as treatment for GD. That is because research to date shows that if transgender identification persists into adolescence, then desistance is incredibly rare, and no medical or surgical treatments are recommended for *pre-pubertal* children.

57. Additionally, no studies have ever demonstrated that gender affirmation in childhood “leads to” a child being transgender who otherwise might not have been. Studies have demonstrated that the majority of youth whose

GD and cross-gender identity continue to be present, or those whose GD emerges in adolescence, are highly unlikely to identify and live as cisgender individuals. Youth with GD, particularly those who are unaffirmed and denied care, are at high risk for depression, anxiety, isolation, self-harm and suicidality at the onset of puberty-related changes that feel wrong to them.

The Myth of Social Contagion and Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD)

58. The GAPMS memo asserts that gender-affirming care should not be provided because the causes of GD are uncertain. It suggests that “exposure to ‘social and peer contagion’” accounts for the rise in numbers of adolescents who identify as transgender, pointing to research that has identified so-called “rapid-onset gender dysphoria” (ROGD). (GAPMS Memo at 12-13; see also Cantor ¶¶ 48-49). However, ROGD is not a diagnosis recognized by any medical or scientific institution, and there is no scientific evidence in support of it.

59. The concept of ROGD originated from a single article authored by Lisa Littman, a researcher who had no experience in the field of gender medicine, transgender issues, or gender dysphoria, prior to the publication of her article.⁴³

⁴³ Littman L. (2018). Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PloS one*, 13(8), e0202330.

60. Littman’s article was heavily criticized for its flawed methodology, potential for bias, and overrepresentation of its findings.⁴⁴ For example, Littman’s study was based solely on “parent observations and interpretations.” But parental reports are not necessarily a reliable basis for understanding a particular youth’s experience with their gender, let alone whether the youth has gender dysphoria.⁴⁵ Moreover, most of the parents who participated in the study were recruited from websites targeted to parents likely to question their child’s gender self-identification and the current best health care approaches. In addition, the study also failed to collect data from the adolescents and young adults (AYAs) or clinicians, which would have been necessary in order to come up with and validate ROGD as a new phenomenon.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Brandelli Costa, A. (2019) Formal comment on: Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. PLoS ONE 14(3): e0212578; Restar A. J. (2020). Methodological Critique of Littman's (2018) Parental-Respondents Accounts of “Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria”. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 49(1), 61–66.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Kennedy, N. (2022) Deferral: the sociology of young trans people’s epiphanies and coming out. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 19:1, 53-75; Brandelli Costa (2019).

61. Following the numerous critiques of the Littman study, the journal that published the study retracted it, ordered a post-publication review, and republished the article with a correction notice,⁴⁶ along with an apology.⁴⁷

62. The correction notice acknowledged, among other things, that:⁴⁸

- a. “there is some information about the AYAs that the parents would not have access to and the answers might reflect parent perspectives” and that “consideration of what information parents may or may not have access to is an important element of the findings”;
- b. “the study’s output was hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing”;
- c. “three of the sites that posted recruitment information expressed cautious or negative views about medical and surgical interventions for gender dysphoric adolescents and young adults

⁴⁶ Littman L. (2019) Correction: Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLoS ONE*, 14(3): e0214157.

⁴⁷ Heber, J. Correcting the scientific record on gender incongruence – and an apology, *PLoS ONE* (Mar. 19, 2019), <https://everyone.plos.org/2019/03/19/correcting-the-scientific-record-and-anapology/>.

⁴⁸ Littman (2019).

and cautious or negative views about categorizing gender dysphoric youth as transgender”; and

- d. “There is expected variation in how objective parents can be about their own children” and that the “descriptive study was not designed to explore or measure the objectivity of participants.”

63. Thus, the correction notice ultimately acknowledged that the study “does not validate the phenomenon” of ROGD and that the term ROGD “should not be used in a way to imply that it explains the experiences of all gender dysphoric youth nor should it be used to stigmatize vulnerable individuals.”⁴⁹ In the end, aside from the correction notice, the journal that published the study issued an apology “for oversights that occurred during the original assessment of the study.”⁵⁰

64. To date, no study has been published that validates or proves the hypothesis of ROGD presented by the Littman study. Indeed, Lisa Littman herself said at the GenSpect 2021 Conference that ROGD was not a new phenomenon, but rather a re-naming of late onset GD.

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ Heber (2019).

65. The GAPMS Memo, Dr. Cantor, and Dr. Van Meter incorrectly allege that an increase in numbers of youth presenting for care related to GD provides support for the social contagion theory. (See GAPMS Memo at 12-13; Van Meter at 9-10). For one, varying estimates of prevalence are the result of inconsistent measures of transgender populations. Some studies have assessed the fraction of a population which had received the DSM-IV diagnosis of GID or the ICD 10 diagnosis of transsexualism, both of which were limited to clinical populations who sought a binary transition (male-to-female or female-to-male). For example, the prevalence reported in DSM-5 (0.005–0.014% for birth-assigned males; 0.002–0.003% for birth-assigned females) are based on people who received a diagnosis of GID or transsexualism and were seeking hormone treatment and surgery from gender specialty clinics, and, therefore, do not reflect the number of all individuals with gender dysphoria or who identify as transgender.⁵¹ Other studies have reported on those who self-identified as transgender or gender incongruent and found that measuring self-identity yields much higher numbers. In 2016, data from the Center for Disease Control’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System suggested that 0.6% of U.S. adults

⁵¹ Coleman, et al. (2022).

identify as transgender, double the estimate utilizing data from the previous decade.⁵² Ultimately, there is nothing surprising about the fact that more transgender people have begun identifying themselves to others as societal stigma has started to abate, and nothing about that lends support to the “social contagion” theory.

Dr. Cantor’s False Assertion of Transition-on-Demand

66. In his “assessment,” Dr. Cantor, a psychologist with no clinical experience in treating gender dysphoria in minors and no experience monitoring patients receiving drug treatments for gender dysphoria, states that “transition-on-demand” increases the probability of unnecessary transition and unnecessary medical risks. (Cantor ¶ 21).

67. His claim is wholly divorced from the reality of care for transgender people. First, like all health care, gender-affirming care for every transgender person is individualized. There simply is no one specific route.

68. Second, Dr. Cantor inaccurately assumes that every transgender person wants and receives rapid access to services. For most transgender individuals seeking care, nothing about their process has been rapid, even when

⁵² Byne, W., Karasic, D. H., Coleman, E., Eyler, A. E., Kidd, J. D., Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. L., ... Pula, J. (2018). Gender dysphoria in adults: An overview and primer for psychiatrists. *Transgender Health*, 3(1), 57-70.

they are young. Most individuals with gender dysphoria have engaged in a long, arduous and private process of understanding their gender to be different from the one assumed at birth. Dr. Cantor gives no credibility to transgender patients regarding their right to bodily autonomy nor their capacity to make sound and informed decisions.

69. Finally, Dr. Cantor is wrong to assert that affirmation “increases the probability of unnecessary transition and unnecessary medical risks.” (Cantor ¶ 21). There is no evidence to support the notion that affirmation of gender in pre-pubertal children, or at any age, leads to transition. Medical interventions are not recommended and are not appropriate for pre-pubertal children. If one’s gender could be impacted by the role of rearing, there would be few transgender people who transition in adulthood, as most were reared in the gender role that corresponded with their sex assigned at birth. It is not logical to think that while we have been epically failing at convincing transgender people to be cisgender, we would be able to make someone who is cisgender into someone who is transgender, a directionality that may correspond with higher rates of discrimination, harassment, and even violence. There is no data to support any such notion that children who are socially transitioned in a pre-pubertal time

period who then go on to embrace their assumed gender at birth are damaged. I know several such young people who are healthy and happy.

The Quality of the Evidence and Lack of Randomized Controlled Trials

70. The care of transgender individuals has a long history. As with all medical care, there is a range of quality in the existing data regarding the treatment of gender dysphoria,⁵³ and there is certainly a need for additional studies of a longitudinal nature. But again, that is true with most medical care.

71. Between 1963 and 1979, over 20 university-based gender identity clinics opened in the United States.⁵⁴ These clinics provided interdisciplinary care that included psychiatrists and other mental health professionals and played an important role in the provision of medical services to transgender people and in promoting research to improve their care. The majority of these clinics closed following a 1981 decision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that labeled sex reassignment surgery as experimental, in large part due to advocacy by Dr. Paul McHugh.⁵⁵ That decision was overturned by HHS in 2014 in a determination that concluded that the 1981 decision was “not

⁵³ See Deutsch (ed.) (2016) (UCSF Guidelines).

⁵⁴ Byne, et al. (2018).

⁵⁵ In this way, Dr. McHugh actively attempted to suppress the research that he complains is lacking in this field of care.

reasonable” and found that gender-affirming surgery is “a safe and effective treatment option.”⁵⁶

72. Over the last four decades: research has continued to occur in the United States and internationally; WPATH (formerly the Henry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association) published the first iteration of the Standards of Care in 1979, which is now in its 8th version; the DSM and ICD stopped classifying transgender identification as a mental disorder; the American Psychological Association and Endocrine Society, as well as other medical organizations, adopted clinical guidelines consistent with the WPATH Standards of Care; and dozens of interdisciplinary gender clinics associated with research institutions and teaching hospitals have been providing gender-affirming care for transgender youth and adults across the United States.

73. Drs. Brignardello-Petersen and Wiercioch repeatedly refer to an apparent lack of data comparing treated vs. untreated individuals with gender dysphoria. Their report continually places emphasis on data that they rated as “low certainty” based on GRADE criteria. These observations about the data do not mean that gender-affirming care is experimental or investigational.

⁵⁶ U.S. Dep’t Health & Hum. Servs., NCD 140.3, Transsexual Surgery 18, 21 (2014); Byne, et al. (2018).

74. One of the intrinsic elements of rating the quality of evidence is the study design. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are considered the highest quality in the grading of evidence. Many of the research studies on gender-affirming care get a “low quality” grade due to the lack of RCTs.

75. But it is well-established that utilizing an untreated control group is unethical in this context – gender-affirming medical interventions have been used for decades, resulting in a vast amount of clinical knowledge about their efficacy. That said, we have a large de facto group of untreated individuals with gender dysphoria who experience significant psychiatric symptoms because of widespread barriers to access to care.

76. Clinicians who are competent in the care of transgender individuals practice according to a “first do no harm” ethic which understands that doing nothing is not a neutral option for those with gender dysphoria. Multiple studies have demonstrated the safety of gender-affirming hormones, and a growing body

of evidence does the same with regards to the safety of GnRH analogues.⁵⁷ The same is true with regards to surgery.⁵⁸

77. In addition, RCTs are ill-suited to studying the effects of gender-affirming interventions on psychological wellbeing and quality of life of trans people. Adequate masking, adherence, and generalizability are severely impeded in transgender care, thereby negating the superior scientific value of RCTs.

78. Gender-affirming interventions have physiologically evident effects, making it impossible to mask RCTs. The purpose of puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and transition-related surgeries is to inhibit or produce visible bodily changes.

79. In an RCT, adolescents who are on puberty blockers would notice that their endogenous pubertal development had stopped, whereas those not on puberty blockers will notice that they had not. Hormonal suppression is achieved

⁵⁷ Kuper, et al. (2020); Chew, D., Anderson, J., Williams, K., May, T., & Pang, K. (2018). Hormonal Treatment in Young People With Gender Dysphoria: A Systematic Review. *Pediatrics*, 141(4), e20173742; Colton-Meier, S. L., Fitzgerald, K. M., Pardo, S. T., & Babcock, J. (2011). The effects of hormonal gender affirmation treatment on mental health in female-to-male transsexuals. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 15(3), 281-299.

⁵⁸ Marano, A. A., Louis, M. R., & Coon, D. (2021). Gender-Affirming Surgeries and Improved Psychosocial Health Outcomes. *JAMA surgery*, 156(7), 685–687; Olson-Kennedy, et al. (2018); Murad, et al. (2010); Smith, et al. (2005); Pfafflin & Junge (1998).

around four weeks after treatment is initiated, but it may take multiple months before participants notice that pubertal development has ceased.

80. Similarly, transgender people given hormone therapy would notice bodily changes from taking estrogen or testosterone, whereas transgender people in the control arm would notice no such changes. The onset of visible effects from hormone therapy varies from person-to-person. The first changes typically appear between one and six months of initiation, whereas other desired changes may not begin for up to a year.

81. Although it may take some time before participants are able to ascertain which treatment they were allocated to due to the delayed effect of puberty blockers and the progressive effect of and hormone therapy, large-scale unmasking is inevitable. Because the physiological changes are the primary purpose of gender-affirming care, meaningful effects on psychological wellbeing and quality of life are not expected until unmasking occurs. As such, while RCTs can be utilized to examine the effects of gender-affirming care on physiology, using RCTs to measure the effect of gender-affirming care on psychological wellbeing and quality of life would be inappropriate.

82. Unmasking an RCT of gender-affirming care would lead to non-compliance, cross-over, and response bias in the control arm of the study.

Transgender people with gender dysphoria who pursue gender-affirming care are typically insistent and persistent in seeking the interventions. They are not ambivalent as to whether they are assigned to the intervention or control arm of the study. Upon realizing that they are in the control arm due to physiological effects or lack thereof, a large proportion of the study participants would likely withdraw from the study or pursue alternative sources of gender-affirming interventions.

83. Withdrawing from the study and noncompliance with the study protocol is most likely among people who have alternative means of securing gender-affirming care and who experience more severe bodily gender dysphoria, raising grave concerns of systematic bias. Gender-affirming interventions can be obtained from parents, peers, illicit or unauthorized sources, other providers within or outside of the health care system, and through medication-sharing with participants from the active arm of the study. Some of these options are associated with elevated safety risks, giving rise to additional ethical concerns about the use of RCTs. Intentional withdrawal with the goal of forcing the study to end is also possible. Resentment towards researchers for not allowing all participants to receive gender-affirming interventions may also increase the risk of response bias compared to observational studies, and the experimental design

may motivate youths to engage in self-harm or suicidal behavior to influence the study results, aggravating scientific and ethical concerns.

84. Given that withdrawal rates could be high enough for studies to be terminated before they are concluded, RCTs may prove impossible to conduct altogether. The likelihood of withdrawal, non-adherence, and response bias in the context of transgender care undermines RCTs' ability to detect true associations and avoid specious associations between the intervention and the outcomes.

85. Many disciplines and areas of research rely on observational studies because RCTs are considered impracticable or unethical. This is especially common when studying the mental health outcomes of physiologically evident interventions due to the impossibility of masking, and when studying the outcomes of highly desired interventions due to the risks of de-randomization. Psychological and psychosocial interventions are most commonly studied using observational methodologies, and many research questions remain unstudied with RCTs.

86. Thus, while the GAPMS Memo correctly notes that “[p]resently, no RCTs that evaluate puberty suppression as a method to treat gender dysphoria are available,” the lack of RCTs is easily understood considering the above

observations about RCTs in this context. (See GAPMS Memo at 15). And, the GAPMS Memo fails to mention that “[d]espite GnRH analogue treatment being used in precocious puberty for more than 20 years, there are no randomized controlled trials to evaluate the effect of GnRHa on a final height compared with untreated controls.”⁵⁹

87. In addition, the GAPMS Memo’s focus on RCTs reveals AHCA’s fundamental misunderstanding of “evidence-based medicine.” (GAPMS Memo at 9).

88. Evidence-based medicine, which originated in the second half of the 19th Century, means the conscientious, explicit, judicious, and reasonable use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. Since its inception, evidence-based medicine has included an element of clinician expertise. Indeed, the modern understanding of evidence-based medicine is a systematic approach to clinical problem solving which allows the integration of the best available research evidence with *clinical expertise and patient values*.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Mul & Hughes (2008).

⁶⁰ Masic, I., Miokovic, M., & Muhamedagic, B. (2008). Evidence based medicine - new approaches and challenges. *Acta informatica medica : AIM : journal of the Society for Medical Informatics of Bosnia & Herzegovina : casopis Drustva za medicinsku informatiku BiH*, 16(4), 219–225.

89. Contemporaneous evidence-based medicine is defined by the *integration of clinical knowledge and skills* with the best critically-appraised-evidence available *as well as patient values and preferences in order to make a clinical decision*. The research literature is continually growing as new discoveries unravel.

90. The GAPMS Memo assigns no value to clinician expertise, experience, and skill, nor to the desires of the individual seeking services. In fact, the GAPMS Memo repeatedly and broadly asserts that recommendations for treatment of GD by well-established professional associations do not rely on evidence-based medicine, but rather on the recommendations outlined by WPATH, the Endocrine Society or others. But these two organizations not only examine best available evidence, but the guidelines and standards of care are updated by clinicians and scientists at the top of the field.

The Use of “Off-Label” Medications

91. Both the GAPMS Memo and Dr. Van Meter repeatedly express concern that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved puberty blockers or hormone therapy for the treatment of GD. (See, e.g., GAPMS Memo at 8, 19; Van Meter at 8). Indeed, Dr. Van Meter asserts that the mere use of these medications “off-label” amounts to “uncontrolled, non-consentable

experimentation on children.” (Van Meter at 8). These concerns are misleading and false.

92. The use of “off-label” medications is extremely common across all fields in medicine and there are many medications that are used “off-label” in the pediatric population. Most of the therapies prescribed to children are on an off-label or unlicensed basis.⁶¹ Common medications that are used “off-label” in pediatrics include antibiotics, antihistamines, and antidepressants. That is because the majority of drugs prescribed have not been tested in children and safety and efficacy of children’s medicines are frequently supported by low quality evidence. This is explained by the lack of clinical research in this population, caused by ethical, scientific, and technical issues, as well as commercial priorities.

93. “From the FDA perspective, once the FDA approves a drug, healthcare providers generally may prescribe the drug for an unapproved use when they judge that it is medically appropriate for their patient.”⁶² Indeed, for

⁶¹ Allen, H.C., Garbe, M.C., Lees, J., Aziz, N., Chaaban, H., Miller, J.L., Johnson, P., & DeLeon, S. (2018). Off-Label Medication use in Children, More Common than We Think: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *The Journal of the Oklahoma State Medical Association*, 111(8), 776–783.

⁶² U.S. Food and Drug Admin. Understanding Unapproved Use of Approved Drugs “Off Label” (Feb. 5, 2018), <https://www.fda.gov/patients/learn-about-expanded-access-and-other-treatmentoptions/understanding-unapproved-use-approved-drugs-label>.

over 40 years, the FDA has informed the medical community that “once a [drug] product has been approved ..., a physician may prescribe it for uses or in treatment regimens of patient populations that are not included in approved labeling.”⁶³ Accordingly, the American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that “off-label use of medications is neither experimentation nor research.”⁶⁴ Thus, “[t]he administration of an approved drug for a use that is not approved by the FDA is not considered research and does not warrant special consent or review if it is deemed to be in the individual patient’s best interests.”

Concerns about the Diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria and the Use of Self-Reports

94. The GAPMS Memo and Dr. Cantor criticize that the diagnosis of gender dysphoria is based, at least in part, on a patient’s self-report. (GAPMS Memo at 19, 24, 28; Cantor ¶¶ 42, 49). This critique demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of how gender-affirming care is provided.

95. While we have continued to attain a greater understanding about the etiology of gender incongruence, patients do not self-diagnose, as Dr. Cantor

⁶³ U.S. Food and Drug Admin, “Citizen Petition Regarding the Food and Drug Administration’s Policy on Promotion of Unapproved Uses of Approved Drugs and Devices; Request for Comments,” 59 Fed. Reg. 59,820 (Nov. 18, 1994).

⁶⁴ Frattarelli, D. A., Galinkin, J. L., Green, T. P., Johnson, T. D., Neville, K. A., Paul, I. M., Van Den Anker, J. N., & American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Drugs (2014). Off-label use of drugs in children. *Pediatrics*, 133(3), 563–567.

suggests. (Cantor ¶¶ 42, 49). However, it is not unusual or extraordinary in medicine for a provider to consider patients' reports of their symptoms as part of the medical assessment. Much like the diagnosis of many clinical conditions, providers rely on self-report to ascertain accurate diagnoses. Consider the diagnosis of chronic fatigue. The diagnostic criteria for this diagnosis include the following: fatigue so severe that it interferes with the ability to engage in pre-illness activities; of new or definite onset (not lifelong); not substantially alleviated by rest; worsened by physical, mental or emotional exertion. Like gender dysphoria, these diagnostic criteria are a subjective telling of an individual's personal experience. It is incumbent upon providers of gender-affirming care to acquire skills that help them ascertain many details about their patient's gender experience including but not limited to the history, developmental trajectory, and expectations regarding treatment options.

96. The provision of gender-affirming care occurs in multi-disciplinary settings, and indeed, the WPATH SOC recommend such an approach.⁶⁵ The

⁶⁵ Chen, D., Hidalgo, M. A., Leibowitz, S., Leininger, J., Simons, L., Finlayson, C., & Garofalo, R. (2016). Multidisciplinary Care for Gender-Diverse Youth: A Narrative Review and Unique Model of Gender-Affirming Care. *Transgender health*, 1(1), 117–123; Coleman, et al. (2022); Coleman, E., Bockting, W., Botzer, M., Cohen-Kettenis, P., DeCuypere, G., Feldman, J., ... & Zucker, K. (2012). Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people, version 7. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 13(4), 165-232.

multiple health providers involved, from various fields, are well trained to conduct clinical interviews and to assess a patient's report to determine whether they meet the diagnostic criteria for GD.

Particular Concerns about the Use of Puberty Delaying Medications

97. The GAPMS Memo and Dr. Cantor allege that the provision of puberty delaying medications for the treatment of GD is not effective. This is not true.

98. A substantial body of evidence shows that gender-affirming medical interventions improve mental health outcomes for transgender persons with GD, who, without treatment, experience higher levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidality. Each of these studies—as with all studies in medicine—has strengths and limitations, and no one study design can answer all questions regarding an intervention. But taken together, these studies indicate that gender-affirming medical care improves mental health for adolescents who require such care.

99. Keeping this in mind, peer-reviewed cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have found that pubertal suppression is associated with a range of improved mental health outcomes for transgender adolescents, including statistically significant improvements in internalizing psychopathology (*e.g.*,

anxiety and depression), externalizing psychopathology (*e.g.*, disruptive behaviors), global functioning, and suicidality.⁶⁶

100. For example, in the realm of cross-sectional studies, Turban et al. *Pediatrics* 2020 found that, after controlling for a range of other variables, those who accessed pubertal suppression had lower odds of lifetime suicidal ideation than those who desired but were unable to access this intervention during adolescence. A similar study by van der Miesen et al. in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, noted above, compared 272 adolescents who had not yet received pubertal suppression with 178 adolescents who had been treated with pubertal suppression. Those who had received pubertal suppression had statistically significant lower “internalizing psychopathology” scores (a measure of anxiety and depression).⁶⁷

101. Longitudinal studies have yielded similar results. For example, de Vries et al. in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine* (discussed above) found statistically significant improvements in symptoms of depression and general

⁶⁶ See, *e.g.*, Tordoff, D. M., Wanta, J. W., Collin, A., Stepney, C., Inwards-Breland, D. J., & Ahrens, K. (2022). Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. *JAMA network open*, 5(2), e220978; Turban, et al. (2020); van der Miesen, et al. (2020); Achille, et al. (2020); de Vries, et al. (2014); de Vries, et al. (2011). See also paragraphs 25-30, *supra*.

⁶⁷ van der Miesen, et al. (2020).

functioning following pubertal suppression for adolescents with gender dysphoria.⁶⁸

102. The GAPMS Memo, as well as the “assessments” by Dr. Brignardello-Petersen and Dr. Wiercioch and by Dr. Cantor, emphasize the possible risks and side effects associated with the provision of gender-affirming care. Every single medication, however, has potential negative side effects, in addition to the possibility of new side effects that have not been historically documented. This is one of the reasons that evidence-based medicine relies heavily on experienced clinicians to exercise their expertise and judgement.

103. The risks associated with the provision of GnRH analogues are comparable when used for transgender and non-transgender patients alike. For example, many of the side effects and risks associated with the provision of GnRH analogues have been well-studied with regards to the use of these medications for the treatment of central precocious puberty (CPP).⁶⁹

104. Given that puberty blockers are reversible, permanent sterility is not a side effect. There is no data to support that patients who have been treated with

⁶⁸ de Vries, et al. (2011).

⁶⁹ Eugster E. A. (2019). Treatment of Central Precocious Puberty. *Journal of the Endocrine Society*, 3(5), 965–972.

blockers for central precocious puberty are “sterilized” following its use. To the contrary, information regarding long-term outcomes of patients treated with GnRH analogues with respect to gonadal function are reassuring. In fact, some studies have shown that assigned males had normal sperm function following treatment and cisgender women treated as children did not need assisted reproductive techniques.

105. In addition, while during the course of treatment with pubertal delaying medication, there is some loss in bone density, which is a side effect that we discuss with all patients and their families, studies show that with removal of the blocking agent or addition of gender affirming hormone therapy, bone mineral density begins to improve.⁷⁰ Studies regarding the use of GnRH analogues for the treatment of CPP document that following cessation of therapy with puberty delaying medications bone mineral accrual appears to be within the normal range compared with population norms. Indeed, patients treated with pubertal suppression for CPP are on pubertal blockades without affirming

⁷⁰ Vlot, M. C., et al. (2017). Effect of pubertal suppression and cross-sex hormone therapy on bone turnover markers and bone mineral apparent density (BMAD) in transgender adolescents. *Bone*, 95, 11–19; Klink, D., et al. (2015). Bone mass in young adulthood following gonadotropin-releasing hormone analog treatment and cross-sex hormone treatment in adolescents with gender dysphoria. *The Journal of clinical endocrinology and metabolism*, 100(2), E270–E275.

hormones for longer periods of time than patients treated with puberty blockers for the treatment of gender dysphoria and the same risks are present.⁷¹

Particular Concerns about the Use of Cross-Sex Hormones

106. The claim that treating gender dysphoria with medically supervised and recommended hormone treatment is particularly risky or causes serious mental health effects is not supported by data.

107. Peer-reviewed research studies have found improved mental health outcomes following gender-affirming hormone treatment (*e.g.*, estrogen or testosterone) for individuals with gender dysphoria, including adolescents.⁷² These include statistically significant improvements in internalizing psychopathology (*e.g.*, anxiety and depression), general well-being, and suicidality. For example, Allen et al. followed a cohort of 47 adolescents with gender dysphoria, and found statistically significant improvements in general well-being and suicidality, as measured by the National Institutes of Health “Ask Suicide Screening Questions” instrument.⁷³

⁷¹ Eugster (2019).

⁷² See, *e.g.*, Achille, et al. (2020); de Lara, D.L., Rodríguez, O.P., Flores, I.C., *et al.* (2020). Psychosocial Assessment in Transgender Adolescents. *Anales de Pediatría (English Edition)*, 93(1), 41-48; Grannis, et al. (2021); Allen, L.R., Watson, L.B., Egan, A.M., & Moser, C.N. (2019). Well-Being and Suicidality Among Transgender Youth After Gender-Affirming Hormones. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 7(3), 302-311.

⁷³ Allen, et al. (2019).

108. What is more, the side effects and risks associated with these treatments are not unique to transgender individuals placed on these therapies.

109. The WPATH SOC require that fertility preservation is offered to all transgender patients prior to the initiation of gender affirming hormones. However, data shows that treatment with testosterone is not sterilizing.⁷⁴ And many transgender men become pregnant on their own.

110. It is also important to note that when these risks are reported, they are rare risks. While starting a transgender individual with GD on gender affirming hormones can raise their risk, their risk profile remains similar to their cisgender counterparts. Many times, the lipid profiles, hematologic profiles, and findings are equivalent to that of the gender these individuals identify with, as opposed to that of their sex assigned at birth.

The Misconceived Notion that Psychotherapy Alone Is Sufficient for the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria

111. Dr. Cantor describes several studies and claims that because the study subjects who were recipients of both gender-affirming hormones or puberty blockers, on the one hand, and psychotherapy, on the other hand, demonstrated

⁷⁴ Yaish, I., et al. (2021). Functional ovarian reserve in transgender men receiving testosterone therapy: evidence for preserved anti-Müllerian hormone and antral follicle count under prolonged treatment. *Human reproduction (Oxford, England)*, 36(10), 2753–2760.

improvements in mental health, that the medical interventions could not be differentiated as responsible for the improvement. (Cantor ¶¶ 40-41).

112. Historically the psychotherapy professional world advocated for a “therapy only” model to address gender dysphoria. As early as the 1920’s and 1930’s it became evident to the preeminent scholars in the field that gender dysphoria (named something else at that time) was refractory to psychotherapy. As noted in 1966 in Harry Benjamin’s *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, “Allegedly, transsexualism, although basically a psychiatric condition, is paradoxically resistant to psychiatric help.”⁷⁵ In this statement, Harry Benjamin acknowledges that psychiatric intervention cannot alter people’s gender, nor does it lead to a diminishing of the distress that arises from gender incongruence. There has been an abundance of opportunity to demonstrate unequivocally that gender dysphoria is best treated with psychotherapy alone, and yet it never has been. To suggest this is now an appropriate approach simply because transgender people are coming out at younger ages is illogical.

⁷⁵ Benjamin (1966).

Dr. Lappert's Critique of My Published Work

113. In his “assessment,” Dr. Lappert criticizes a 2018 article I co-wrote that was published in JAMA Pediatrics, which he acknowledges to be a “leading journal.” He refers to the article as “reckless” and using “low-quality data.” (Lappert, p. 7).

114. Dr. Lappert takes issue with the claim in this article that regret for surgery is “rare.” (Lappert p. 7). The manuscript describes that no individual who had undergone chest reconstruction in this cohort regretted this decision. While no single study can capture all experiences, the data reported in this study and clinical experience support the claim that regret after chest surgery is rare.

115. Dr. Lappert additionally calls surgery on minors a “reckless, experimental practice” and, without citing any evidence to support his claims, states that it has “apparently been abandoned as unethical” in England, Sweden, and Finland. (Lappert p. 7). Chest surgery for transmasculine youth younger than the age of majority is not experimental. While the scientific study of the care of transgender youth is still ongoing and growing, this does not make such care experimental. By its very nature, science is ever growing and ongoing. Moreover, Dr. Lappert’s claim completely discounts the clinical experiences of both community members and providers of such care.

116. Dr. Lappert seems to take issue with the methods my study used to recruit participants, which he terms “convenience sampling” and suggests constitutes “self-selection” and confirmation bias. (Lappert p. 7). While it is true that the participants were recruited from our practice, individuals seeking such a surgical intervention will also be enrolled in care at clinics familiar with gender affirming care, therefore, they are “self-selecting” to become patients. As noted in my manuscript, we made an attempt to reach all patients in our clinic who had been referred for chest surgery.

117. Dr. Lappert emphasizes that 26% of study participants who had undergone surgery could not be reached during follow-up phone calls. (Lappert p. 7). He further highlights that of the individuals we were able to reach by phone, 72% completed our survey. Again Dr. Lappert bemoans these facts as demonstrating self-selection and confirmation bias. Our Center provides services for youth and young adults up to the age of 25. Some participants who were unable to be reached had aged out of services, moved, changed their phone numbers, or simply didn’t answer a phone call. This is common among all research.

118. Dr. Lappert additionally criticizes our paper for using a novel measure of gender dysphoria, which he claims is “entirely unvalidated” and “junk

science.” (Lappert p. 8). When no measures exist to gain understanding about an experience, measures need to be created. Chest dysphoria is a latent construct, and as such needs to be captured through a collective of questions. The chest dysphoria scale components were developed through both content and face validity. The scale was not validated, as I clearly reported in the manuscript. In a manuscript by Sood et al., Chest Dysphoria, as measured by the scale I created, among 156 transmasculine youth, showed a significant, positive association with anxiety and depression.⁷⁶

119. Dr. Lappert suggests that our findings, which looked at satisfaction with gender-affirming surgery for patients who had undergone surgery between less than 1 to 5 years prior to the survey, are “misleading” and “deceptive” because they are not completely consistent with other long-term longitudinal population studies. (Lappert p. 8). I have not seen any longitudinal studies looking at chest surgery that dispute the findings laid out in my manuscript. In a meta-analysis related to satisfaction following masculinizing chest surgery,

⁷⁶ Sood, R., Chen, D., Muldoon, A. L., Chen, L., Kwasny, M. J., Simons, L. K., Gangopadhyay, N., Corcoran, J. F., & Jordan, S. W. (2021). Association of Chest Dysphoria With Anxiety and Depression in Transmasculine and Nonbinary Adolescents Seeking Gender-Affirming Care. *The Journal of adolescent health: official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*, 68(6), 1135–1141.

Bustos et al. found that among 1,052 transmasculine patients, the overall satisfaction rate was 92%.⁷⁷

120. Based on his review of my study, Dr. Lappert concludes that it “is essentially useless in making any clinical decisions regarding who should be offered surgery, what is the likelihood they will benefit from it, and what is the likelihood they will regret their decision.” (Lappert p. 8). There have been at least two studies since my manuscript that have duplicated the findings laid out in my manuscript in addition to the meta-analysis conducted by Bustos et al. described above.

CONCLUSION

121. Gender-affirming medical and surgical care is effective, beneficial, and necessary for transgender people suffering with gender dysphoria, including transgender youth after the onset of puberty. It is well documented and studied, through years of clinical experience, observational scientific studies, and even some longitudinal studies. It is also the accepted standard of care by all major medical organizations in the United States.

⁷⁷ Bustos, et al. (2021).

122. The denial of gender-affirming care, on the other hand, is harmful to transgender people. It exacerbates their dysphoria and may cause anxiety, depression, and suicidality, among other harms.

123. The GAPMS memo is misguided and informed by individuals with no experience or knowledge base regarding the provision of gender-affirming care, not to mention well-documented biases against transgender people and/or the provision of gender-affirming care. The report leans heavily on manuscripts that are not contemporaneous with our modern understanding of gender identity and gender dysphoria, demonstrated by outdated and incorrect terminology.

124. While data may be described as weak due to the lack of randomized controlled trials, many disciplines and areas of research rely on observational studies because RCTs are considered impractical or unethical. This is especially common when studying the mental health outcomes of physiologically evident interventions due to the impossibility of masking, and when studying the outcomes of highly desired interventions due to the risks of de-randomization. Psychological and psychosocial interventions are most commonly studied using observational methodologies, and many research questions remain unstudied with RCTs.

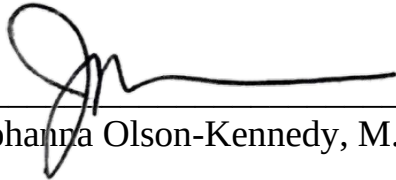
125. Finally, the reports completely overlook bodily autonomy. Given the repeated conflation of children and adolescents, it is not surprising that the “assessments” relied upon by the GAPMS Memo and the GAPMS Memo itself view adolescents as too immature to understand their own gender. However, many studies have demonstrated that cisgender children as young as age 2 know their gender. Denying medical care to adolescent youth with gender dysphoria is an act of acquiescence to the fear of what is not understood.

126. I do not disagree that, as with every field of medicine, there is more to learn in the field of transgender youth care. That is why I became an investigator. However, there is room to provide gender-affirming medical interventions in a thoughtful manner that extrapolates from relevant fields of science and medicine, existing data and clinical expertise while simultaneously carrying out necessary investigations.

127. The denial of much needed care only serves to harm transgender people.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 16 day of February, 2023.



Johanna Olson-Kennedy, M.D., M.S.

Exhibit A
Curriculum Vitae

CURRICULUM VITAE
JOHANNA OLSON-KENNEDY MS, MD
FEBRUARY 14, 2023

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Work
4650 Sunset Blvd. MS 2
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Phone: 323-361-3128
Fax: 323-953-8116
Work Email: jolson@chla.usc.edu

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

EDUCATION:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Degree, Field, Institution, City</i>
1992	BA, Mammalian Physiology, UC San Diego, San Diego
1993	MS, Animal Physiology, The Chicago Medical School, Chicago
1997	MD, Medical Doctor, The Chicago Medical School, Chicago
2015	MS, Clinical and Biomedical Investigations in Translational Science, USC, Los Angeles

POST-GRADUATE TRAINING:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Training Type, Field, Mentor, Department, Institution, City</i>
1997 - 1998	Internship, Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Orange County, Orange
1998 - 2000	Residency, Pediatrics, Antonio Arrieta, Children's Hospital Orange County, Orange
2000 - 2003	Fellowship, Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles
2012 - 2015	Master's Degree, Clinical and Biomedical Investigations in Translational Science, USC

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Department, Institution, City, Country</i>
2006 - 2016	Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics	Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital Los Angeles/USC Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, USA
2016 - Present	Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics	Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital Los Angeles/USC Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, USA

CLINICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS:

2008 - 2012	Fellowship Director	Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
2012 - present	Medical Director	The Center for Transyouth Health and Development, Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA

2021 - present	Clinical consultant	Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics

LICENSURE, CERTIFICATIONS**LICENSURE:**

<i>Year</i>	<i>License number, State, Status</i>
2000	A-67352, California, Active

BOARD CERTIFICATION OR ELIGIBILITY:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Board, State, Status</i>
2001, 2009, 2015	Pediatrics, California, active

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Specialty Certification, Status</i>
2003, 2013	Adolescent Medicine, California, active

HONORS, AWARDS:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Awarding agency, address, city</i>
2009	Health Care Advocacy Champion	Democratic Advocates for Disability Issues, Los Angeles
2010	Clinical Research Academic Career Development Award	Saban Research Center TSRI Program: Community Health Outcomes and Intervention, Los Angeles
2012	Extraordinary Service Award	Equality California, 202 W 1st St., Suite 3-0130, Los Angeles
2013	Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2014	Anne Marie Staas Ally Award	Stonewall Democratic Club; 1049 Havenhurst Drive #325, West Hollywood
2014	Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2014	Recognition Award for Outstanding, Compassionate and Innovative Service	SoCal Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Regional Chapter, Los Angeles
2015	The Champion Award	The Division of Adolescent Medicine; CHAMPION FUND 5000 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles
2016	America's Most Honored Professional's – Top 10%	America's Most Honored Professional's
2016	Regional Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2017	Exceptional Women in Medicine	Castle Connolly
2017	Regional Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2017	America's Most Honored Professional's – Top 5%	America's Most Honored Professional's
2018	Regional Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2019	Benjamin Meaker Visiting Professorship	University of Bristol, Bristol UK
2019	Regional Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2019	L.A's Top Docs	Los Angeles Magazine
2019	Top Docs	Pasadena Health
2019	America's Most Honored Professional's – Top 1%	America's Most Honored Professional's
2020	Regional Top Doctor	Castle Connolly
2020	Southern California Top Doc	Castle Connolly

2020	Southern California Top Doctors	
2020	L.A's Top Docs	Los Angeles Magazine
2020	America's Most Honored Professional's – Top 1%	America's Most Honored
2021	Southern California Top Doc	Castle Connolly
2021	America's Most Honored Doctors – Top 1%	America's Most Honored
2021	Top Doctors	Castle Connolly
2022	America's Most Honored Doctors – Top 1%	America's Most Honored
2022	Top Doctors	Castle Connolly

TEACHING**DIDACTIC TEACHING:***Keck School of Medicine at USC*

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Units/Hrs</i>	<i>Role</i>
2019	Puberty Suppression and Hormones; Medical Interventions for Transgender Youth	One hour	Curriculum development and delivery
2020, 2021, 2022	Approach to the Care of Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Youth	One hour	Curriculum development and delivery
2023	Transgender and Non-binary Youth and Young Adults 101	One hour	Curriculum development and delivery

CalState Fullerton

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Units/Hrs</i>	<i>Role</i>
2017	Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth	One hour	Curriculum development and delivery

UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE AND MEDICAL STUDENT (OR OTHER) MENTORSHIP:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Trainee Name</i>	<i>Trainee Type</i>	<i>Dissertation/Thesis/Project Title</i>
2015 - 2016	David Lyons	MD	Transgender Youth Clinical Clerkship
2016 - 2019	Jonathan Warus	MD	Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Minors and Young Adults: Comparisons of Nonsurgical and Postsurgical Cohorts
2019 - 2021	Laer Streeter	MD	Comparison of Histrelin Implants
2020 - Present	Richard Mateo Mora	MD	Fertility Preservation Among Transgender Women
2022	Avery Everhart	PhD	Incomplete Data & Insufficient Methods: Transgender Population Health Research in the US

GRADUATE STUDENT THESIS, EXAM AND DISSERTATION COMMITTEES:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Trainee Name</i>	<i>Committee Type</i>	<i>Student Department</i>
2022	Avery Everhart	Dissertation	Social Work

POSTGRADUATE MENTORSHIP:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Trainee Name</i>	<i>If past trainee, current position and location</i>
2012-2013	Lisa Simons, MD	Clinical Instructor – Lurie Children’s Hospital
2013	Shelley Aggarwal, MD	Clinical Instructor – Stanford University School of Medicine
2014	Julie Spencer, MD	Adolescent Medicine Provider Kaiser Hospital
2014-2015	Michael Haymer, MD	Program Director, Psychiatry Department UCLA
2015-2017	Patrick Shepherd, MD	CHLA Endocrinology Fellow
2015-2018	Jonathan Warus, MD	Faculty, CHLA/USC Keck School of Medicine
2015-2020	Shannon Dunlap, PhD	Postdoctoral Scholar - Research Associate, University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
2020-Present	Marianela Gomez-Rincon, MD	Adolescent Medicine Fellow
2020-Present	Jonathan Warus, MD	CHLA, Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics
2022	Emmett Henderson, PhD, MS	USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Senior mentor K99; USC

MENTORSHIP OF FACULTY:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Mentee Name</i>	<i>Mentee Department</i>
2021 - present	Jonathan Warus, MD	Division of Adolescent Medicine, CHLA
2022	Brigid Conn, PhD	Clinical Psychologist, CHLA

SERVICE**DEPARTMENT SERVICE:**

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Position, Committee</i>	<i>Organization/Institution</i>
2010-2015	Secretary, The CHAMPION Fund Executive Board	The Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles

HOSPITAL OR MEDICAL GROUP SERVICE:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Position, Committee</i>	<i>Organization/Institution</i>
2021 - present	Committee Member	SOGI work group, CHLA

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Position, Committee</i>	<i>Organization/Institution</i>
2012-present	Member, LGBT Special Interest Group	Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
2022	Secretary, Executive Board of Directors	US Professional Association of Transgender Health

CONSULTANTSHIPS AND ADVISORY BOARDS:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Position, Board</i>	<i>Organization/Hospital/School, Institution</i>
2010-2017	Member, Advisory Board	Transyouth Family Allies
2017-present	Member, National Medical Committee	Planned Parenthood
2017 - Present	Board Member	US Professional Association of Transgender Health
2021	Expert Panelist	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - National Commission on Data Transformation for Health Equity
2021	Member, Advisory Board	The National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS:

<i>Year- Year</i>	<i>Society</i>
2003 - present	Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
2005 - present	American Academy of Pediatrics
2006 - 2011	Los Angeles Pediatric Society (Past president 2010)
2010 - present	Professional Association for Transgender Health
2014 - present	Society for Pediatric Research
2017 - present	US Professional Association for Transgender Health

MAJOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: (E.G., DEAN, CHAIR, INSTITUTE DIRECTOR, HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION, ETC.)**RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP****EDITORSHIPS AND EDITORIAL BOARDS:**

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Journal/Board Name</i>
2015 - present	Associate Editor	Journal of Transgender Health

MANUSCRIPT REVIEW:

<i>Year-Year</i>	<i>Journal</i>
2014 - present	Pediatrics
2014 - present	Journal of Adolescent Health
2014 - present	LGBT Health
2014 - present	International Journal of Transgenderism
2015 - present	Journal of Transgender Health
2018 - present	Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry
2018 - present	Journal of Sexual Medicine
2018 - present	Journal of Transgender Health
2021 - present	JAMA Peds

GRANT REVIEWS:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Awarding agency, City, State, Country</i>
2017	Cognition and Perception Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2017	Neurological, Aging and Musculoskeletal Epidemiology Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2018	Social Psychology, Personality and Interpersonal Processes Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2018	Neurological, Aging and Musculoskeletal Epidemiology Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2019	Special Emphasis Panel Review of Research Conference (R13) Grants	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2019	The Einstein Foundation Award for Promoting Quality in Research	Einstein Foundation, Berlin
2020	Biobehavioral and Behavioral Sciences Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
2021	Social Psychology, Personality and Interpersonal Processes Study Section	National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA

MAJOR AREAS OF RESEARCH INTEREST

Research Areas
1. Transgender and non-binary children, adolescents and young adults
2. HIV medication adherence

GRANT SUPPORT - CURRENT:

<i>Grant No. (PI)2R01HD082554-06A1 (Olson-Kennedy)</i>	<i>Dates of Award: 2021-2026</i>
<i>Agency: NICHD</i>	<i>Percent Effort 25%</i>
<i>Title: The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth</i>	
<i>Description: This is the continuations of a multicenter study, the first of its kind in the U.S. to evaluate the long-term outcomes of medical treatment for transgender youth. This study will provide essential, evidence-based information on the physiological and psychosocial impact, as well as safety, of hormone blockers and cross-sex hormones use in this population.</i>	

<i>Role: Principle Investigator</i>	
<i>Total Direct Costs: \$4,918,586</i>	
<i>Grant No. 1R01HD097122-01 (Hidalgo)</i>	<i>Dates of Award: 2019-2024</i>
<i>Agency: NICHD</i>	<i>Percent Effort 2.5%</i>
<i>Title: A Longitudinal Study of Gender Nonconformity in Prepubescent Children</i>	
<i>Description: The purpose of this study is to establish a national cohort of prepubertal transgender/gender nonconforming (TGNC) children (and their parents), and longitudinally observe this cohort to expand the body of empirical knowledge pertaining to gender development and cognition in TGNC children, their mental health symptomology and functioning over time, and how family-initiated social gender transition may predict or alleviate mental health symptoms and/or diagnoses.</i>	
<i>Role: Site PI</i>	
<i>Total Direct Costs: \$2,884,950</i>	

GRANT SUPPORT - PAST:

<i>Grant No. (PI) 1R01HD082554-01A1</i>	<i>Dates of Award: 2015-2020</i>
<i>Agency: NICHD</i>	<i>Percent Effort 45%</i>
<i>Title: The Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth</i>	
<i>Description: This is a multicenter study, the first of its kind in the U.S. to evaluate the long-term outcomes of medical treatment for transgender youth. This study will provide essential, evidence-based information on the physiological and psychosocial impact, as well as safety, of hormone blockers and cross-sex hormones use in this population.</i>	
<i>Role: Principle Investigator</i>	
<i>Total Direct Costs: \$4,631,970</i>	
<i>Grant No. (COI) R01AI128796-01</i>	<i>Dates of Award: 2/24/17-1/31/18</i>
<i>Agency: NIAID</i>	<i>Percent Effort: 5%</i>
<i>Title: Maturation, Infectibility and Trauma Contributes to HIV Susceptibility in Adolescents</i>	
<i>Description: This proposal explores the overarching hypothesis that fluctuations in sex steroid levels and mucosal trauma (sexual activity) are key determinants of mucosal immune activation and epithelial integrity, and that microbial communities are central to these processes. We will pursue this hypothesis by examining longitudinal changes in the anogenital microbiome as well as protein expression at these mucosal sites during sexual maturation (cisgender youth) and in hormonally-controlled sexual maturation (transgender youth). Associations between sex steroid levels, microbial community composition, mucosal trauma, and vaginal proteins will be determined and modeled.</i>	
<i>Role: Co-Investigator</i>	
<i>Total Direct Costs: \$44,816</i>	

<i>Grant No. (PI) U01HD040463</i>	<i>Dates of Award 2006 – 2016</i>
<i>Agency: NIH/NICHD</i>	<i>Percent Effort: 10%</i>
<i>Title: Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS</i>	
<i>Description: Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS</i>	

<i>Role: Co-Investigator</i>
<i>Total Direct Costs: 2,225,674</i>

<i>Grant No. (PI) SC CTSI 8KL2TR000131</i>	<i>Dates of Award: 2012-2014</i>
<i>Agency: KL2 Mentored Career Research Development Program of the Center for Education, Training and Career Development</i>	<i>Percent Effort: 37.5%</i>
<i>Title: The Impact of Hormone Blockers on the Physiologic and Psychosocial Development of Gender Non-Conforming Peri-Pubertal Youth</i>	
<i>Description: This study aimed to understand the impact of puberty blocking medications on mental health and physiologic parameters in peri-pubertal transgender youth.</i>	
<i>Role: Principal Investigator</i>	
<i>Total Direct Costs: 191,525</i>	

Invited Lectures, Symposia, keynote addresses

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Title, Location</i>
2014	Invited Lecture	Transgender Youth; Needs, Risks, Outcomes and the Role of the System, Including Permanency and Inclusion for Our Youth, Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families and Children, San Diego, California
2015	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, Lopez Family Foundation Special Lecture for Puerto Rico and Panama, Lopez Family Foundation, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
2015	Symposium	Transgender Youth – An Overview of Medical and Mental Health Needs of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents, Public Child Welfare Training Academy, Academy for Professional Excellence at San Diego State University School of Social Work, San Diego, California
2015	Invited Lecture	Meeting the Needs of Transgender Adolescents; 1 st Annual Southern California LGBT Health Symposium; USC/UCLA, Los Angeles, California
2015	Symposium	Transgender Youth; An Overview of Medical and Mental Health Needs of Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents; GetReal California's Initiative; "Integrating Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) into California's Child Welfare System," Oakland, California
2016	Invited Symposium	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth; Idyllwild, California
2016	Educational symposium	Gender 101: A Primer; Vista Mar, California
2016	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Teens in the New Millennium - A Multidisciplinary Team Approach, California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Los Angeles, California
2016	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Nonconforming Children and Transgender Youth, California Psychological Association, Continuing Education Institute, Irvine, California
2016	Invited Lecture	Health Issues Related to Transgender Youth; LA City Health Commission, Los Angeles, California

2016	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Medical Directors 12th Annual Update on Reproductive Health and Medical Leadership, Planned Parenthood, Steamboat Springs, Colorado
2016	Invited Lecture	Caring For Transgender Teens, UCLA Meet the Professor, Los Angeles, CA
2017	Symposium	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, Santa Barbara, CA
2017	Invited Lecture	Healthcare for TGNC Youth, Expanding Competency for LGBT Youth in the System, Washington DC
2017	Invited Lecture	Gender Non-conforming and Transgender Children and Youth; Center for Early Education, West Hollywood, CA
2017	Invited Lecture	Rethinking Gender, University of Massachusetts, Annual Convocation Welcome Luncheon, Worcester, MA
2017	Invited Lecture	Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, Board of Behavioral Sciences, Orange, CA
2017	Invited Lecture	Puberty Suppression and Hormones; Medical Interventions for Transgender Youth, Santa Monica Rape Treatment Center, Santa Monica, CA
2017	Invited Lecture	Transgender Youth Care in the New Millennium, USC Law and Global Health Initiative, Los Angeles, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Supporting Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth: A Deeper Look at Gender Dysphoria, Studio City, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Working with Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Youth, Children's Hospital Orange County, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Caring for gender Non-conforming and Transgender Youth and Young Adults, Ascend Residential, Encino CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Caring for gender Non-conforming and Transgender Youth and Young Adults, California State University Northridge, Northridge, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Gender Dysphoria; School Nurse Organization of Idaho Annual Conference, Idaho
2018	Invited Lecture	Gender and What You Should Know, Archer School for Girls, Brentwood, CA
2018	Symposium	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, Oceanside, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Gender Dysphoria: Beyond the Diagnosis, Advance LA, Los Angeles, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, Andrology Society of America Clinical Symposium, Portland, OR
2018	Symposium	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, Los Angeles, CA
2018	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, Center for Early Education, Los Angeles, CA
2019	Symposium	The Care of Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Youth and Young Adults, Cal State Los Angeles, California
2019	Symposium	The Care of Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Youth and Young Adults, Claremont Colleges, California
2019	Symposium	TransYouth Care; Flagstaff, AZ
2019	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Youth, Ascend Residential Treatment, Utah
2019	Invited Lecture	Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth; What Pediatricians Should Know, Common Problems in Pediatrics Conference, Utah AAP, Utah

2019	Invited Lecture	Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth; What Pediatricians Should Know, Common Problems in Pediatrics Conference, Utah AAP, Utah
2019	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Grand Rounds, UCLA Olive View, CA
2019	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Grand Rounds, Good Samaritan, CA
2019	Invited Lecture	Puberty Suppression in Youth with Gender Dysphoria, Fenway Trans Health Program, Boston
2019	Invited Lecture	Recognizing the Needs of Transgender Youth, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Ventura, CA
2019	Invited Lecture	Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis, Gender Education Demystification Symposium, GA
2019	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Los Angeles Superior Court/Los Angeles Bar Association Training, CA
2019	Invited Lecture	Supporting Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth; A Deeper Look at Gender Dysphoria, Oakwood School, CA
2020	Symposium	Trans Youth Care, Chico Transgender Week, Virtual Presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Novartis, Virtual Presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	Advanced Hormones; More than Just T and E, CHLA, Virtual Presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	Video Telehealth and Transgender Youth, Telehealth Best Practices for the Trans Community, The Central Texas Transgender Health Coalition, Virtual Presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	Gear Talk, Transforming Families, Virtual Lecture
2020	Invited Lecture	Tips for Parenting a Trans or Gender Diverse Youth, Models of Pride, Virtual Presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, LGBTQ+ Clinical Academy, Palo Alto University, Virtual presentation
2020	Invited Lecture	USC Medical School, Los Angeles, CA
2020	Invited Lecture	Medical Interventions for transgender youth, Cal State Los Angeles, Los Angeles
2020	Plenary Session	Understanding Issues Involving Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Individuals Coming to a Courtroom Near You, Mid-Winter Workshop for Judges of the Ninth Circuit, Palm Springs, CA
2021	Invited Lecture	Gender Affirmation through a Social Justice Lens; Center for Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS) at Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles
2021	Invited Lecture	Introduction to the Care of Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Providence Medical Group – South Bay Pediatrics (Torrance, San Pedro, Redondo Beach), virtual lecture
2021	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth. SLO Acceptance, Cal Poly, Virtual Presentation
2022	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Non-binary children and youth, Board of Behavioral Sciences
2022	Invited Lecture	Gender Affirmation through a Social Justice Lens; University of Arizona Health Sciences LGBTQ+ Symposium & Health Fair

2022	Invited Lecture	Gender Dysphoria in Children, Adolescents and Young Adults, MedLambda and PsychSIG Keck USC School of Medicine, Virtual Lecture
2022	Invited Lecture	Caring for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth, Presbyterian Healthcare Services, New Mexico, Virtual lecture
2022	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Non-Binary Youth, Rogers Behavioral Health, Virtual Lecture
2023	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Non-binary Youth and Young Adults 101 , When Healthcare Gets Political; Health Justice and Systems of Care course, Keck USC School of Medicine, Los Angeles

Invited Grand Rounds, CME Lectures

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Title, Location</i>
2014	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Teens in the New Millennium - A Multidisciplinary Team Approach; Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle, Washington
2014	CME lecture	Transgender Youth; An Overview of Medical and Mental Health Needs of Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents; Eisenhower Medical Center Transgender Health Symposium, Palm Springs, California
2014	Grand Rounds	Toddlers to Teens: Comprehensive Health Care for the Transgender Child, Cultural Psychiatry Lecture Series, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa
2014	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Teens in the New Millennium; A Multidisciplinary Team Approach, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
2014	CME lecture	Difficult Cases, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Gender Spectrum, Moraga, California
2014	CME lecture	Difficult Cases, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Gender Spectrum, Moraga, California
2014	CME lecture	Cross-sex Hormones for Teenagers, How Young is Too Young? Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2014	CME lecture	Pediatric Update, Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2015	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Stanford Division of Adolescent Medicine, Palo Alto, CA
2015	CME Educational Lecture	The Transgender Experience, St. Joseph's Providence, Burbank, CA
2015	CME Educational Lecture	Update on the Transgender Patient for the PCP, St. Joseph's Providence, Burbank, CA
2015	CME Educational Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Teens, Providence Tarzana, CA
2015	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California

2015	Grand Rounds	Puberty Blockers and Cross Sex Hormones, Pediatric Endocrinology, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
2015	CME lecture	Youth and Hormones, 2015 Gender Expansion Conference, University of Montana, Missoula Montana
2015	CME lecture	Transyouth Healthcare, 2015 Gender Expansion Conference, University of Montana, Missoula Montana
2015	CME lecture	Supporting Transgender Youth, Southern Oregon University Student Health and Wellness Center Workshop, Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon
2015	PCS Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Nonconforming Children and Transgender Youth, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
2015	CME lecture	Medical Care for Gender Non-Conforming Children, Transgender Adolescents and Young Adults in the New Millennium, Continuing Medical Education of Southern Oregon, Medford, Oregon
2015	Grand Rounds	Medical Care for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, Olive View Medical Center-UCLA, Sylmar, California
2015	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Teens, Harbor-UCLA Department of Pediatrics, Torrance, California
2015	CME lecture	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Teens in the New Millennium, Healthcare Partners Pediatric Town Hall Meeting, Healthcare Partners CME, Glendale, California
2016	Pediatric Grand Rounds	Puberty Suppression and Hormones; Medical Interventions for Transgender Youth; Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
2016	Endocrine Grand Rounds	Approach to Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents; Cedars Sinai Hospital, Los Angeles, California
2016	Pediatric Grand Rounds	Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents in the New Millennium, Stanford Lucille Packard Children's Hospital, Palo Alto, California
2016	Pediatric Update	Caring for Gender Variant Children and Adolescents, St. Louis, Missouri
2016	Grand Rounds	Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents in the New Millennium, St. Jude's Grand Rounds, Memphis, Tennessee
2016	CME Educational Lecture	Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth: Innovative Approaches to Care in 2016; Integrating Substance Use, Mental Health, and Primary Care Services: Courageous and Compassionate Care, Los Angeles, California
2016	CME; professional conference	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Teens in the New Millennium - A Multidisciplinary Team Approach, Arizona Psychiatric Society, Tempe, Arizona
2016	CME/Educational Symposium	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, San Diego, California
2016	CME/CEU Educational Training	Medical Interventions for Transgender Youth and Young Adults, San Diego State University, San Diego, California
2016	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Nonconforming Children and Transgender Youth, Mt. Sinai Hospital, Pediatric Grand Rounds George J. Ginandes Lecture, New York, New York

2016	CME Educational Lecture	The Transgender Experience, Providence Tarzana, CA
2017	CME Educational Seminar	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, San Diego, CA
2017	CME Educational Seminar	The Care of Gender Non-Conforming children and Transgender Youth; Orange County Health Care Agency, Orange County, CA
2017	CME Educational Lecture	Rethinking Gender, Adolescent Grand Rounds, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
2017	CME Educational Lecture	Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, Pasadena CA
2017	CME Educational Lecture	Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Children and Adolescents, Developmental Pediatrics continuing education lecture, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, CA
2017	CME Educational Lecture	Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents, Lopez Family Foundation Educational Lecture, Los Angeles, CA
2017	CME Educational Lecture	Puberty Suppression and Hormones; Medical Interventions for Transgender Youth, USC Keck School of Medicine Reproductive Health, Los Angeles, CA
2017	CME Educational Seminar	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, San Diego, CA
2018	CME Symposium	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Glendale Unified School District, CA
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, CME by the Sea, CA
2018	CME Symposium	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth, TransYouth Care, Austin, TX
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Approach to the Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, Desert Oasis Healthcare, Palm Desert, CA
2018	CME Workshop	Mental and Medical Healthcare for Transgender Adolescents, California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Garden Grove, CA
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Approach to the Care of Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth, Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA
2018	Grand Rounds	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents, Primary Children's Hospital, Salt Lake City, UT
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Caring for Transgender Youth, Chico Trans Week, Chico, CA

2018	CME Educational Lecture	Rethinking Gender, UCSD Medical School, San Diego, CA
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Rethinking Gender, UCLA Medical School, Los Angeles, CA
2019	Symposium	Recognizing the Needs of Transgender Youth, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Stockton, CA
2019	Symposium	The Care of Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Youth and Young Adults, Cal State Los Angeles, California
2019	Symposium	The Care of Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Youth and Young Adults, Claremont Colleges, California
2019	CME Lecture	Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Harbor UCLA Medical Center Grand Rounds, Torrance, CA
2019	CME Lecture	Gender Dysphoria – Beyond the Diagnosis, Gender Odyssey San Diego, San Diego, CA
2019	Grand Rounds	Transgender Youth; What's New in 2019?, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, CA
2019	CME Symposium	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Children's Hospital Orange County, CA
2019	CME Symposium	Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, CA
2019	CME Educational Lecture	Rethinking Gender, Olive View Medical Center Grand Rounds, CA
2020	CME Lecture	Gender Affirmation Through a Social Justice Lens, SAHM Conference, Virtual Presentation
2020	CME Lecture	Introduction to the Care of Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, AAP Conference, Virtual Lecture
2020	CME Lecture	Conversations with LGBTQ youth; the role of the pediatrician, AAP Conference, Virtual Lecture
2020	Grand Rounds	Creating Affirming Environments for Trans and Gender Diverse Patients, USC OB/Gyn Grand Rounds, Virtual Presentation
2020	CME Lecture	Introduction to the Care of Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Resident Lecture, CHLA
2020	CME Lecture	Introduction to the Care of Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Facey Medical Group, Los Angeles, CA
2020	Plenary Lecture	Reframing Gender Dysphoria, LEAH Conference, Los Angeles, CA
2020	CME Lecture	Gender Affirming Care for Pre and Peri-pubertal Trans and Gender Diverse Youth, LEAH Conference, Los Angeles, CA
2020	CME Lecture	Introduction to the Care of Gender Diverse and Transgender Youth, Division of Endocrinology, USC, Los Angeles, CA
2021	CME Lecture	Transitioning: From Invalidation and Trauma to Gender Affirming Care; Department of Anesthesiology at CHLA

2021	CME Lecture	Transitioning from Invalidation and Trauma to Gender Affirming Care; ACCM Grand Rounds, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Virtual presentation
2021	CME Symposium	TransYouth Care; Transfamily Support San Diego, Virtual Symposium
2021	Symposium	TransYouth Care for Parents; Santa Clara, CA
2022	CME Lecture	Gender affirming medical interventions; An Evolving landscape, Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference, San Diego, California
2022	CME Symposium	TransYouth Care for Mental Health Providers; Santa Clara, CA
2022	CME Symposium	TransYouth Care; Transfamily Support San Diego, Virtual Symposium

International Lectures

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Title, Location</i>
2013	Keynote	Caring for Gender Non-conforming Children and Adolescents in the New Millennium, Vancouver, Canada
2016	CME; professional conference	Social Transitions in Pre-pubertal Children; What do we know? World Professional Association of Transgender Health, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2016	CME; professional conference	Beyond Male and Female; Approach to Youth with Non-Binary Gender Identities, World Professional Association of Transgender Health, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2016	CME; professional conference	Workgroup on Gender Nonconforming/Transgender Youth: Biopsychosocial Outcomes and Development of Gender Identity, World Professional Association of Transgender Health, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2017	Invited Lecture	Gender Dysphoria, Beyond the Diagnosis, Pink Competency, Oslo Norway
2017	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents: A United States Perspective, Pink Competency, Oslo Norway
2017	Invited Lecture	Caring for Gender Non-conforming and Transgender youth and Young Adults, Diverse Families Forum: The Importance of Family Support in The Trans And LGBT Children, Organized by COPRED and The International Association Of Families For Diversity (FDS), Mexico City, Mexico
2018	Invited Lecture	Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Adolescents and Young Adults: Comparison of Nonsurgical and Postsurgical Cohorts, Buenos Aires, Argentina
2018	Invited Lecture	Transgender Youth and Gender Affirming Hormones; A 6-8 year follow-up, Buenos Aires, Argentina
2018	Invited Lecture	Transyouth Care – An NIH Multisite Study About the Impact of Early Medical Treatment in Transgender Youth in the US, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2018	Invited Lecture	Uso de Hormonas Reafirmantes de Genero en Adolescentes Transgenero, Trans Amor Congreso Nacional de Transexualidad Juvenil y Infantes, Monterey, Mexico
2018	Invited Lecture	Bloqueadores de la Pubertad, Trans Amor Congreso Nacional de Transexualidad Juvenil y Infantes, Monterey, Mexico
2018	CME Educational Lecture	Puberty Blockers and Gender Affirming Hormones for Transgender Youth: What Do We Know, and What Have We Learned, Pediatric Academic Societies, Toronto, Canada
2019	Grand Rounds	Rethinking Gender, Grand Rounds, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada
2019	Keynote	<i>Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis</i> , Promoting Innovation and Collaboration to Support Gender Diverse Youth Conference, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada, December 2019
2019	Invited Lecture	Hormonas que Affirman el Genero pasa Juventud y Adultos Menores Trans, Transformando Desde el Amor y Las Familias, Colombia
2019	Invited Lecture	Infancia Trans y da Genero Diverso, Transformando Desde el Amor y Las Familias, Colombia
2019	Invited Lecture	Transgender Youth: Medical and Mental Health Needs, Bristol, United Kingdom
2019	Invited Lecture	Rethinking Gender, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
2019	CME; professional conference	Male Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Adolescents and Young Adults, European Professional Association of Transgender Health, Rome Italy
2019	CME; professional conference	Transgender Youth and Gender Affirming Hormones; 5-7 Year Follow Up, European Professional Association of Transgender Health, Rome Italy
2019	CME Educational Lecture	Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis, European Professional Association of Transgender Health, Rome Italy
2022	Plenary Session	The Landscape of Gender Affirming Care for Youth in the US, AusPATH, Virtual
2022	CME; professional conference	Emotional Functioning of Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria After Two Years of Treatment; WPATH Conference, Montreal, Canada
2022	CME; Professional Conference	Creating Enduring Materials; WPATH Conference, Montreal, Canada
2023		

Keynote/Plenary Presentations

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Title, Location</i>
2015	Keynote	The Future of Trans Care in the New Millennium, Gender Infinity Conference, Houston, Texas
2016	Plenary Session	Caring for Trans Youth and Gender Non-Conforming Children, Transgender Spectrum Conference, St. Louis, Missouri
2018	Keynote	Future Directions, USPATH, Washington DC
2019	Keynote	Gender Dysphoria; A Deeper Dive Beyond the Diagnosis, Inaugural LGBTQ summit, Santa Clara CA
2021	CME; professional conference	Advances and Challenges in the Care of Transgender/Gender Diverse Youth; USPATH Conference, Virtual presentation
2022	Keynote	Gender Affirmation Through a Social Justice Lens, Indiana University School of Medicine
2022	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Non-Binary Youth, Supporting the Well-Being of LGBTQ Youth Certificate Program Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Georgetown University, virtual training
2022	Invited Lecture	Transgender and Non-Binary Youth, Young Women's Career Conference (YWCC) for the Girls Academic Leadership Academy; virtual lecture

PUBLICATIONS:

*** INDICATES TRAINEES**

**** INDICATE YOURSELF AS CO-FIRST OR CO-CORRESPONDING OR SENIOR AUTHORS**

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1. Belzer M, Sanchez K, **Olson J**, Jacobs AM, Tucker D. Advance supply of emergency contraception: a randomized trial in adolescent mothers. J Pediatr Adolesc Gynecol. 2005 Oct;18(5):347-54. PubMed PMID: 16202939.
2. Puccio JA, Belzer M, **Olson J**, Martinez M, Salata C, Tucker D, Tanaka D. The use of cell phone reminder calls for assisting HIV-infected adolescents and young adults to adhere to highly active antiretroviral therapy: a pilot study. AIDS Patient Care STDS. 2006 Jun;20(6):438-44. PubMed PMID: 16789857.
3. **Olson J****, Forbes C, Belzer M. Management of the transgender adolescent. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2011 Feb;165(2):171-6. doi: 10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.275. Review. PubMed PMID: 21300658.
4. Simons L*, Schrager SM, Clark LF, Belzer M, **Olson J****. Parental support and mental health among transgender adolescents. J Adolesc Health. 2013 Dec;53(6):791-3. DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.07.019. Epub 2013 Sep 4. PubMed PMID: 24012067; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC3838484.
5. Belzer ME, Naar-King S, **Olson J**, Sarr M, Thornton S, Kahana SY, Gaur AH, Clark LF; Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions. The use of cell phone support for non-adherent HIV-infected youth and young adults: an initial randomized and controlled intervention trial. AIDS Behav. 2014 Apr;18(4):686-96. doi: 10.1007/s10461-013-0661-3. PubMed PMID: 24271347; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC3962719.

6. **Olson J****, Garofalo R. The peripubertal gender-dysphoric child: puberty suppression and treatment paradigms. *Pediatr Ann.* 2014 Jun;43(6):e132-7. doi: 10.3928/00904481-20140522-08. PMID: 24972421.
7. **Olson J****, Schrager SM, Clark LF, Dunlap SL, Belzer M. Subcutaneous Testosterone: An Effective Delivery Mechanism for Masculinizing Young Transgender Men. *LGBT Health.* 2014 Sep;1(3):165-7. doi: 10.1089/lgbt.2014.0018. Epub 2014 Jun 26. PMID: 26789709.
8. Schrager SM, **Olson J**, Beharry M*, Belzer M, Goldsich K*, Desai M, Clark LF. Young men and the morning after: a missed opportunity for emergency contraception provision? *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care.* 2015 Jan;41(1):33-7. doi: 10.1136/jfprhc-2013-100617. Epub 2014 Jan 24. PubMed PMID: 24465024.
9. Belzer M, Kolmodin MacDonell K, Clark L, Huang J, **Olson J**, Kahana S, Naar S, Sarr M, Thornton S. Acceptability and Feasibility of a Cell Phone Support Intervention for Youth Living with HIV with Nonadherence to Antiretroviral Therapy, *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, Vol. 29, No. 6, June 2015: 338-345. doi: 10.1089/apc.2014.0282;
10. Klein DA, Ellzy JA, **Olson J****. Care of a Transgender Adolescent. *Am Fam Physician.* 2015 Jul 15;92(2):142-8. PMID: 26176373.
11. **Olson J****, Schrager SM, Belzer M, Simons LK*, Clark LF. Baseline Physiologic and Psychosocial Characteristics of Transgender Youth Seeking Care for Gender Dysphoria. *J Adolesc Health.* 2015 Oct;57(4):374-80. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.04.027. Epub 2015 Jul 21. PMID: 26208863; PMCID: PMC5033041.
12. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Cohen-Kettenis PT, Kreukels BP, Meyer-Bahlburg HF, Garofalo R, Meyer W, Rosenthal SM. Research priorities for gender nonconforming/transgender youth: gender identity development and biopsychosocial outcomes. *Curr Opin Endocrinol Diabetes Obes.* 2016 Apr;23(2):172-9. doi: 10.1097/MED.0000000000000236. PMID: 26825472; PMCID: PMC4807860.
13. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Okonta V, Clark LF, Belzer M. Physiologic Response to Gender-Affirming Hormones Among Transgender Youth. *J Adolesc Health.* 2018 Apr;62(4):397-401. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2017.08.005. Epub 2017 Oct 19. PMID: 29056436; PMCID: PMC7050572.
14. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Warus J*, Okonta V, Belzer M, Clark LF. Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Minors and Young Adults: Comparisons of Nonsurgical and Postsurgical Cohorts. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2018 May 1;172(5):431-436. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.5440. PMID: 29507933; PMCID: PMC5875384.
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16. Pang KC, Notini L, McDougall R, Gillam L, Savulescu J, Wilkinson D, Clark BA, **Olson-Kennedy J**, Telfer MM, Lantos JD. Long-term Puberty Suppression for a Nonbinary Teenager. *Pediatrics.* 2020 Feb;145(2):e20191606. doi: 10.1542/peds.2019-1606. PMID: 31974217.

17. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Chan YM, Garofalo R, et al. Impact of Early Medical Treatment for Transgender Youth: Protocol for the Longitudinal, Observational Trans Youth Care Study. *JMIR Res Protoc*. 2019;8(7):e14434. Published 2019 Jul 9. doi:10.2196/14434
18. Rider, G. N., Berg, D., Pardo, S. T., **Olson-Kennedy, J.**, Sharp, C., Tran, K. M., Calvetti, S., & Keo-Meier, C. L. (2019). Using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) with transgender/gender nonconforming children and adolescents. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 7(3), 291–301. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpp0000296>
19. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Chan YM, Rosenthal S, Hidalgo MA, Chen D, Clark L, Ehrensaft D, Tishelman A, Garofalo R. Creating the Trans Youth Research Network: A Collaborative Research Endeavor. *Transgend Health*. 2019 Nov 1;4(1):304-312. doi: 10.1089/trgh.2019.0024. PMID: 31701011; PMCID: PMC6830532.
20. Lee JY, Finlayson C, **Olson-Kennedy J**, Garofalo R, Chan YM, Glidden DV, Rosenthal SM. Low Bone Mineral Density in Early Pubertal Transgender/Gender Diverse Youth: Findings from the Trans Youth Care Study. *Journal of the Endocrine Society*. 2020 September 1;4(9):bvaa065. PubMed PMID: 32832823; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC7433770; DOI: 10.1210/jendso/bvaa065
21. Millington K, Schulmeister C, Finlayson C, Grabert R, **Olson-Kennedy J**, Garofalo R, Rosenthal SM, Chan YM. Physiological and Metabolic Characteristics of a Cohort of Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth in the United States. *J Adolesc Health*. 2020 Sep;67(3):376-383. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.03.028. Epub 2020 May 14. PMID: 32417098; PMCID: PMC7483238.
22. Pang KC, Notini L, McDougall R, Gillam L, Savulescu J, Wilkinson D, Clark BA, **Olson-Kennedy J**, Telfer MM, Lantos JD. Long-term Puberty Suppression for a Nonbinary Teenager. *Pediatrics*. 2020 Feb;145(2):e20191606. doi: 10.1542/peds.2019-1606. PMID: 31974217.
23. **Olson-Kennedy J****, Streeter LH*, Garofalo R, Chan YM, Rosenthal SM. Histrelin Implants for Suppression of Puberty in Youth with Gender Dysphoria: A Comparison of 50 mcg/Day (Vantas) and 65 mcg/Day (SupprelinLA). *Transgender health*. 2021 February;6(1):36-42. PubMed PMID: 33644320; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC7906230; DOI:10.1089/trgh.2020.0055.
24. Millington K, Finlayson C, **Olson-Kennedy J**, Garofalo R, Rosenthal SM, Chan YM. Association of High-Density Lipoprotein Cholesterol With Sex Steroid Treatment in Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth. *JAMA pediatrics*. 2021 May 1;175(5):520-521. PubMed PMID: 33587098; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC7885095; DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.5620.
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2. Forcier M, **Olson J****, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth, AM:STARs Hot Topics in Adolescent Health: Adolescent Medicine State of the Art Reviews, 25(2), August 2014 [American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Adolescent Health](#)
3. **Olson J****, Transgender Youth and Young Adults. In: Neinstein's Adolescent and Young Adult Health Care: A Practical Guide, 6th edition, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2015
4. **Olson-Kennedy J****. Mental Health Disparities Among Transgender Youth: Rethinking the Role of Professionals. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2016 May 1;170(5):423-4. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.0155. PMID: 26998945.
5. Clark BA, Virani A, Ehrensaft D, **Olson-Kennedy J**. Resisting the Post-Truth Era: Maintaining a Commitment to Science and Social Justice in Bioethics. *Am J Bioeth*. 2019 Jul;19(7):W1-W3. doi: 10.1080/15265161.2019.1618951. PMID: 31237512.
6. **Olson-Kennedy J****. The Care of Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Youth. Lavin N, Manual of Endocrinology and Metabolism, 5th Edition, Wolters Kluwer, 2019
7. **Olson-Kennedy J****. When the Human Toll of Conversion Therapy Is Not Enough. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2022 May 1;176(5):450-451. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.0049. PMID: 35254396.
8. Turban JL, Brady C, **Olson-Kennedy J**. Understanding and Supporting Patients with Dynamic Desires for Gender-Affirming Medical Interventions. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(7):e2224722. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.24722

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1. **Olson, J**.** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer youth and the internet- a virtual closet or cornucopia? – California Pediatrician, Jan 2011
2. Hildago MA, Ehrensaft D, Tishelman AC, Clark LF, Garofalo R, Rosenthal SM, Spack NP, **Olson J**.** The gender affirmative model: What we know and what we aim to learn. *Human Development*, 2013, 3: 285-290. Edited manuscript; senior author
3. **Olson-Kennedy, J**.**, 2018. "Hot Topics and Fresh Paradigms in Gender, Diversity, and Care", AM:STARS: LGBTQ Youth: Enhancing Care For Gender and Sexual Minorities, American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Adolescent Health
4. **Olson J**.**, Forcier M, Overview of the management of gender nonconformity in children and adolescents, In: UpToDate, Post TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA Role: co-first authored manuscript – drafting and editing.
5. Forcier M, **Olson J**.**, Overview of gender development and clinical presentation of gender nonconformity in children and adolescents, In: UpToDate, Post TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA. Role: co-first authored manuscript – drafting and editing.

ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

1. Beharry M*, **Olson J**.**, Men and the Morning After, poster presented at the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, Toronto, 2010.
2. **Olson J**.**, Clark L, Schrager S, Simons L, Belzer M, Baseline Characteristics Of Transgender Youth Naïve To Cross Sex Hormone Therapy, J Adol Health, February 2013 (Vol. 52, Issue 2, Supplement 1, Pages S35-S36, DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.10.086)
3. **Olson J.**, Transgender Youth; An Overview of Medical and Mental Health Needs of Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents, Models of Pride, Los Angeles LGBT Center's LifeWorks, Los Angeles, CA, 2014
4. **Olson J.**, Transitioning Teens and the Adolescent Experience, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Gender Spectrum, Moraga, CA, 2014
5. **Olson J.**, Outside of the Gender Binary: Defining and Caring for Non-Binary Identified Youth, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Gender Spectrum, Moraga, CA, 2014
6. **Olson J.**, Medical Care of Transgender Adolescents, Cross sex Hormones, Gender Infinity Conference, Houston, TX, 2014
7. **Olson J.**, Cross Sex Hormone Therapy for Transgender Teens, Southern Comfort Conference, Atlanta, GA, 2014
8. **Olson J.**, Puberty Suppression, Southern Comfort Conference, Atlanta, GA, 2014

9. **Olson J**, Medical Treatment of Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Chico Trans* Week, Stonewall Alliance & Chico California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Chico, CA
10. **Olson J**, Transgender Youth 101, Stonewall LGBT Health Symposium, Los Angeles, CA, 2014
11. **Olson J**, Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Adolescents, EDGY Conference, Los Angeles, CA, 2015
12. **Olson J**, Gender Non-conforming Children and Transgender Teens, Chico Trans Week, Stonewall Alliance Center of Chico, Chico, CA, 2015
13. **Olson J**, Cross-sex Hormones for Transgender Youth, Transgender Health and Education Alliance Family Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015
14. **Olson J**, Puberty Suppression in Gender Non-conforming Children, Gender Odyssey Conference, Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA, 2014
15. **Olson J**, Cross sex Hormones, Gender Odyssey Conference, Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA, 2014
16. **Olson J**, Just a Boy, Just a Girl, Gender Spectrum, Gender Spectrum Professional Conference, Moraga, California, 2015
17. **Olson J**, Transition for Teens and Young Adults, Gender Infinity Provider and Advocacy Day, Gender Infinity Conference, Houston, TX, 2015
18. **Olson J**, Puberty Blockers and Hormone Therapy, Gender Infinity Conference, Houston, TX, 2015
19. **Olson J**, Just a Boy, Just a Girl; Gender Odyssey Conference, Seattle, WA, 2015
20. **Olson J**, Puberty Blockers and Cross Sex Hormones, Gender Odyssey Conference, Seattle, WA, 2015
21. **Olson J**, Outside of the Binary, Gender Odyssey Conference, Seattle, WA, 2015
22. **Olson J**, Outside of the Gender Binary: Defining and Caring for Non-Binary Identified Youth, Gender Spectrum, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Moraga, CA, 2015
23. **Olson, J**, Caring for Youth with Gender Dysphoria, Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting, Pediatric Academic Societies, San Diego, California, 2015
24. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Parents of Trans and Gender Fluid Youth, Models of Pride, Los Angeles, CA, 2016
25. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Caring for Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth, Intersections in Queer Health, SoCal LGBT Health Conference, Irvine, CA, 2016
26. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Outside of the Binary; Care for Non-Binary Adolescents and Young Adults, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA, 2016

27. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Nonconforming Children and Adolescents, AAP National Conference, San Francisco, California, 2016
28. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Masculinizing Hormone Therapy, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
29. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Just a Boy, Just a Girl, Houston, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
30. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Blockers, Houston, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
31. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy for Adolescents and Young Adults, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
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33. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Models of Care & Legal Issues Related to Consent, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
34. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Defining and Caring for Non-binary Identified Youth, Gender Infinity, Houston Texas, 2016
35. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Beyond Male and Female; Approach to Youth with Non-Binary Gender Identities; Gender Spectrum, Moraga, California, 2016
36. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Meier, C, TYFA Research: Demographics of a US sample of Two Cohorts of Gender Non-conforming Children, Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA 2016
37. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Affirming Hormones; Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA 2016
38. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Beyond Male and Female; Approach to Youth with Non-Binary Gender Identities; Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA, 2016
39. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression; What When and How?; Gender Odyssey, Seattle, WA, 2016
40. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Care of Gender Nonconforming Children and Adolescents, Southeastern Transgender Health Summit, Asheville, North Carolina, 2016
41. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression in the United States; practice models, lessons learned, and unanswered questions, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA 2017
42. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression in the United States; practice models, lessons learned, and unanswered questions, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA 2017
43. **Olson-Kennedy J**, “Just a Boy, Just a Girl” Gender Infinity, Houston TX 2017
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45. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Outside of the Binary; Care for Non-Binary Adolescents and Young Adults, Gender Infinity, Houston TX 2017
46. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Blockers; What, When and How, Gender Infinity, Houston TX 2017
47. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Non-Conforming Children and Transgender Youth; Integrated Care Conference, Los Angeles, CA, 2017
48. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Children and Adolescents; A Multidisciplinary Approach, California Psychiatric Association Annual Conference, Yosemite, CA, 2017
49. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis, Models of Pride, Los Angeles, CA
50. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Delay and Cross Hormones for Trans* Youth, Models of Pride, Los Angeles, CA
51. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Masculinizing Hormones, Central Texas Transgender Health Conference, Austin, TX, 2017
52. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Children, Youth, Families and Hormone Blockers, Central Texas Transgender Health Conference, Austin, TX, 2017
53. **Olson-Kennedy J**, “Just a Boy, Just a Girl” Gender Infinity, Houston TX, 2017
54. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Chest Dysphoria – The Impact of Male Chest Reconstruction, Gender Odyssey Professional Symposium, Seattle, WA, 2017
55. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Delay and Cross Hormones for Transyouth, Gender Odyssey Professional Symposium, Seattle, WA, 2017
56. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Just a Girl, Just a Boy, Gender Odyssey Professional Symposium, Pasadena, CA, 2017
57. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Blockers and Cross Sex Hormones, Gender Odyssey, Pasadena, CA, 2017
58. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Gender Dysphoria, Gender Spectrum Family Conference, Moraga, CA, 2017
59. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Rethinking Gender, Chico TransGNC Week, Chico, CA, 2017
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61. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression in the United States; practice models, lessons learned, and unanswered questions, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA, 2017

62. **Olson-Kennedy J**, The Impact of Male Chest Reconstruction on Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Adolescents and Young Men; A Preliminary Study, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA, 2017
63. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Outside of the Binary; Care for Non-Binary Adolescents and Young Adults, US Professional Association of Transgender Health, Los Angeles, CA, 2017
64. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Gender Dysphoria: Beyond the Diagnosis, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Supporting the Well-Being of LGBTQ Youth Certificate Program, Washington DC, 2018
65. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis; Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium, Chicago, IL, 2018
66. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression and Gender Affirming Hormones, Gender Fest, Las Vegas, NV, 2018
67. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Dysphoria; Beyond the Diagnosis, Gender Odyssey Family Conference, Seattle WA, 2018
68. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy for Transmasculine Adolescents and Young Adults, Gender Infinity, Houston, TX, 2018
69. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Outside of the Binary; Care for Non-Binary Adolescents and Young Adults, Gender Infinity, Houston, TX, 2018
70. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Chest Dysphoria and the Impact of Chest Reconstruction, Gender Infinity, Houston, TX, 2018
71. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Landon S, Just a Girl, Just a Boy, Gender Infinity, Houston, TX, 2018
72. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Hormones 201: More than Testosterone and Estrogen, Gender Odyssey Professional Symposium, WA, 2018
73. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Puberty Suppression: What, When, and How, Gender Odyssey Family Conference, Seattle WA, 2018
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75. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Male Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Minors and Young Adults, Gender Odyssey Professional Symposium, WA, 2018
76. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Mosser S, Chest Surgery, Gender Spectrum, Moraga, CA 2018
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80. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Transyouth Care – Self-reflection on Personal Biases and Their Impact on Care, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, Seattle WA, 2018
81. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Rethinking Gender, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, Seattle WA, 2018
82. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Providing 360 degree transgender hormone therapy: beyond the protocols, Medical Directors Council (MeDC) 14th Annual Clinical Update in Reproductive Health and Medical Leadership, Snowbird, Utah, 2018
83. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Gender Dysphoria: Beyond the Diagnosis, Gender Education and deMystification Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2018
84. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Rethinking Gender, SoCal LGBTQIA Health Conference, Los Angeles, CA, 2018
85. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Hormones 201 – Beyond T and E, Gender Odyssey San Diego, San Diego, CA, 2019
86. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Landon S, Just a Boy, Just a Girl, Gender Odyssey San Diego, San Diego, CA, 2019
87. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Gender Dysphoria; A Deeper Dive Beyond the Diagnosis, Advance LA Conference, California
88. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Histrelin Implants for Suppression of Puberty in Youth with Gender Dysphoria: a Comparison of 50 mcg/day (Vantas) and 65 mcg/day (SupprelinLA), WPATH Conference, Virtual Presentation, 2020
89. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Adolescents and Young Adults, Comparison of Post-surgical and Non-surgical Cohorts, WPATH Conference, Virtual Presentation, 2020
90. **Olson-Kennedy J**, Olson-Kennedy A, Gender Dysphoria: Beyond the Diagnosis, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Supporting the Well-Being of LGBTQ Youth Certificate Program, Virtual Presentation, 2020

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Transgender 13-year-old Zoey having therapy, BBC

Driven to Suicide, People Magazine

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Fellow Olympian on Bruce Jenner's Transgender Announcement: 'Hardest Thing I Could Ever Imagine' ET Online

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15-Year-Old Transgender Teen Hopes to Inspire Others, Fox 11

Pausing Puberty with Hormone Blockers May Help Transgender Kids, Fox News

'I Am Jazz': Transgender Teen on Grappling with High School, Puberty, ABC/Nightline

New study proves transgender status is not the result of a hormone imbalance, Examiner.com

Transgender youth have typical hormone levels, Science Daily

Health Effects of Transitioning in Teen Years Remain Unknown, NPR

STUDY: Being Young and Trans Is Not the Result of a Hormonal Imbalance

Transgender Kids Found to Have No Hormone Abnormalities Contributing To Their Experience, The Advocate

No Difference in Hormone Levels of Transgender Youth, Science 2.0

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First Study on Transgender Youth Tx Outcomes Starting Soon, Monthly Prescribing Reference

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Exhibit B

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**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Tallahassee Division**

AUGUST DEKKER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JASON WEIDA, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 4:22-cv-00325-RH-MAF

EXPERT REPORT OF DANIEL SHUMER, M.D.

I, Daniel Shumer, M.D., hereby declare and state as follows:

1. I have been retained by counsel for Plaintiffs as an expert in connection with the above-captioned litigation.

2. I have actual knowledge of the matters stated herein. If called to testify in this matter, I would testify truthfully and based on my expert opinion.

I. BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

A. Qualifications

3. I am a Pediatric Endocrinologist, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, and the Clinical Director of the Child and Adolescent Gender Clinic at Mott Children's Hospital at Michigan Medicine. I am also the Medical Director of the

Comprehensive Gender Services Program at Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan.

4. I am Board Certified in Pediatrics and Pediatric Endocrinology by the American Board of Pediatrics and licensed to practice medicine in the state of Michigan.

5. I received my medical degree from Northwestern University in 2008. After completing a Residency in Pediatrics at Vermont Children's Hospital, I began a Fellowship in Pediatric Endocrinology at Harvard University's Boston Children's Hospital. Concurrent with the Fellowship, I completed a Master of Public Health from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. I completed both the Fellowship and the MPH degree in 2015.

6. I have extensive experience in working with and treating children and adolescents with endocrine conditions including differences in sex development (DSD) (also referred to as intersex conditions), gender dysphoria, type 1 diabetes, thyroid disorders, growth problems, and delayed or precocious puberty. I have been treating patients with gender dysphoria since 2015.

7. A major focus of my clinical, teaching, and research work pertains to the assessment and management of transgender adolescents.

8. I have published extensively on the topic of gender identity in pediatrics and the treatment of gender dysphoria, as well as reviewed the peer-reviewed literature concerning medical treatments for gender dysphoria, the current standards of care the treatment of gender dysphoria, and research articles on a variety of topics with a focus on mental health in transgender adolescents.

9. I am involved in education of medical trainees. I am the Fellowship Director in the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology, Education Lead for the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology, and Course Director for a medical student elective in Transgender Medicine. My additional academic duties as an Associate Professor include teaching several lectures, including those entitled “Puberty,” “Transgender Medicine,” and “Pediatric Growth and Development.”

10. As a Fellow at Harvard, I was mentored by Dr. Norman Spack. Dr. Spack established the Gender Management Services Clinic (GeMS) at Boston Children’s Hospital. While working and training at GeMS, I became a clinical expert in the field of transgender medicine within Pediatric Endocrinology and began conducting research on gender identity, gender dysphoria, and the evaluation and management of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents.

11. Based on my work at GeMS, I was recruited to establish a similar program assessing and treating gender diverse and transgender children and

adolescents at the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor. In October 2015, I founded the hospital's Child and Adolescent Gender Services Clinic.

12. The Child and Adolescent Gender Services Clinic has treated over 600 patients since its founding. The clinic provides comprehensive assessment, and when appropriate, treatment with pubertal suppression and hormonal therapies, to patients diagnosed with gender dysphoria. I have personally evaluated and treated over 400 patients with gender dysphoria. The majority of the patients receiving care range between 10 and 21 years old. Most patients attending clinic live in Michigan or Ohio. As the Clinical Director, I oversee the clinical practice, which currently includes 4 physicians (including 1 psychiatrist), 1 nurse practitioner, 2 social workers, 1 research coordinator, as well as nursing and administrative staff. I also actively conduct research related to transgender medicine, gender dysphoria treatment, and mental health concerns specific to transgender youth.

13. I also provide care in in the Differences/Disorders of Sex Development (DSD) Clinic at Michigan Medicine at Mott Children's Hospital. The DSD Clinic is a multidisciplinary clinic focused on providing care to infants and children with differences in the typical path of sex development, which may be influence by the arrangement of sex chromosomes, the functioning of our gonads (i.e. testes, ovaries), and our bodies' response to hormones. The clinic is comprised of members from

Pediatric Endocrinology, Genetics, Psychology, Urology, Gynecology, Surgery, and Social Work. In this clinic I have assessed and treated over 100 patients with DSD. In my role as Medical Director of the Comprehensive Gender Services Program (CGSP), I lead Michigan Medicine's broader efforts related to transgender services. CGSP is comprised of providers from across the health system including pediatric care, adult hormone provision, gynecologic services, adult surgical services, speech/language therapy, mental health services, and primary care. I run monthly meetings with representatives from these areas to help coordinate communication between Departments. I coordinate strategic planning aimed to improve care within the health system related to our transgender population. I also serve as the medical representative for CGSP in discussions with health system administrators and outside entities.

14. I have authored numerous peer-reviewed articles related to treatment of transgender youth. I have also co-authored chapters of medical textbooks related to medical management of transgender patients. I have been invited to speak at numerous hospitals, clinics, and conferences on topics related to clinical care and standards for treating transgender children and youth.

15. The information provided regarding my professional background, experiences, publications, and presentations is detailed in my curriculum vitae, a true and correct copy of the most up-to-date version of which is attached as **Exhibit A**.

B. Prior Testimony

16. In the past four years, I have been retained as an expert and provided testimony at trial or by deposition in the following cases: *Roe et al v. Utah High School Activities Association et al* (Third District Court in and for Salt Lake County, UT); and *Menefee v. City of Huntsville Bd. of Educ.*, No. 5:18-cv-01481 (N.D. Ala.). I also provided expert witness testimony on behalf of a parent in a custody dispute involving a transgender child in the following case: *In the Interest of Younger*, No. DF-15-09887 (Dallas County, Texas).

C. Compensation

17. I am being compensated at an hourly rate for the actual time that I devote to this case, at the rate of \$325 per hour for any review of records, preparation of reports, declarations, and deposition and trial testimony. My compensation does not depend on the outcome of this litigation, the opinions that I express, or the testimony that I provide.

D. Bases for Opinions

18. This report sets forth my opinions in this case and the bases for my opinions.

19. In preparing this report, I reviewed the text of *Florida Medicaid – Generally Accepted Professional Medical Standards Determination on the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria*, including the attachments, as well as the Complaint in this case.

20. I have also reviewed the materials listed in the bibliography attached as **Exhibit B** to this report, as well as the materials listed within my curriculum vitae, which is attached as **Exhibit A**. The sources cited therein include authoritative, scientific peer-reviewed publications. They include the documents specifically cited as supportive examples in particular sections of this report. I may rely on these materials as additional support for my opinions.

21. In addition, I have relied on my scientific education, training, and years of clinical and research experience, and my knowledge of the scientific literature in the pertinent fields.

22. The materials I have relied upon in preparing this report are the same types of materials that experts in my field of study regularly rely upon when forming opinions on these subjects.

23. To the best of my knowledge, I have not met or spoken with the Plaintiffs or their parents. My opinions are based solely on my extensive background and experience treating transgender patients.

24. I may wish to supplement or revise these opinions or the bases for them due to new scientific research or publications or in response to statements and issues that may arise in my area of expertise.

II. EXPERT OPINIONS

A. MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND ON SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY

25. *Sex* is comprised of several components, including, among others, internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, chromosomes, hormones, gender identity, and secondary sex characteristics (IOM, 2011).

26. *Gender identity* is the medical term for a person's internal, innate sense of belonging to a particular sex. Everyone has a gender identity. Diversity of gender identity and incongruence between assigned sex at birth and gender identity are naturally occurring sources of human biological diversity (IOM, 2011). The term *transgender* refers to individuals whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth (Shumer, et al., 2013).

27. The terms *gender role* and *gender identity* refer to different things. *Gender roles* are behaviors, attitudes, and personality traits that a particular society

considers masculine or feminine, or associates with male or female social roles. For example, the convention that girls wear pink and have longer hair, or that boys wear blue and have shorter hair, are socially constructed gender roles from a particular culture and historical period. By contrast, *gender identity* does not refer to socially contingent behaviors, attitudes, or personality traits. It is an internal and largely biological phenomenon, as reviewed below. Living consistent with one's gender identity is critical to the health and well-being of any person, including transgender people (Hidalgo, et al., 2013; Shumer, et al., 2013; White Hughto, et al., 2015).

28. A person's understanding of their gender identity may evolve over time in the natural course of their life, however, attempts to "cure" transgender individuals by forcing their gender identity into alignment with their birth sex (sometimes described as "conversion therapy") has been found to be both harmful and ineffective. In one study, transgender adults who recall previous attempts from healthcare professionals to alter their gender identity reported an increase in lifetime suicide attempts and higher rates of severe psychological distress in the present (Turban, et al., 2020a). In another study, exposure to these types of attempts were found to increase the likelihood that a transgender adolescent will attempt suicide by 55% and more than double the risk for running away from home (Campbell, et al., 2002). Those practices have been denounced as unethical by all major

professional associations of medical and mental health professionals, such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association, among others (Fish, et al., 2022).

29. Scientific research and medical literature across disciplines demonstrates that gender identity, like other components of sex, has a strong biological foundation. For example, there are numerous studies detailing the similarities in the brain structures of transgender and non-transgender people with the same gender identity (Luders, et al., 2009; Rametti, et al., 2011; Berglund, et al., 2008; Savic, et al., 2011). In one such study, the volume of the bed nucleus of the *stria terminalis* (a collection of cells in the central brain) in transgender women was equivalent to the volume found in cisgender women (Chung, et al., 2002).

30. There are also studies highlighting the genetic components of gender identity. Twin studies are a helpful way to understand genetic influences on human diversity. Identical twins share the same DNA, while fraternal twins share roughly 50% of the same DNA, however both types of twins share the same environment. Therefore, studies comparing differences between identical and fraternal twin pairs can help isolate the genetic contribution of human characteristics. Twin studies have shown that if an identical twin is transgender, the other twin is much more likely to

be transgender compared to fraternal twins, a finding which points to genetic underpinnings to gender identity development (Heylens, et al., 2012).

31. There is also ongoing research on how differences in fetal exposures to hormones may influence gender identity. This influence can be examined by studying a medical condition called congenital adrenal hyperplasia. Female fetuses affected by congenital adrenal hyperplasia produce much higher levels of testosterone compared to fetuses without the condition. While most females with congenital adrenal hyperplasia have a female gender identity in adulthood, the percentage of those with gender dysphoria is higher than that of the general population. This suggests that fetal hormone exposures contribute to the later development of gender identity (Dessens, et al, 2005).

32. There has also been research examining specific genetic differences that appear associated with gender identity formation (Rosenthal, 2014). For example, one study examining differences in the estrogen receptor gene among transgender women and cisgender male controls found that the transgender individuals were more likely to have a genetic difference in this gene (Henningsson, et al., 2005).

33. The above studies are representative examples of scientific research demonstrating biological influences on gender identity. Gender identity, like other

complex human characteristics, is rooted in biology with important contributions from neuroanatomic, genetic and hormonal variation (Roselli, 2018).

B. RATIONALE FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS

34. All medical interventions, including treatment for gender dysphoria, require rigorous study and evidence base.

35. There are several studies demonstrating positive results of gender-affirming care in adolescents and adults (de Vries, et al., 2014; de Vries, et al., 2011; Green, et al., 2022; Smith, et al., 2005; Turban, et al., 2022). These studies consistently demonstrate improvement of gender dysphoria with associated improvement of psychological functioning. A 2014 long-term follow-up study following patients from early adolescence through young adulthood showed that gender-affirming treatment allowed transgender adolescents to make age-appropriate developmental transitions while living as their affirmed gender with positive outcomes as young adults (de Vries, et al., 2014). More recently, Green et al. (2022) describe that gender-affirming hormone therapy is correlated with reduced rates of depression and suicidality among transgender adolescents. Turban et al. (2022) documented that access to gender-affirming hormone therapy in adolescence is associated with favorable mental health outcomes in adulthood, when compared to individuals who desired but could not access hormonal interventions.

C. ASSESSMENT OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND ADULTS

36. Due to the incongruence between their assigned sex and gender identity, transgender people experience varying degrees of gender dysphoria, a serious medical condition defined in both the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5 TR) (APA, 2022). *Gender Dysphoria* is defined as an incongruence between a patient's assigned sex and their gender identity present for at least six months, which causes clinically important distress in the person's life. This distress is further defined as impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (APA, 2022). Additional features may include a strong desire to be rid of one's primary or secondary sex characteristics, a strong desire to be treated as a member of the identified gender, or a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings of identified gender (APA, 2022).

37. The World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD), the diagnostic and coding compendia for mental health and medical professionals, codifies Gender Incongruence as the diagnosis resulting from the incongruity between one's gender identity and sex assigned at birth. The Gender Incongruence diagnosis is part of a new "Conditions related to sexual health" chapter in the ICD-11, which is the most recent iteration of the ICD published in 2019

(Costa, et al., 2015; WHO, 2019). This reflects evidence that transgender and gender diverse identities are not conditions of mental ill health and classifying them as such can cause enormous stigma.

38. In children and adolescents, the diagnosis of gender dysphoria is made by a health provider including but not limited to a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or therapist with expertise in gender identity concerns. It is recommended that children and adolescents diagnosed with gender dysphoria engage with a multidisciplinary team of mental health and medical professionals to formulate a treatment plan, in coordination with the parent(s) or guardian(s), with a goal of reduction of gender dysphoria. The *Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8* (“SOC 8”), published by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), provides guidance to providers on how to provide comprehensive assessment and care to this patient population based on medical evidence. These standards recommend involving relevant disciplines, including mental health and medical professionals, to reach a decision with families about whether medical interventions are appropriate and remain indicated through the course of treatment. Multidisciplinary clinics, such as the Child and Adolescent Gender Clinic where I practice, have structured their programs around this model, as guided by the WPATH SOC.

39. In transgender adults, the WPATH SOC recommends that a health care provider assessing and treating a transgender patient should ensure diagnostic criteria are met prior to initiating gender-affirming treatments and ensure that any health conditions that could negatively impact the outcome of treatment are assessed, with risks and benefits discussed, before a decision is made regarding treatment. The capacity of the adult to consent for the specific treatment should be confirmed prior to initiation (Coleman, et al., 2022).

**D. EVIDENCE-BASED CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES
FOR THE TREATMENT OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN
CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS**

40. The goal of any intervention for gender dysphoria is to reduce dysphoria, improve functioning, and prevent the harms caused by untreated gender dysphoria.

41. Gender dysphoria is highly treatable and can be effectively managed. If left untreated, however, it can result in severe anxiety and depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicidality (Reisner, et al., 2015).

42. Based on longitudinal data, and my own clinical experience, when transgender adolescents are provided with appropriate medical treatment and have parental and social support, they are more likely to thrive and grow into healthy adults (de Vries, et al., 2014).

43. In children and adolescents, a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment is typically the first step in evaluation, performed by a mental health provider with experience in gender identity. The goals of this assessment are to develop a deep understanding of the young person's experience with gender identity, to consider whether the child or adolescent meets criteria for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, and to understand what options may be desired and helpful for the adolescent (Coleman, et al., 2022; Coleman, et al., 2012; Hembree, et al., 2017; Hembree, et al., 2009).

44. For children younger than pubertal age, the only recommended treatments do not involve medications. For adolescents, additional treatments involving medications may be appropriate.

45. For pre-pubertal children with gender dysphoria, treatments may include supportive therapy, encouraging support from loved ones, and assisting the young person through elements of a social transition. Social transition may include adopting a new name and pronouns, appearance, and clothing, and correcting identity documents.

46. Options for treatment after the onset of puberty include the use of gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists ("GnRHa") for purposes of preventing progression of pubertal development, and hormonal interventions such as

testosterone and estrogen administration. These treatment options are based on robust research and clinical experience, which consistently demonstrate safety and efficacy.

47. Clinical practice guidelines have been published by several long-standing and well-respected medical bodies: the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the Endocrine Society (Coleman, et al., 2022; Coleman, et al., 2012; Hembree, et al., 2017; Hembree, et al., 2009), as well as the UCSF Center for Excellence in Transgender Health (Deutsch (ed.), 2016). The clinical practice guidelines and standards of care published by these organizations provide a framework for treatment of gender dysphoria in adolescents.

48. WPATH has been recognized as the standard-setting organization for the treatment of gender dysphoria since its founding in 1979. The most recent WPATH Standards of Care (SOC 8) were published in 2022 and represent expert consensus for clinicians related to medical care for transgender people, based on the best available science and clinical experience (Coleman, et al., 2022).

49. The purpose of the WPATH Standards of Care is to assist health providers in delivering necessary medical care to transgender people, to maximize their patients' overall health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment. The

WPATH Standards of Care serve as one of the foundations for the care provided in my own clinic.

50. The WPATH SOC 8 is based on rigorous review of the best available science and expert professional consensus in transgender health. International professionals were selected to serve on the SOC 8 writing committee. Recommendation statements were developed based on data derived from independent systemic literature reviews. Grading of evidence was performed by an Evidence Review Team which determined the strength of evidence presented in each individual study relied upon in the document (Coleman, et al., 2022).

51. The previous version (SOC 7), published in 2012 (Coleman, et al., 2012), was the most recent version at the time of the adoption of Florida Administrative Code, 59G-1.050(7) (the “Challenged Exclusion”). SOC 7 was similar to SOC 8 in the basic tenets of management for transgender adolescents and adults; however, SOC 8 further reinforces these guidelines with data published since the release of SOC 7.

52. In addition, the Endocrine Society is a 100-year-old global membership organization representing professionals in the field of adult and pediatric endocrinology. In 2017, the Endocrine Society published clinical practice guidelines on treatment recommendations for the medical management of gender dysphoria, in

collaboration with Pediatric Endocrine Society, the European Societies for Endocrinology and Pediatric Endocrinology, and WPATH, among others (Hembree, et al, 2017).

53. The Endocrine Society Clinical Guidelines were developed through rigorous scientific processes that “followed the approach recommended by the Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation group, an international group with expertise in the development and implementation of evidence-based guidelines.” The guidelines affirm that patients with gender dysphoria often must be treated with “a safe and effective hormone regimen that will (1) suppress endogenous sex hormone secretion determined by the person’s genetic/gonadal sex and (2) maintain sex hormone levels within the normal range for the person’s affirmed gender.” (Hembree, et al., 2017).

54. The AAP is the preeminent professional body of pediatricians in the United States, with over 67,000 members. The AAP endorses a commitment to the optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for youth. The 2018 policy statement titled *Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents* further lends support to the treatment options outlined in the WPATH Standards of Care and the Endocrine Society’s Clinical Practice Guidelines (Rafferty, et al., 2018).

55. Aside from the AAP, the tenets set forth by the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines and the WPATH Standards of Care are supported by the major professional medical and mental health associations in the United States, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and American Academy of Family Physicians, among others (e.g., AMA, 2019; American Psychological Association, 2015; Drescher, et al., 2018 (American Psychiatric Association); Hembree, et al., 2017 (Endocrine Society); Klein, et al., 2018 (AAFP); National Academies, 2020; WPATH, 2016).

56. As a board-certified pediatric endocrinologist, I follow the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines and the WPATH Standards of Care when treating my patients.

E. TREATMENT PROTOCOLS FOR GENDER DYSPHORIA

57. Undergoing treatment to alleviate gender dysphoria is commonly referred to as a transition. The transition process in adolescence typically includes (i) social transition and/or (ii) medications, including puberty-delaying medication and hormone therapy. The steps that make up a person's transition and their sequence will depend on that individual's medical and mental health needs and decisions made between the patient, family, and multidisciplinary care team.

58. There are no medications considered for transition until after the onset of puberty. Puberty is a process of maturation heralded by production of sex hormones—testosterone and estrogen—leading to the development of secondary sex characteristics. Secondary sex characteristics include testosterone-induced effects such as deepening of the voice, muscular changes, facial and body hair, and estrogen-induced effects such as breast development. There is diversity in the age of pubertal onset; however, most adolescents begin puberty between ages 10 and 12 years.

59. Gender exploration in childhood is expected and healthy. The majority of prepubertal children exploring their gender do not develop gender dysphoria and are not expected to become transgender adolescents or adults. In contrast, data and personal experience shows that children whose gender dysphoria persists into adolescence are highly likely to be transgender (van der Loos, et al., 2022). Some individuals in this field misinterpret older studies showing that a large percentage of children diagnosed with gender identity disorder did not grow up to be transgender (e.g., GAPMS Memo at 14; Attachment D (Cantor) to GAPMS Memo at 6-9). Those studies include children who would not fulfill the current diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria and, in any case, have no relevance to this case because no medications are prescribed to prepubertal children.

60. Puberty-delaying medication and hormone-replacement therapy—both individually and in combination—can significantly improve a transgender young person’s mental health. These treatments allow for a physical appearance more closely aligning with gender identity and decreases the likelihood that a transgender young person will be incorrectly identified with their assigned sex, further alleviating their gender dysphoria, and bolstering the effectiveness of their social transition.

61. At the onset of puberty, adolescents begin to experience the onset of secondary sex characteristics. Adolescents with differences in gender identity may have intensification of gender dysphoria during this time due to development of secondary sex characteristics incongruent with gender identity. Persistence or intensification of gender dysphoria as puberty begins is used as a helpful diagnostic tool as it becomes more predictive of gender identity persistence into adolescence and adulthood (de Vries, et al., 2012).

i. Treatment with puberty-delaying medications

62. Adolescents diagnosed with gender dysphoria who have entered puberty (Tanner Stage 2) may be prescribed puberty-delaying medications (GnRHa) to prevent the distress of developing permanent, unwanted physical characteristics that do not align with the adolescent’s gender identity. Tanner Stage 2 refers to the

stage in puberty whereby the physical effects of testosterone or estrogen production are first apparent on physical exam. Specifically, this is heralded by the onset of breast budding in an individual assigned female at birth, or the onset of testicular enlargement in an individual assigned male at birth. For individuals assigned male at birth, Tanner Stage 2 typically occurs between age 9-14, and for those assigned female at birth between age 8-12.

63. The treatment works by pausing endogenous puberty at whatever stage it is at when the treatment begins, limiting the influence of a person's endogenous hormones on their body. For example, a transgender girl will experience no progression of physical changes caused by testosterone, including facial and body hair, an Adam's apple, or masculinized facial structures. And, in a transgender boy, those medications would prevent progression of breast development, menstruation, and widening of the hips (Coleman, et al., 2022; de Vries, et al., 2012; Deutsch (ed.), 2016; Hembree, et al., 2017; Rosenthal, 2014).

64. GnRHa have been used extensively in pediatrics for several decades. Prior to their use for gender dysphoria, they were used (and still are used) to treat precocious puberty. GnRHa work by suppressing the signal hormones from the pituitary gland (luteinizing hormone [LH] and follicle stimulating hormone [FSH])

that stimulate the testes or ovaries to produce sex hormones. Upon discontinuation of GnRHa, LH and FSH production resume and puberty will also resume.

65. GnRHa have no long-term implications on fertility. In transgender youth, it is most typical to use GnRHa from the onset of puberty (Tanner Stage 2) until mid-adolescence. While treating, the decision to continue treatment will be continually evaluated. Should pubertal suppression no longer be desired, GnRHa would be discontinued, and puberty would re-commence.

66. Prior to initiation of GnRHa, providers counsel patients and their families extensively on potential benefits and risks. Designed benefit of treatment is to reduce the risk of worsening gender dysphoria and mental health deterioration. More specifically, use of GnRHa in transmasculine adolescents allows for decreased chest development, reducing the need for breast binding and surgical intervention in adulthood. For transfeminine adolescents GnRHa limits facial and body hair growth, voice deepening, and masculine bone structure development, which greatly reduce distress both at the time of treatment and later in life and reduce the need for later interventions such as voice therapy, hair removal, and facial feminization surgery.

67. The goal in using GnRHa is to minimize the patient's dysphoria related to progression of puberty and allow for later initiation of puberty consistent with gender identity. When a patient presents to care, the provider assesses the patient's

pubertal stage, pubertal history, and individual needs. A patient may present prior to the onset of puberty (Tanner Stage 1), at the onset of puberty (Tanner Stage 2), or further along in puberty (Tanner Stages 3-5). The pubertal stage and individual needs of the patient then direct conversations regarding care options. A patient at Tanner Stage 2 may benefit from GnRHa, while an older patient who has completed puberty may benefit from pubertal initiation with hormones, as described below. I have observed that providing individualized care based on individual patient characteristics, using the WPATH Standards of Care as the foundation of this care, provides significant benefit to patients, minimizes gender dysphoria, and can eliminate the need for surgical treatments in adulthood.

68. As an experienced pediatric endocrinologist, I treat patients with these same medications for both precocious puberty and gender dysphoria and in both cases the side effects are comparable and easily managed. And for both patient populations the risks are greatly outweighed by the benefits of treatment.

69. In addition, I regularly prescribe GnRHa for patients who do not meet criteria for precocious puberty but who require pubertal suppression. Examples include patients with disabilities who are unable to tolerate puberty at the typical age due to hygienic concerns; minors with growth hormone deficiency who despite growth hormone treatment will have a very short adult height; and young women

with endometriosis. As with gender dysphoria, the prescription of GnRHa to treat these conditions is “off-label,” yet it is widely accepted within the field of endocrinology and not considered experimental. The same holds true for other common medications used in pediatric endocrinology: using metformin for weight loss; growth hormone for short stature not caused by growth hormone deficiency; countless medications used to control type 2 diabetes which have an adult indication but whose manufacturers have not applied for a pediatric indication.

ii. Treatment with hormone therapy

70. In mid-adolescence, the patient, their parents, and the patient’s care team may discuss the possibility of beginning the use of testosterone or estrogen. In my practice we discuss these treatments for a patient who is currently receiving GnRHa, or patients who have already gone through their endogenous puberty and either did not have access to, desire, or elect for GnRHa treatment. In adult patients, use of GnRHa is uncommon, but rather medical decisions are focused more on testosterone or estrogen therapy.

71. These hormone therapies are used to treat gender dysphoria in adolescents and adults to facilitate development of sex-specific physical changes congruent with their gender identity. For example, a transgender man prescribed testosterone will develop a lower voice as well as facial and body hair, while a

transgender woman prescribed estrogen will experience breast growth, female fat distribution, and softer skin.

72. Under the Endocrine Society Clinical Guidelines and SOC 8, hormone therapy is an appropriate treatment for transgender adolescents with gender dysphoria when the experience of dysphoria is marked and sustained over time, the adolescent demonstrates emotional and cognitive maturity required to provide and informed consent/assent for treatment, other mental health concerns (if any) that may interfere with diagnostic clarity and capacity to consent have been addressed, the adolescent has discussed reproductive options with their provider. SOC 8 also highlights the importance of involving parent(s)/guardian(s) in the assessment and treatment process for minors (Coleman, et al., 2022; Hembree, et al., 2017).

73. Under the Endocrine Society Clinical Guidelines and SOC 8, hormone therapy is an appropriate treatment for transgender adults with gender dysphoria when the experience of dysphoria is marked and sustained, other possible causes of apparent gender dysphoria are excluded, any mental and physical health conditions that could negatively impact the outcome of treatment are assessed, the adult has capacity to understand risks and benefits of treatment and provide consent for treatment (Coleman, et al., 2022; Hembree, et al., 2017).

74. Similar to GnRHa, the risks and benefits of hormone treatment are discussed with patients (and families, if the patient is a minor) prior to initiation of testosterone or estrogen. When treated with testosterone or estrogen, the goal is to maintain the patient's hormone levels within the normal range for their gender. Laboratory testing is recommended to ensure proper dosing and hormonal levels. If starting hormonal care after completing puberty, discussion of egg or sperm preservation prior to starting treatment is recommended.

75. Regardless of the treatment plan prescribed, at every encounter with the care team there is a re-evaluation of the patient's gender identity and their transition goals. Should a patient desire to discontinue a medical intervention, the intervention is discontinued. Discontinuation of GnRHa will result in commencement of puberty. Findings from studies in which participants have undergone comprehensive evaluation prior to gender care show low levels of regret (de Vries, et al., 2011; van der Loos, et al., 2022; Wiepjes, et al., 2018).

F. SAFETY AND EFFICACY OF PUBERTY-DELAYING MEDICATIONS AND HORMONE THERAPY TO TREAT GENDER DYSPHORIA

76. GnRHa, prescribed for delaying puberty in transgender adolescents, is both a safe and effective treatment. Patients under consideration for treatment are working within a multidisciplinary team of providers all dedicated to making

informed and appropriate decisions with the patient and family in the best interest of the adolescent. Physicians providing this intervention are trained and qualified in gender identity concerns and childhood growth and development and are participating in this care out of a desire to improve the health and wellness of transgender youth and prevent negative outcomes such as depression and suicide.

77. GnRHa, including injectable leuprolide and implantable histrelin, have rare side effects which are discussed with patients and families prior to initiation. Mild negative effects may include pain at the injection or implantation site, sterile abscess formation, weight gain, hot flashes, abdominal pain, and headaches. These effects can be seen in patients receiving GnRHa for gender dysphoria, or for other indications such as precocious puberty. I counsel patients on maintaining a healthy diet and promote physical activity, and regularly document height and weight during treatment. Nutritional support can be provided for patients at risk for obesity.

78. Risk of lower bone mineral density in prolonged use of GnRHa can be mitigated by screening for, and treating, vitamin D deficiency when present, and by limiting the number of years of treatment based on a patient's clinical course (Rosenthal, 2014). An exceptionally rare but significant side effect, increased intracranial pressure, has been reported in six patients (five treated for precocious puberty, one for transgender care), prompting an FDA warning in July 2022 (AAP,

2022). These cases represent an extremely small fraction of the thousands of patients who have been treated with GnRHa over decades. Symptoms of this side effect (headache, vomiting, visual changes) are reviewed with families and if they occur the medication is discontinued.

79. GnRHa do not have long-term implications on fertility. This is clearly proven from decades of use in the treatment of precocious puberty (Guaraldi, et al., 2016; Martinerie, et al, 2021). Progression through natal puberty is required for maturation of egg or sperm. If attempting fertility after previous treatment with GnRHa followed by hormone therapy is desired, an adult patient would withdraw from hormones and allow pubertal progression. Assistive reproduction could be employed if needed (T'Sjoen, et al., 2013).

80. Patients who initiate hormones after completing puberty are offered gamete preservation prior to hormonal initiation (Coleman, et al., 2022), but even when not undertaken, withdrawal of hormones in adulthood often is successful in achieving fertility when it is desired (Light, et al., 2014; Knudson, et al., 2017).

81. Discussing the topic of fertility is important, and not specifically unique to treatment of gender dysphoria. Medications used for other medical conditions, such as chemotherapeutics used in cancer treatment, can affect fertility. For all medications with potential impacts on fertility, the potential risks and benefits of

both treatment and non-treatment should be reviewed and data regarding risk for infertility clearly articulated prior to the consent or assent of the patient. Risk for fertility changes must be balanced with the risk of withholding treatment.

82. Review of relevant medical literature clearly supports the benefits of GnRHa treatment on both short-term and long-term psychological functioning and quality of life (e.g., Achille, et al., 2020; Carmichael, et al., 2021; Costa, et al., 2015; de Vries, et al., 2014; de Vries, et al., 2011; Kuper, et al., 2020; Turban, et al., 2020b; van der Miesen, et al., 2020). For example, a 2014 long-term follow-up study following patients from early adolescence through young adulthood showed that gender-affirming treatment allowed transgender adolescents to make age-appropriate developmental transitions while living as their affirmed gender with positive outcomes as young adults (de Vries, et al., 2014).

83. In my own practice, adolescent patients struggling with significant distress at the onset of puberty routinely have dramatic improvements in mood, school performance, and quality of life with appropriate use of GnRHa. Side effects encountered are similar to those seen in other patients treated with these medications and easily managed.

84. Hormone therapy (testosterone or estrogen) is prescribed to older adolescents with gender dysphoria. As is the case with GnRHa, the need for hormone

therapy is not unique to transgender adolescents. Patients with conditions such as delayed puberty, hypogonadism, Turner Syndrome, Klinefelter Syndrome, gonadotropin deficiency, premature ovarian failure, and disorders of sex development all require treatment with these hormones, often times starting in adolescence and continuing lifelong. Without testosterone or estrogen treatment, these patients would be unable to progress through puberty normally, which would have serious medical and social consequences. Whether used in adolescents to treat gender dysphoria, or to treat any of these other conditions, testosterone and estrogen are prescribed with a goal to raise the testosterone or estrogen level into the normal male or female range for the patient's age. Careful monitoring of blood levels and clinical progress are required. Side effects are rare, but most often related to overtreatment, which can be minimized with this monitoring. Additionally, side effects are considered, discussed, and easily managed in all individuals needing hormone therapy regardless of the diagnosis necessitating these medications.

85. Venous thromboembolism (blood clotting) is a known side effect of estrogen therapy in all individuals placed on it including transgender women. Risk is increased in old age, in patients with cancer, and in patients who smoke nicotine. This side effect is mitigated by careful and accurate prescribing and monitoring. In my career, no patient has suffered a thromboembolism while on estrogen therapy.

86. Treatment of gender dysphoria with testosterone or estrogen is highly beneficial for both short-term and long-term psychological functioning of adolescents with gender dysphoria and withholding treatment from those who need it is harmful (e.g., Achille, et al., 2020; Allen, et al., 2019; Chen, et al., 2023; de Lara, et al., 2020; de Vries, et al., 2014; Grannis, et al., 2021; Green, et al., 2022; Kaltiala, et al., 2020; Kuper, et al., 2020). To highlight examples, Green et al. (2022) describe that gender-affirming hormone therapy is correlated with reduced rates of depression and suicidality among transgender adolescents. Turban et al. (2022) documented that access to gender-affirming hormone therapy in adolescence is associated with favorable mental health outcomes in adulthood, when compared to individuals who desired but could not access hormonal interventions.

87. I treat many patients with gender dysphoria GnRHa, testosterone, and estrogen. Side effects related to these medications is very rare and can be treated with dose adjustment and/or lifestyle changes.

88. The efficacy of hormone treatment in transgender adults is similarly robust. At least 11 longitudinal studies document improvement in various mental health parameters including depression, anxiety, self-confidence, body image and self-image, general psychological functioning (e.g., Colizzi, et al., 2013; Colizzi, et al., 2014; Corda, et al., 2016; Defreyne, et al., 2018; Fisher, et al., 2016; Heylens, et

al., 2014; Keo-Meier, et al., 2015; Manieri, et al., 2014; Motta, et al., 2018; Oda, et al., 2017; Turan, et al., 2018).

89. In sum, the use of GnRHa and hormones in adolescents, and hormones in adults for the treatment of gender dysphoria is the current standard of care and certainly not experimental. This is due to robust evidence of safety and efficacy. The sum of the data supports the conclusion that treatment of gender dysphoria with these interventions promotes wellness and helps to prevent negative mental health outcomes, including suicidality in adolescent and adult age groups. The data to support these interventions are so strong that withholding such interventions would be negligent and unethical.

G. HARMS ASSOCIATED WITH PROHIBITING AND DISCONTINUING TREATMENT

90. Prohibition of gender-affirming care, or coverage thereof, for adolescents and adults is likely to have devastating consequences. I am concerned that the Challenged Exclusion might lead to a staggering increase in mental health problems including suicidality for transgender Floridians. One study which highlights my concern is a study of over 21,000 patients who report ever desiring gender-affirming hormone care. When comparing those who were able to access this care to those desiring but never accessing care, those able to access care had lower odds of suicidality within the past year. In addition, those individuals where were

able to access care in adolescence had lower odds of suicidality compared to those waiting to access until adulthood (Turban, et al., 2022).

91. Even more concerning is a situation where patients currently receiving care and thriving would be forced to discontinue this care.

III. CONCLUSION

92. In summary, banning coverage of gender-affirming care runs counter to evidence-based best practices and standards of care for the treatment of gender dysphoria in adolescence and adulthood.

93. Gender dysphoria is a challenging condition, but it is treatable through individualized assessment and treatment, which may include social transition, psychotherapy, pubertal suppression, and hormonal therapy. These treatments are not experimental and are supported by all major medical bodies in the field of transgender medicine and pediatrics.

94. Lack of access to these treatments will result in worse outcomes for countless individuals in Florida. Furthermore, banning coverage for evidence-based treatment for gender dysphoria sends a message that transgender people are not valid and should be stigmatized.

95. In my own clinical practice in Michigan, I have seen an influx of patients from states banning medically proven treatments for gender dysphoria who

report not feeling safe living in the community that they have always called home. Adult patients, and parents who love and support their transgender children, have described themselves as “refugees” in their own country, moving to avoid discriminatory laws which they know would clearly harm their health or the health of their child.

96. Banning coverage of effective treatment for gender dysphoria will not eliminate transgender people, but will, unfortunately, lead to an increase in mental health problems and suicidality in an already vulnerable population.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 16th day of February 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Shumer', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Shumer, M.D.

Exhibit A
Curriculum Vitae

Daniel Shumer, MD MPH

Clinical Associate Professor in Pediatrics - Endocrinology

Email: dshumer@umich.edu

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education

- 08/2000-08/2003 BA, Northwestern University, Evanston, United States
- 08/2004-05/2008 MD, Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, United States
- 07/2013-05/2015 MPH, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, United States

Postdoctoral Training

- 06/2008-06/2011 Residency, Pediatrics, Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Burlington, VT
- 07/2011-06/2012 Chief Resident, Chief Resident, Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Burlington, VT
- 07/2012-06/2015 Clinical Fellow, Pediatric Endocrinology, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, MA

CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

Certification

- 10/2011-Present American Board of Pediatrics, General

Licensure

- Michigan, Medical License
- Michigan, Controlled Substance
- 08/2015-Present Michigan, Medical License

09/2015-Present Michigan, DEA Registration

09/2015-Present Michigan, Controlled Substance

WORK EXPERIENCE

Academic Appointment

10/2015-9/2022 Clinical Assistant Professor in Pediatrics - Endocrinology,
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor

09/2022-Present Clinical Associate Professor in Pediatrics - Endocrinology,
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor

Administrative Appointment

07/2019-Present Fellowship Director - Pediatric Endocrinology, Michigan
Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Ann Arbor

07/2020-Present Medical Director of the University of Michigan
Comprehensive Gender Services Program, Michigan
Medicine, Ann Arbor

*Oversee the provision of care to transgender and gender non-
conforming patients at Michigan Medicine.*

07/2020-Present Education Lead - Pediatric Endocrinology, University of
Michigan - Department of Pediatrics, Ann Arbor

Clinical Appointments

04/2022-05/2023 Medical Director in UMMG Faculty Benefits Appt.,
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor

Private Practice

08/2013-09/2015 Staff Physician, Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates,
Braintree

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Gender dysphoria
- Prader Willi Syndrome

CLINICAL INTERESTS

- Gender dysphoria
- Disorders of Sex Development
- Prader Willi Syndrome

GRANTS

Past Grants

A Phase 2b/3 study to evaluate the safety, tolerability, and effects of Livoletide (AZP-531), an unacylated ghrelin analog, on food-related behaviors in patients with Prader-Willi syndrome

PI

Millendo Therapeutics

04/2019 - 04/2021

HONORS AND AWARDS

National

2014 Annual Pediatric Endocrine Society Essay Competition:
Ethical Dilemmas in Pediatric Endocrinology: competition
winner - The Role of Assent in the Treatment of Transgender
Adolescents

Institutional

2012 - 2015 Harvard Pediatric Health Services Research Fellowship;
funded my final two years of pediatric endocrine fellowship
and provided tuition support for my public health degree

- 2016 The University of Michigan Distinguished Diversity Leaders Award, awarded by The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to the Child and Adolescent Gender Services Team under my leadership
- 2019 Lecturer of the Month, Department of Pediatrics, Michigan Medicine

TEACHING MENTORSHIP

Resident

- 07/2020-Present Rebecca Warwick, Michigan Medicine (co-author on publication #22)

Clinical Fellow

- 07/2017-06/2020 Adrian Araya, Michigan Medicine (co-author on publication #22, book chapter #4)
- 12/2020-Present Jessica Jary, Michigan Medicine - Division of Adolescent Medicine

Medical Student

- 09/2017-06/2020 Michael Ho, Michigan Medicine
- 07/2019-Present Hadrian Kinnear, University of Michigan Medical School (co-author on book chapter #3, abstract #3)
- 07/2019-Present Jourdin Batchelor, University of Michigan

TEACHING ACTIVITY

Regional

- 08/2018-Present Pediatric Boards Review Course sponsored by U-M: "Thyroid Disorders and Diabetes". Ann Arbor, MI

Institutional

12/2015-12/2015	Pediatric Grand Rounds: "Transgender Medicine - A Field in Transition". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2016-02/2016	Medical Student Education: Panelist for M1 Class Session on LGBT Health, Doctoring Curriculum. Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2016-02/2016	Psychiatry Grand Rounds: "Transgender Medicine - A Field in Transition". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
03/2016-03/2017	Pharmacy School Education: "LGBT Health". University of Michigan School of Pharmacy, Ann Arbor, MI
04/2016-Present	Course Director: Medical Student (M4) Elective in Transgender Medicine. Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
04/2016-04/2016	Rheumatology Grand Rounds: "Gender Identity". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
05/2016-05/2016	Lecture to Pediatric Rheumatology Division: "Gender Dysphoria". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
07/2016-07/2016	Internal Medicine Resident Education: "Gender Identity". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
09/2016-09/2016	Presentation to ACU Leadership: "Gender Identity Cultural Competencies". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
10/2016-10/2016	Presentation to Department of Dermatology: "The iPledge Program and Transgender Patients". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2017-02/2017	Swartz Rounds Presenter. Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2017-02/2017	Lecture to Division of General Medicine: "Transgender Health". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI

02/2017-02/2017	Presentation at Collaborative Office Rounds: "Transgender Health". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
10/2017-10/2017	Family Medicine Annual Conference: "Transgender Medicine". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
12/2017-12/2017	Presenter at Nursing Unit 12-West Annual Educational Retreat: "Gender Identity at the Children's Hospital". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2018-Present	Pediatrics Residency Lecturer: "Puberty". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2019-Present	Medical Student (M1) Lecturer: "Pediatric Growth and Development". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
02/2019-Present	Doctors of Tomorrow Preceptor: offering shadowing opportunities to students from Cass Technical High School in Detroit. Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI
03/2019-03/2019	Lecture to Division of Orthopedic Surgery: "Transgender Health". Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

2012 - Present Pediatric Endocrine Society

COMMITTEE SERVICE

National

2014 - 2016	Pediatric Endocrine Society - Ethics Committee, Other, Member
2017 - present	Pediatric Endocrine Society - Special Interest Group on Gender Identity, Other, Member
2018 - present	Pediatric Endocrine Society - Program Directors Education Committee, Other, Member

Regional

2013 - 2015 Investigational Review Board - The Fenway Institute, Boston, MA, Other, Voting Member

Institutional

2017 - 2019 Department of Pediatrics at Michigan Medicine; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Other, Fellowship Lead

2017 - 2019 University of Michigan Transgender Research Group, Other, Director

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

2014 Camp Physician, Massachusetts, Served at a camp for youth with Type 1 Diabetes

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATIONS

Extramural Invited Presentation Speaker

1. Grand Rounds, Shumer D, Loyola University School of Medicine, 07/2022, Chicago, Illinois

Other

1. Gender Identity, Groton School, 04/2015, Groton, MA
2. Television Appearance: Gender Identity in Youth, Channel 7 WXYZ Detroit, 04/2016, Southfield, MI
3. It Gets Better: Promoting Safe and Supportive Healthcare Environments for Sexual Minority and Gender Non-Conforming Youth, Adolescent Health Initiative: Conference on Adolescent Health, 05/2016, Ypsilanti, MI
4. Gender Identity, Humanists of Southeast Michigan, 09/2016, Farmington Hills, MI

5. Gender Identity, Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, 10/2016, Grand Rapids, MI
6. Pediatric Grand Rounds - Hormonal Management of Transgender Youth, Beaumont Children's Hospital, 11/2016, Royal Oak, MI
7. Transgender Youth: A Field in Transition, Temple Beth Emeth, 11/2016, Ann Arbor, MI
8. Transgender Youth: A Field in Transition, Washtenaw County Medical Society, 11/2016, Ann Arbor, MI
9. Pediatric Grand Rounds: Transgender Youth - A Field in Transition, St. John Hospital, 02/2017, Detroit, MI
10. Transgender Medicine, Veterans Administration - Ann Arbor Healthcare System, 05/2017, Ann Arbor, MI
11. Gender Identity, Hegira Programs, 05/2017, Detroit, MI
12. Care of the Transgender Adolescent, Partners in Pediatric Care, 06/2017, Traverse City, MI
13. Conference planner, host, and presenter: Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth: Best Practices for Mental Health Clinicians, Educators, & School Staff; 200+ attendees from fields of mental health and education from across Michigan, Michigan Medicine, 10/2017, Ypsilanti, MI
14. Endocrinology Grand Rounds: Transgender Medicine, Wayne State University, 11/2017, Detroit, MI
15. Care of the Transgender Adolescent, St. John Hospital Conference: Transgender Patients: Providing Compassionate, Affirmative and Evidence Based Care, 11/2017, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
16. Hormonal Care in Transgender Adolescents, Michigan State University School of Osteopathic Medicine, 11/2017, East Lansing, MI
17. Working with Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth, Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians, 01/2018, Bellaire, MI

18. Community Conversations, Lake Orion, 01/2018, Lake Orion, MI
19. "I Am Jazz" Reading and Discussion, St. James Episcopal Church, 03/2019, Dexter, MI
20. Gender Identity, Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health, 10/2019, Brighton, MI; Port Huron, MI
21. Ask The Expert, Stand With Trans, 05/2020, Farmington Hills, MI (Virtual due to COVID)
22. Transgender Medicine, Michigan Association of Clinical Endocrinologists Annual Symposium, 10/2020, Grand Rapids, MI (Virtual due to COVID)
23. Transgender Youth in Primary Care, Michigan Child Care Collaborative (MC3), 10/2020, Ann Arbor, MI (Virtual due to COVID)
24. Lets Talk About Hormones, Stand With Trans, 10/2020, Farmington Hills, MI (Virtual due to COVID)
25. Gender Identity, Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty, 04/2021, Virtual due to COVID
26. Unconscious Bias, Ascension St. John Hospital, 05/2021, Virtual due to COVID

PUBLICATIONS/SCHOLARSHIP

Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. Vengalil N, Shumer D, Wang F: Developing an LGBT curriculum and evaluating its impact on dermatology residents, *Int J Dermatol*.61: 99-102, 01/2022. PM34416015

Chapters

1. Shumer: Coma. In Schwartz MW6, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA, (2012)
2. Shumer, Spack: Medical Treatment of the Adolescent Transgender Patient. In Đorđević M; Monstrey SJ; Salgado CJ Eds. CRC Press/Taylor & Francis, (2016)

3. Kinnear HA, **Shumer DE**: Duration of Pubertal Suppression and Initiation of Gender-Affirming Hormone Treatment in Youth. In FinlaysonElsevier, (2018)
4. Araya, **Shumer DE**: Endocrinology of Transgender Care – Children and Adolescents. In Poretsky; Hembree Ed. Springer, (2019)

Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

1. Shumer D: The Effect of Race and Gender Labels in the Induction of Traits, *Northwestern Journal of Race and Gender Criticism*.NA01/2014
2. Shumer D: A Tribute to Medical Stereotypes, *The Pharos, Journal of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Society*.Summer07/2017
3. Mohnach L, Mazzola S, Shumer D, Berman DR: Prenatal diagnosis of 17-hydroxylase/17,20-lyase deficiency (17OHD) in a case of 46,XY sex discordance and low maternal serum estriol, *Case Reports in Perinatal Medicine*.8(1)01/2018
4. Mohnach L, Mazzola S, Shumer D, Berman DR: Prenatal Diagnosis of 17-hydroxylase/17,20-lyase deficiency (17OHD) in a case of 46,XY sex discordance and low maternal serum estriol, *Case Reports in Perinatal Medicine*.8(1)12/2018
5. Kim C, Harrall KK, Glueck DH, **Shumer DE**, Dabelea D: Childhood adiposity and adolescent sex steroids in the EPOCH (Exploring Perinatal Outcomes among Children) study, *Clin Endocrinol (Oxf)*.91(4): 525-533, 01/2019. PM31278867
6. Araya A, Shumer D, Warwick R, Selkie E: 37. “I’ve Been Happily Dating For 5 Years” - Romantic and Sexual Health, Experience and Expectations in Transgender Youth, *Journal of Adolescent Health*.66(2): s20, 02/2020
7. Araya A, Shumer D, Warwick R, Selkie E: 73. "I think sex is different for everybody" - Sexual Experiences and Expectations in Transgender Youth, *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*.33(2): 209-210, 04/2020
8. Araya AC, Warwick R, Shumer D, Selkie E, Rath T, Ibrahim M, Srinivasan A: Romantic Health in Transgender Adolescents, *Pediatrics*.Pediatrics01/2021
9. Martin S, Sandberg ES, **Shumer DE**: Criminalization of Gender-Affirming Care - Interfering with Essential Treatment for Transgender Children and

Adolescents, *New England Journal of Medicine*.385(7): 579-581, 08/2021.
PM34010528

Editorial Comment

1. **Shumer DE**, Harris LH, Opipari VP: The Effect of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender-Related Legislation on Children, 01/2016. PM27575000
2. **Shumer DE**: Health Disparities Facing Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth Are Not Inevitable, 01/2018. PM29437859
3. Martin S, Sandberg ES, Shumer DE: Criminalization of Gender-Affirming Care - Interfering with Essential Treatment for Transgender Children and Adolescents, 01/2021

Erratum

1. Tishelman AC, Kaufman R, Edwards-Leeper L, Mandel FH, **Shumer DE**, Spack NP: Correction to Serving Transgender Youth: Challenges, Dilemmas, and Clinical Examples, [Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 46(1), (2015) 37-45], *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.46(4): 249, 08/2015

Journal Articles

1. **Shumer DE**, Thaker V, Taylor GA, Wassner AJ: Severe hypercalcaemia due to subcutaneous fat necrosis: Presentation, management and complications, *Archives of Disease in Childhood: Fetal and Neonatal Edition*.99(5)01/2014. PM24907163
2. Tishelman AC, Kaufman R, Edwards-Leeper L, Mandel FH, **Shumer DE**, Spack NP: Serving transgender youth: Challenges, dilemmas, and clinical examples, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.46(1): 37-45, 02/2015. PM26807001
3. Reisner SL, Veters R, Leclerc M, Zaslow S, Wolfrum S, **Shumer DE**, Mimiaga MJ: Mental health of transgender youth in care at an adolescent Urban community health center: A matched retrospective cohort study, *Journal of Adolescent Health*.56(3): 274-279, 03/2015. PM25577670

4. **Shumer DE**, Tishelman AC: The Role of Assent in the Treatment of Transgender Adolescents, *International Journal of Transgenderism*.16(2): 97-102, 04/2015. PM27175107

5. **Shumer DE**, Roberts AL, Reisner SL, Lyall K, Austin SB: Brief Report: Autistic Traits in Mothers and Children Associated with Child's Gender Nonconformity, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.45(5): 1489-1494, 05/2015. PM25358249

6. Tishelman AC, Kaufman R, Edwards-Leeper L, Mandel FH, **Shumer DE**, Spack NP: Reply to comment on "serving transgender youth: Challenges, dilemmas, and clinical examples" by Tishelman et al. (2015), *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.46(4): 307, 08/2015. PM26858509

7. **Shumer DE**, Reisner SL, Edwards-Leeper L, Tishelman A: Evaluation of Asperger Syndrome in Youth Presenting to a Gender Dysphoria Clinic, *LGBT Health*.3(5): 387-390, 10/2016. PM26651183

8. Tishelman AC, **Shumer DE**, Nahata L: Disorders of sex development: Pediatric psychology and the genital exam, *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*.42(5): 530-543, 01/2017. PM27098964

9. Edwards-Leeper L, **Shumer DE**, Feldman HA, Lash BR, Tishelman AC: Psychological profile of the first sample of transgender youth presenting for medical intervention in a U.S. pediatric gender center, *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*.4(3): 374-382, 01/2017

10. **Shumer DE**, Abrha A, Feldman HA, Carswell J: Overrepresentation of adopted adolescents at a hospital-based gender dysphoria clinic, *Transgender Health*.2(1): 76-79, 07/2017. PM28861549

11. Strang JF, Meagher H, Kenworthy L, de Vries AL C, Menvielle E, Leibowitz S, Janssen A, Cohen-Kettenis P, **Shumer DE**, Edwards-Leeper L, Pleak RR, Spack N, Karasic DH, Schreier H, Balleur A, Tishelman A, Ehrensaft D, Rodnan L, Kushner ES, Mandel F, Caretto A, Lewis HC, Anthony LG: Initial Clinical Guidelines for Co-Occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria or Incongruence in Adolescents, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*.47(1): 105-115, 01/2018. PM27775428

12. Selkie E, Adkins V, Masters E, Bajpai A, **Shumer DE**: Transgender Adolescents' Uses of Social Media for Social Support, *Journal of Adolescent Health*.66(3): 275-280, 03/2020. PM31690534
13. Warwick RM, **Shumer DE**: Gender-affirming multidisciplinary care for transgender and non-binary children and adolescents, *Children's Health Care*.01/2021
14. Araya AC, Warwick R, **Shumer DE**, Selkie E: Romantic relationships in transgender adolescents: A qualitative study, *Pediatrics*.147(2)02/2021. PM33468600
15. Warwick RM, Araya AC, **Shumer DE**, Selkie EM: Transgender Youths' Sexual Health and Education: A Qualitative Analysis, *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*.35(2): 138-146, 04/2022. PM34619356

Letters

1. Strang JF, Janssen A, Tishelman A, Leibowitz SF, Kenworthy L, McGuire JK, Edwards-Leeper L, Mazefsky CA, Rofey D, Bascom J, Caplan R, Gomez-Lobo V, Berg D, Zaks Z, Wallace GL, Wimms H, Pine-Twaddell E, **Shumer DE**, Register-Brown K, Sadikova E, Anthony LG: Revisiting the Link: Evidence of the Rates of Autism in Studies of Gender Diverse Individuals, *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.57(11): 885-887, 11/2018. PM30392631

Letters to editor

1. **Shumer DE**: Doctor as environmental steward, 01/2009. PM19364173

Notes

1. **Shumer DE**, Mehringer J, Braverman L, Dauber A: Acquired hypothyroidism in an infant related to excessive maternal iodine intake: Food for thought, *Endocrine Practice*.19(4): 729-731, 07/2013. PM23512394

Podcasts

1. Gaggino L, Shumer WG D: Pediatric Meltdown: Caring for Transgender Youth with Compassion: What Pediatricians Must Know, 01/2020

Reviews

1. **Shumer DE**, Spack NP: Current management of gender identity disorder in childhood and adolescence: Guidelines, barriers and areas of controversy, *Current Opinion in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Obesity*.20(1): 69-73, 02/2013. PM23221495
2. Guss C, **Shumer DE**, Katz-Wise SL: Transgender and gender nonconforming adolescent care: Psychosocial and medical considerations, *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*.27(4): 421-426, 08/2015. PM26087416
3. **Shumer DE**, Nokoff NJ, Spack NP: Advances in the Care of Transgender Children and Adolescents, *Advances in Pediatrics*.63(1): 79-102, 08/2016. PM27426896

Short Surveys

1. **Shumer DE**, Spack NP: Transgender medicine-long-term outcomes from 'the Dutch model', *Nature Reviews Urology*.12(1): 12-13, 01/2015. PM25403246

Abstracts/Posters

1. Shumer D, Kinnear H, McLain K, Morgan H: Development of a Transgender Medicine Elective for 4th Year Medical Students, National Transgender Health Summit, Oakland, CA, 2017
2. Shumer D: Overrepresentation of Adopted Children in a Hospital Based Gender Program, World Professional Association of Transgender Health Biennial International Symposium, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2016
3. Shumer D: Mental Health Presentation of Transgender Youth Seeking Medical Intervention, World Professional Association of Transgender Health Biennial International Symposium, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2016
4. Adkins V, Masters E, Shumer D, Selkie E: Exploring Transgender Adolescents' Use of Social Media for Support and Health Information Seeking (Poster Presentation), Pediatric Research Symposium, Ann Arbor, MI, 2017

Exhibit B
Bibliography

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Allen, N. G., Krishna, K. B., & Lee, P. A. (2021). Use of gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogs in children. *Current opinion in pediatrics*, 33(4), 442–448.

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Berglund, H., Lindström, P., Dhejne-Helmy, C., & Savic, I. (2008). Male-to-female transsexuals show sex-atypical hypothalamus activation when smelling odorous steroids. *Cerebral cortex (New York, N.Y. : 1991)*, 18(8), 1900–1908.

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Jack Turban MD MHS
Political Minds

The Evidence for Trans Youth Gender-Affirming Medical Care

Research suggests gender-affirming medical care results in better mental health.

Posted January 24, 2022

✓ Reviewed by Abigail Fagan



KEY POINTS

- Sixteen studies to date have examined the impact of gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth.
- Existing evidence suggests that gender-affirming medical care results in favorable mental health outcomes.
- All major medical organizations oppose legislation that would ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender adolescents.

NOTE: *This post was updated on October 11, 2022. In discussions of studies 5, 7, 8 and 10, the final sentence was appended to include further information about the study.*

time on Twitter. And yes I know, that's my first mistake. I've noticed there seem to be hundreds if not thousands of Twitter accounts that will repeatedly post that there is no evidence that gender-affirming medical care results in good mental health outcomes for transgender youth.

Since several U.S. states are introducing legislation to [outlaw gender-affirming medical care](#) this year (despite opposition from just about every [major medical organization](#) including The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The American Psychiatric Association), I thought this was a good time to review the relevant research for you all. So buckle up — here we go. The studies are in chronological order. I'll provide a brief summary of each and provide the citation for people who want to read more. I'll plan on updating this post as new studies become available. As you read, please keep in mind that all studies have methodological strengths and weaknesses and conclusions must be drawn from all of these studies together.

The Studies

Study 1: De Vries, A. L., Steensma, T. D., Doreleijers, T. A., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2011). Puberty suppression in adolescents with [gender identity disorder](#): A prospective follow-up study. The Journal of Sexual Medicine, 8(8), 2276-2283.

This study from the Netherlands followed 70 transgender adolescents and measured their mental health before and after pubertal suppression. Study participants had improvements in [depression](#) and global functioning following treatment.

Study 2: De Vries, A. L., McGuire, J. K., Steensma, T. D., Wagenaar, E. C., Doreleijers, T. A., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2014). Young adult psychological outcome after puberty suppression and gender reassignment. *Pediatrics*, 134(4), 696-704.

Another study from the Netherlands. This one followed 55 transgender adolescents through pubertal suppression, gender-affirming hormone treatment (estrogen or testosterone), and gender-affirming genital surgery (as adults). Of note, many of these participants were also participants in study 1 (this study followed them for longer). The researchers found that psychological functioning steadily improved over the course of the study and by adulthood these now young adults had global functioning scores similar to or better than age-matched peers in the general population. Of note, one patient in this study died from a surgical complication of vaginoplasty (necrotizing fasciitis), but little additional information is provided.

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER ADVERTISEMENT

Psychological support, puberty suppression, and psychosocial functioning in adolescents with gender dysphoria. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 12(11), 2206-2214.

This study is from the United Kingdom. They followed 101 adolescents who received pubertal suppression at the beginning of the study and 100 adolescents who, for a range of reasons, were deemed by the team not ready to start pubertal suppression and thus did not receive it over the course of the study. Both groups received supportive psychotherapy. Both groups saw improvement in mental health. While the pubertal suppression group had a 5-point higher mean score on the study's psychological functioning scale at the end of the study, the difference was not statistically significant. This could have been due to the small sample size by the end of the study (the researchers only had data from 36 participants in the therapy-only group and 35 participants in the pubertal suppression group at the final time point of the study). We will see that later studies were able to obtain larger sample sizes so that statistically significant differences between those who did and did not receive pubertal suppression could be detected.

Study 4: Allen, L. R., Watson, L. B., Egan, A. M., & Moser, C. N. (2019). Well-being and suicidality among transgender youth after gender-affirming hormones. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 7(3), 302.

This study was from researchers at Children's Mercy Hospital Gender Pathway Services Clinic in Missouri. They followed 47

starting treatment. They found statistically significant increases in general well-being and a statistically significant decrease in suicidality. Of note, the adolescents also received psychotherapy.

Study 5: Kaltiala, R., Heino, E., Työläjäarvi, M., & Suomalainen, L. (2020). Adolescent development and psychosocial functioning after starting cross-sex hormones for gender dysphoria. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 74(3), 213-219.

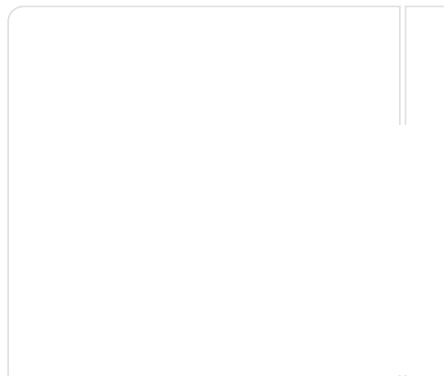
This study is from Finland. Researchers conducted a retrospective chart review of 52 adolescents who received gender-affirming hormones (estrogen or testosterone) and found statistically significant decreases in need for specialist level psychiatric treatment for depression (decreased from 54% to 15%), anxiety (decreased from 48% to 15%), and suicidality or self-harm (decreased from 35% to 4%) following treatment. However, the authors note that gender reassignment is "not enough to improve functioning and relieve psychiatric comorbidities among adolescents with gender dysphoria."

Study 6: de Lara, D. L., Rodríguez, O. P., Flores, I. C., Masa, J. L. P., Campos-Muñoz, L., Hernández, M. C., & Amador, J. T. R. (2020). Psychosocial assessment in transgender adolescents. *Anales de Pediatría (English Edition)*, 93(1), 41-48.

This study is from Spain. It followed 23 transgender adolescents who received gender-affirming hormones (estrogen or testosterone) and 30 cisgender controls for approximately one year. They found the transgender adolescents at

by the end of the study. The transgender adolescents in the study who received gender-affirming hormones had statistically significant improvements in several mental health measures, including anxiety and depression.

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Study 7: van der Miesen, A. I., Steensma, T. D., de Vries, A. L., Bos, H., & Popma, A. (2020).

Psychological functioning in transgender adolescents before and after gender-affirmative care compared with cisgender general population peers.

Journal of Adolescent Health, 66(6), 699-704.

This was another Dutch study, with an impressive sample size. Researchers compared 272 transgender adolescents referred to the gender clinic who had not yet received pubertal suppression with 178 transgender adolescents who had received pubertal suppression. They found those who received pubertal suppression had better mental health outcomes than those who did not receive pubertal suppression. However, because subjects received psychotherapy, the authors note that the study does not provide "direct evidence"

Study 8: Achille, C., Taggart, T., Eaton, N. R., Osipoff, J., Tafuri, K., Lane, A., & Wilson, T. A. (2020). Longitudinal impact of gender-affirming endocrine intervention on the mental health and well-being of transgender youths: preliminary results. *International Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology*, 2020(1), 1-5.

This study was from Stony Brook Children's Hospital in New York. It followed 50 transgender adolescents longitudinally. Over the course of the study, 23 received pubertal suppression only, 35 received gender-affirming hormones only, and 11 received both. Three participants received no gender-affirming medical interventions. Over the course of the study, there was a statistically significant decrease in depression scores in one group: Male-to-female transitioners who underwent puberty suppression only.

Study 9: Kuper, L. E., Stewart, S., Preston, S., Lau, M., & Lopez, X. (2020). Body dissatisfaction and mental health outcomes of youth on gender-affirming hormone therapy. *Pediatrics*, 145(4).

This study was from a gender clinic in Dallas, Texas. The researchers followed 148 transgender adolescents who were receiving gender-affirming medical treatment. 25 received pubertal suppression only, 93 received gender-affirming hormones (estrogen or testosterone) only, and 30 received both. 15 participants received gender-affirming chest surgery. When examining all participants together, the study found

Study 10: Turban, J. L., King, D., Carswell, J. M., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2020). Pubertal suppression for transgender youth and risk of suicidal ideation. *Pediatrics*, 145(2).

This study was conducted by myself along with several other researchers from Harvard Medical School. It utilized data from a non-probability sample of 20,619 transgender adults who reported ever wanting pubertal suppression. Of these, 89 actually received pubertal suppression. After adjusting for **potentially confounding variables**, access to pubertal suppression was associated with a lower odds of lifetime suicidal ideation. Of note, this study did not identify psychotherapy as a potentially confounding variable.

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Study 11: Carmichael, P., Butler, G., Masic, U., Cole, T. J., De Stavola, B. L., Davidson, S., ... & Viner, R. M. (2021). Short-term outcomes of pubertal suppression in a selected cohort of 12 to 15 year old young

This is another study from the United Kingdom. Researchers presented data for transgender adolescents who had received pubertal suppression. They had data for 44 patients after 12 months of treatment, 24 patients after 24 months of treatment, and 14 patients after 36 months of treatment. They were unable to detect any changes on their mental health measures (positive or negative).

Study 12: Grannis, C., Leibowitz, S. F., Gahn, S., Nahata, L., Morningstar, M., Mattson, W. I., ... & Nelson, E. E. (2021). Testosterone treatment, internalizing symptoms, and body image dissatisfaction in transgender boys. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 132, 105358.

This study recruited 42 birth-assigned female adolescents from a gender clinic in Ohio. Nineteen were receiving testosterone and 23 were not. Those not receiving testosterone were not receiving it due to a number of reasons (referred to endocrinology but hadn't started, parents not providing consent, and one was not interested in testosterone). The adolescents who were receiving testosterone treatment had lower scores on measures of generalized anxiety, social anxiety, depression, and body image dissatisfaction.

Study 13: Hisle-Gorman, E., Schvey, N. A., Adirim, T. A., Rayne, A. K., Susi, A., Roberts, T. A., & Klein, D. A. (2021). Mental healthcare utilization of transgender youth before and after affirming treatment. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 18(8), 1444-1454.

healthcare system. The researchers identified 963 trans-gender adolescents who had received some form of gender-affirming medical treatment. The mean age of starting any gender-affirming medical care was 18.2 (so this study may not technically qualify for our review of studies of adolescents). Their outcomes of interest were number of mental healthcare visits after gender-affirming medical care and number of days taking a psychiatric medication after starting gender-affirming medical care. In their adjusted models, there was no change in number of annual mental healthcare visits and an increase in days taking psychiatric medication from a mean 120 days per year to a mean 212 days per year. It's difficult to make firm conclusions based on this study, given the unusual outcome measure of number of days per year taking a psychiatric medication. The authors present a range of possible interpretations in the discussion section of the manuscript for those who are interested.

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Study 14: Green, A. E., DeChants, J. P., Price, M. N., & Davis, C. K. (2021). Association of gender-affirm-

and nonbinary youth. Journal of Adolescent Health.

This study was conducted by researchers from The Trevor Project. They recruited 5,753 transgender adolescents who said they wanted gender-affirming hormone treatment (estrogen or testosterone). Of these, 1,216 had accessed gender-affirming hormones treatment. To focus on the results for only participants who were under 18: After adjusting for potential confounding variables, access to gender-affirming hormones was associated with lower odds of recent depression and suicide attempts when compared to those who desired but did not access gender-affirming hormones.

Study 15: Turban, J. L., King, D., Kobe, J., Reisner, S. L., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2022). Access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence and mental health outcomes among transgender adults. PLoS One, 17(1), e0261039.

This study was also conducted by me and other researchers at Harvard Medical School. We examined 21,598 adults who reported ever desiring gender-affirming hormones (estrogen or testosterone). Of these, 481 accessed gender-affirming hormones during adolescence, 12,257 accessed gender-affirming hormones as adults, and 8,860 were never able to access gender-affirming hormones. We found that regardless of age of initiation, accessing gender-affirming hormones was associated with lower odds of past-year suicidal ideation and past year severe psychological distress. We also found that access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence was associated with a lower odds of these same adverse mental health outcomes when compared to not accessing

who had suicidal ideation in the past but did not have it in the past year (a proxy for mental health improving over time). We found that people who accessed gender-affirming hormones were more likely to meet this criterion than people who desired but did not access gender-affirming hormones, arguing against reverse causation (a common problem with cross-sectional studies).

Study 16: Tordoff, D. M., Wanta, J. W., Collin, A., Stephney, C., Inwards-Breland, D. J., Ahrens, K. (2022) Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. *JAMA Network Open*, 5(2), e220978.

This study was a prospective cohort study from Seattle Children's Gender Clinic. The researchers followed 104 transgender and non-binary youth who were receiving gender-affirming medical treatment. After adjusting for temporal trends and potential confounders, they found lower odds of depression and suicidality among young people who had started gender-affirming medical care, when compared to those who did not.

No Randomized Controlled Trials

One will notice that there have not been any randomized controlled trials. There is a general consensus in the field that such a trial would be unethical given the body of literature we have so far indicating that those in the control group would be likely to suffer adverse mental health outcomes compared to those randomized to the treatment groups. For this reason, it appears that no institutional review board would approve a

Conclusion

In summary, there have been, to my knowledge, 16 studies to date studying the impact of gender-affirming medical care for transgender adolescents. Taken together, the body of research indicates that these interventions result in favorable mental health outcomes. I will continue to update this post as new studies become available. Please feel free to [contact me](#) if you are aware of any new studies I have not yet included.

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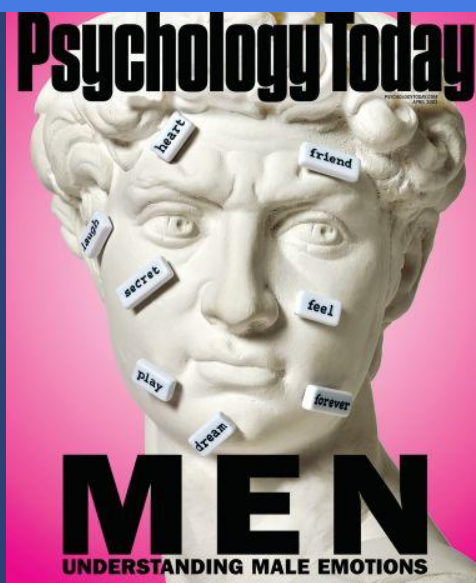
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Published in final edited form as:

J Neuroendocrinol. 2018 July ; 30(7): e12562. doi:10.1111/jne.12562.

Neurobiology of gender identity and sexual orientation

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Abstract

Sexual identity and sexual orientation are independent components of a person's sexual identity. These dimensions are most often in harmony with each other and with an individual's genital sex, although not always. The present review discusses the relationship of sexual identity and sexual orientation to prenatal factors that act to shape the development of the brain and the expression of sexual behaviours in animals and humans. One major influence discussed relates to organisational effects that the early hormone environment exerts on both gender identity and sexual orientation. Evidence that gender identity and sexual orientation are masculinised by prenatal exposure to testosterone and feminised in its absence is drawn from basic research in animals, correlations of biometric indices of androgen exposure and studies of clinical conditions associated with disorders in sexual development. There are, however, important exceptions to this theory that have yet to be resolved. Family and twin studies indicate that genes play a role, although no specific candidate genes have been identified. Evidence that relates to the number of older brothers implicates maternal immune responses as a contributing factor for male sexual orientation. It remains speculative how these influences might relate to each other and interact with postnatal socialisation. Nonetheless, despite the many challenges to research in this area, existing empirical evidence makes it clear that there is a significant biological contribution to the development of an individual's sexual identity and sexual orientation.

Keywords

brain; foetal development; gender identity; homosexuality; hormones; sexual differentiation; sexual orientation; sexual partner preference; sexually dimorphic nucleus; transsexuality

1 | INTRODUCTION

Gender identity and sexual orientation are fundamental independent characteristics of an individual's sexual identity.¹ Gender identity refers to a person's innermost concept of self as male, female or something else and can be the same or different from one's physical sex.² Sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to men, women or both sexes.³ Both gender identity and sexual orientation are

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

characterised by obvious sex differences. Most genetic females identify as such and are attracted to males (ie, androphilic) and most genetic males identify as males and are attracted to females (ie, gynophilic). The existence of these dramatic sex differences suggest that gonadal hormones, particularly testosterone, might be involved, given that testosterone plays an important role in the development of most, behavioural sex differences in other species. Here, a review is provided of the evidence that testosterone influences human gender identity and sexual orientation. The review begins by summarising the available information on sex hormones and brain development in other species that forms the underpinnings of the hypothesis suggesting that these human behaviours are programmed by the prenatal hormone environment, and it will also consider contributions from genes. This is followed by a critical evaluation of the evidence in humans and relevant animal models that relates sexual identity and sexual orientation to the influences that genes and hormones have over brain development.

2 | HORMONES, GENES AND SEXUAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE BRAIN AND BEHAVIOUR

The empirical basis for hypothesising that gonadal hormones influence gender identity and sexual orientation is based on animal experiments involving manipulations of hormones during prenatal and early neonatal development. It is accepted dogma that testes develop from the embryonic gonad under the influence of a cascade of genes that begins with the expression of the sex-determining gene *SRY* on the Y chromosome.^{4,5} Before this time, the embryonic gonad is “indifferent”, meaning that it has the potential to develop into either a testis or an ovary. Likewise, the early embryo has 2 systems of ducts associated with urogenital differentiation, Wolffian and Müllerian ducts, which are capable of developing into the male and female tubular reproductive tracts, respectively. Once the testes develop, they begin producing 2 hormones, testosterone and anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH). In rats, this occurs around day 16–17 of gestation, whereas, in humans, it occurs at about 7–8 weeks of gestation.⁶ Testosterone and one of its derivatives, dihydrotestosterone, induce the differentiation of other organs in the male reproductive system, whereas AMH causes the degeneration of the Müllerian ducts. Female ovaries develop under the influence of a competing set of genes that are influenced by expression of *DAX1* on the X chromosome and act antagonistically to *SRY*. The female reproductive tract in the embryo develops in the absence of androgens and later matures under the influence hormones produced by the ovary, in particular oestradiol.

Analogous processes occur during early development for sexual differentiation of the mammalian brain and behaviour. According to the classical or organisational theory,^{7,8} prenatal and neonatal exposure to testosterone causes male-typical development (masculinisation), whereas female-typical development (feminisation) occurs in the relative absence of testosterone. Masculinisation involves permanent neural changes induced by steroid hormones and differs from the more transient activational effects observed after puberty. These effects typically occur during a brief critical period in development when the brain is most sensitive to testosterone or its metabolite oestradiol. In rats, the formation of oestradiol in the brain by aromatisation of circulating testosterone is the most important

mechanism for the masculinisation of the brain;⁹ however, as shown below, testosterone probably acts directly without conversion to oestradiol to influence human gender identity and sexual orientation. The times when testosterone triggers brain sexual differentiation in different species correspond to periods when testosterone is most elevated in males compared to females. In rodents and other altricial species, this occurs largely during the first 5 days after birth, whereas, in humans, the elevation in testosterone occurs between months 2 and 6 of pregnancy and then again from 1 to 3 months postnatally.⁶ During these times, testosterone levels in the circulation are much higher in males than in females. These foetal and neonatal peaks of testosterone, together with functional steroid receptor activity, are considered to program the male brain both phenotypically and neurologically. In animal models, programming or organising actions are linked to direct effects on the various aspects of neural development that influence cell survival, neuronal connectivity and neurochemical specification.¹⁰ Many of these effects occur well after the initial hormone exposure and have recently been linked to epigenetic mechanisms.¹¹

The regional brain differences that result from the interaction between hormones and developing brain cells are assumed to be the major basis of sex differences in a wide spectrum of adult behaviours, such as sexual behaviour, aggression and cognition, as well as gender identity and sexual orientation. Factors that interfere with the interactions between hormones and the developing brain systems during gestation may permanently influence later behaviour. Studies in sheep and primates have clearly demonstrated that sexual differentiation of the genitals takes places earlier in development and is separate from sexual differentiation of the brain and behaviour.^{12,13} In humans, the genitals differentiate in the first trimester of pregnancy, whereas brain differentiation is considered to start in the second trimester. Usually, the processes are coordinated and the sex of the genitals and brain correspond. However, it is hypothetically possible that, in rare cases, these events could be influenced independently of each other and result in people who identify with a gender different from their physical sex. A similar reasoning has been invoked to explain the role of prenatal hormones on sexual orientation.

Although the role of gonadal steroids in the sexual differentiation of reproductive brain function and behaviour is undeniable, males and females also carry a different complement of genes encoded on their sex chromosomes that also influence sexual differentiation of the brain.^{14–16} As will be discussed, family and twin studies suggest that there is a genetic component to gender identity and sexual orientation at least in some individuals. However, the nature of any genetic predisposition is unknown. The genetic component could be coding directly for these traits or, alternatively, could influence hormonal mechanisms by determining levels of hormones, receptors or enzymes. Genetic factors and hormones could also make separate yet complementary or antagonistic contributions. It should be noted that, although the early hormone environment appears to influence gender identity and sexual orientation, hormone levels in adulthood do not. There are no reports indicating that androgen levels differ as a function of gender identity or sexual orientation or that treatment with exogenous hormones alters these traits in either sex.

3 | GENDER IDENTITY

The establishment of gender identity is a complex phenomenon and the diversity of gender expression argues against a simple or unitary explanation. For this reason, the extent to which it is determined by social vs biological (ie, genes and hormones) factors continues to be debated vigorously.¹⁷ The biological basis of gender identity cannot be modelled in animals and is best studied in people who identify with a gender that is different from the sex of their genitals, in particular transsexual people. Several extensive reviews by Dick Swaab and coworkers elaborate the current evidence for an array of prenatal factors that influence gender identity, including genes and hormones.^{18–20}

3.1 | Genes

Evidence of a genetic contribution to transsexuality is very limited.²¹ There are few reports of family and twin studies of transsexuals but none offer clear support for the involvement of genetic factors.^{22–24} Polymorphisms in sex hormone-related genes for synthetic enzymes and receptors have been studied based on the assumption that these may be involved in gender identity development. An increased incidence of an A2 allele polymorphism for CYP17A1 (ie, 17 α -hydroxylase/17, 20 lyase, the enzyme catalysing testosterone synthesis) was found in female-to-male (FtM) but not in male-to-female (MtF) transsexuals.²⁵ No associations were found between a 5 α -reductase (ie, the enzyme converting testosterone to the more potent dihydrotestosterone) gene polymorphism in either MtF or FtM transsexuals.²⁶ There are also conflicting reports of associations between polymorphisms in the androgen receptor, oestrogen receptor β and CYP19 (ie, aromatase, the enzymes catalysing oestradiol synthesis).^{27–29} A recent study using deep sequencing detected three low allele frequency gene mutants (i.e., *FBXO38* [chr5:147774428; T>G], *SMOC2* [chr6:169051385; A>G] and *TDRP* [chr8:442616; A>G]) between monozygotic twins discordant for gender dysphoria.³⁰ Further investigations including functional analysis and epidemiological analysis are needed to confirm the significance of the mutations found in this study. Overall, these genetic studies are inconclusive and a role for genes in gender identity remains unsettled.

3.2 | Hormones

The evidence that prenatal hormones affect the development of gender identity is stronger but far from proven. One indication that exposure to prenatal testosterone has permanent effects on gender identity comes from the unfortunate case of David Reimer.³¹ As an infant, Reimer underwent a faulty circumcision and was surgically reassigned, given hormone treatments and raised as a girl. He was never happy living as a girl and, years later, when he found out what happened to him, he transitioned to living as a man. However, for at least the first 8 months of life, this child was reared as a boy and it is not possible to know what impact rearing had on his dissatisfaction with a female sex assignment.¹ Other clinical studies have reported that male gender identity emerges in some XY children born with poorly formed or ambiguous genitals as a result of cloacal exstrophy, 5 α -reductase or 17 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency and raised as girls from birth.^{32,33} All of these individuals were exposed to testosterone prenatally emphasising a potential role for androgens in gender development and raising doubts that children are psychosexually neutral at birth.²⁰ On the other hand, XY individuals born with an androgen receptor

mutation causing complete androgen insensitivity are phenotypically female, identify as female and are most often androphilic, indicating that androgens act directly on the brain without the need for aromatisation to oestradiol.³⁴

3.3 | Neuroanatomy

Further evidence that the organisational hormone theory applies to development of gender identity comes from observations that structural and functional brain characteristics are more similar between transgender people and control subjects with the same gender identity than between individuals sharing their biological sex. This includes local differences in the number of neurones and volume of subcortical nuclei such as the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis,^{35,36} numbers of kisspeptin and neurokinin B neurones in the infundibulum,^{37,38} structural differences of gray^{39,40} and white matter microstructure,^{41–43} neural responses to sexually-relevant odours^{44,45} and visuospatial functioning.⁴⁶ However, in some cases, the interpretation of these studies is complicated by hormone treatments, small sample sizes and a failure to disentangle correlates of sexual orientation from gender identity.⁴⁷ The fact that these differences extend beyond brain areas and circuits classically associated with sexual and endocrine functions raises the possibility that transsexuality is also associated with changes in cerebral networks involved in self-perception.

4 | SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Research over several decades has demonstrated that sexual orientation ranges along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to the opposite sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex.⁴⁸ However, sexual orientation is usually discussed in terms of 3 categories: heterosexual (having emotional, romantic or sexual attractions to members of the other sex), homosexual (having emotional, romantic or sexual attractions to members of one's own sex) and bisexual (having emotional, romantic or sexual attractions to both men and women). Most people experience little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation. There is no scientifically convincing research to show that therapy aimed at changing sexual orientation (ie, reparative or conversion therapy) is safe or effective.³ The origin of sexual orientation is far from being understood, although there is no proof that it is affected by social factors after birth. On the other hand, a large amount of empirical data suggests that genes and hormones are important regulators of sexual orientation.^{49–51} Useful animal models and experimental paradigms in animals have helped frame questions and propose hypotheses relevant to human sexual orientation.

4.1 | Animal studies

Sexual partner preference is one of the most sexually dimorphic behaviours observed in animals and humans. Typically, males choose to mate with females and females choose to mate with males. Sexual partner preferences can be studied in animals by using sexual partner preference tests and recording the amount of time spent alone or interacting with the same or opposite sex stimulus animal. Although imperfect, tests of sexual partner preference or mate choice in animals have been used to model human sexual orientation. As reviewed comprehensively by Adkins-Regan⁵² and Henley et al,⁵³ studies demonstrate that perinatal sex steroids have a large impact on organising mate choice in several species of animals,

including birds, mice, rats, hamsters, ferrets and pigs. In particular, perinatal exposure to testosterone or its metabolite oestradiol programs male-typical (ie, gynophilic) partner preferences and neonatal deprivation of testosterone attenuates the preference that adult males show typically. In the absence of high concentrations of sex steroid levels or receptor-mediated activity during development, a female-typical (ie, androphilic) sexual preference for male sex partners develops.

Sexually dimorphic neural groups in the medial preoptic area of rats and ferrets have been associated with sexual partner preferences. In male rats, a positive correlation was demonstrated between the volume of the sexual dimorphic nucleus of the preoptic area (SDN) and the animal's preference for a receptive female,⁵⁴ although this was not replicated in a recent study.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in both rats and ferrets, destruction of the SDN caused males to show either neutral or androphilic preferences.⁵⁶

Naturally occurring same-sex interactions involving genital arousal have been reported in hundreds of animal species; however, they often appear to be motivated by purposes other than sex and may serve to facilitate other social goals.^{57,58} Exclusive and enduring same-sex orientation is, however, extremely rare among animals and has only been documented conclusively and studied systematically in certain breeds of domestic sheep.^{59,60} Approximately 6% to 8% of Western-breed domestic rams choose to exclusively court and mount other rams, but never ewes, when given a choice. No social factors, such as the general practice of rearing in same sex groups or an animal's dominance rank, were found to affect sexual partner preferences in rams. Consistent with the organisational theory of sexual differentiation, sheep have an ovine sexually dimorphic preoptic nucleus (oSDN) that is larger and contains more neurones in female-oriented (gynophilic) rams than in male-oriented rams (androphilic) and ewes (androphilic).⁶¹ Thus, morphological features of the oSDN correlate with a sheep's sexual partner preference. The oSDN already exists and is larger in males than in females before sheep are born, suggesting that it could play a causal role in behaviour.⁶² The oSDN differentiates under the influence of prenatal testosterone after the male genitals develop, but is unaffected by hormone treatment in adulthood.⁶³ Appropriately timed experimental exposure of female lamb foetuses to testosterone can alter oSDN size independently of genetic and phenotypic sex.¹³ However, males appear to be resistant to suppression of the action of androgen during gestation because the foetal hypothalamic-pituitary-axis is active in the second trimester (term pregnancy approximately 150 days) and mitigates against changes in circulating testosterone that could disrupt brain masculinisation.⁶⁴ These data suggest that, in sheep, brain sexual differentiation is initiated during gestation by central mechanisms acting through gonadotrophin-releasing hormone neurones to stimulate and maintain the foetal testicular testosterone synthesis needed to masculinise the oSDN and behaviour. More research is required to understand the parameters of oSDN development and to causally relate its function to sexual partner preferences in sheep. Nonetheless, when considered together, the body of animal research strongly indicates that male-typical partner preferences are controlled at least in part by the neural groups in the preoptic area that differentiate under the influence of pre- and perinatal sex steroids.

4.2 | Human studies

4.2.1 | Genes—Evidence from family and twin studies suggests that there is a moderate genetic component to sexual orientation.⁵⁰ One recent study estimated that approximately 40% of the variance in sexual orientation in men is controlled by genes, whereas, in women, the estimate is approximately 20%.⁶⁵ In 1993, Hamer et al⁶⁶ published the first genetic linkage study that suggested a specific stretch of the X chromosome called Xq28 holds a gene or genes that predispose a man to being homosexual. These results were consistent with the observations that, when there is male homosexuality in a family, there is a greater probability of homosexual males on the mother's side of the family than on the father's side. The study was criticised for containing only 38 pairs of gay brothers and the original finding was not replicated by an independent group.⁶⁷ Larger genome-wide scans support an association with Xq28 and also found associations with chromosome 7 and 8,^{68,69} although this has also been disputed.⁷⁰ Scientists at the personal genomics company 23andme performed the only genome-wide association study of sexual orientation that looked within the general population.⁷¹ The results were presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Human Genetics in 2012, although they have not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal. Although no genetic loci reaching genome-wide significance for homosexuality among men or women, the genetic marker closest to significance was located in the same region of chromosome 8 in men as that implicated in linkage studies. Other molecular genetic evidence suggests that epigenetic factors could influence male sexual orientation, although this has yet to be demonstrated.^{72,73}

4.2.2 | Hormones—The leading biological theory of sexual orientation in humans, as in animals, draws on the application of the organisational theory of sexual differentiation. However, this theory cannot be directly tested because it is not ethical to experimentally administer hormones to pregnant women and test their effect on the sexual orientation of their children. Naturally occurring and iatrogenic disorders of sex development that involve dramatic alterations in hormone action or exposure lend some support to a role for prenatal hormones, although these cases are extremely rare and often difficult to interpret.⁷⁴ Despite these limitations, two clinical conditions are presented briefly that lend some support for the organisational theory. More comprehensive presentations of the clinical evidence on this topic can be found in several excellent reviews.^{74–76}

Women born with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) and exposed to abnormally high levels of androgens in utero show masculinised genitals, play behaviour and aggression.^{74,77} They also are less likely to be exclusively heterosexual and report more same-sex activity than unaffected women, which suggests that typical female sexual development is disrupted. Although it appears plausible that these behavioural traits are mediated through effects of elevated androgens on the brain, it is also possible that the sexuality of CAH women may have also been impacted by the physical and psychological consequences of living with genital anomalies or more nuanced effects of socialisation.⁷⁸ There is also evidence for prenatal androgen effects on sexual orientation in XY individuals born with cloacal exstrophy. It was reported originally that a significant number of these individuals eventually adopt a male gender identity even though they had been surgically reassigned and raised as girls. Follow-up studies found that almost all of them were attracted to females (i.e.

gynophilic).^{33,50} The outcomes reported for both of these conditions are consistent with the idea that prenatal testosterone programs male-typical sexual orientation in adults. However, effects on sexual orientation were not observed across the board in all individuals with these conditions, indicating that hormones cannot be the only factor involved.

4.2.3 | Neuroanatomy—Additional evidence that supports a prenatal organisational theory of sexual orientation is derived from the study of anatomical and physiological traits that are known to be sexually dimorphic in humans and are shown to be similar between individuals sharing the same sexual attraction. Neuroanatomical differences based on sexual orientation in human males have been found. LeVay⁷⁹ reported that the third interstitial nucleus of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH3) in homosexual men is smaller than in heterosexual men and has a similar size in homosexual men and women. Based on its position and cytoarchitecture, INAH3 resembles the sheep oSDN, which has similar differences in volume and cell density correlated with sexual partner preference. This similarity suggests that a relevant neural circuit is conserved between species. A recent review and meta-analysis of neuroimaging data from human subjects with diverse sexual interests during sexual stimulation also support the conclusion that elements of the anterior and preoptic area of the hypothalamus is part of a core neural circuit for sexual preferences.⁸⁰

Other neural and somatic biomarkers of prenatal androgen exposure have also been investigated. McFadden⁸¹ reported that functional properties of the inner ear, measured as otoacoustic emissions (OAEs), and of the auditory brain circuits, measured as auditory evoked potentials (AEPs), differ between the sexes and between heterosexual and homosexual individuals. OAEs and AEPs are usually stronger in heterosexual women than in heterosexual men and are masculinised in lesbians, consistent with the prenatal hormone theory. However, OAEs were not different in homosexual males and AEPs appear to be hyper-masculinised. The second digit to fourth digit (2D:4D) ratio, which is the length of the second digit (index finger) relative to that of the fourth digit (ring finger), is another measure that has been used as a proxy for prenatal androgen exposure. The 2D:4D ratio is generally smaller in men than in women,^{82,83} although the validity of this measure as a marker influenced by only prenatal androgen exposure has been questioned.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, numerous studies have reported that the 2D:4D ratio is also on average smaller in lesbians than in heterosexual women, a finding that has been extensively replicated⁸⁵ and suggests the testosterone plays a role in female sexual orientation. Similar to OAEs, digit ratios do not appear to be feminised in homosexual men and, similar to AEPs, may even be hyper-masculinised. The lack of evidence for reduced androgen exposure in homosexual men (based on OAEs, AEPs and digit ratios) led Breedlove⁸⁵ to speculate that there may be as yet undiscovered brain-specific reductions in androgen responses in male fetuses that grow up to be homosexual. No variations in the human androgen receptor or the aromatase gene were found that relate to variations in sexual orientation.^{86,87} However, Balthazart and Court⁸⁸ provided suggestions for other genes located in the Xq28 region of the X-chromosome that should be explored and it remains possible that expression levels of steroid hormone response pathway genes could be regulated epigenetically (11).

4.2.4 | Maternal immune response—Homosexual men have, on average, a greater number of older brothers than do heterosexual men, a well-known finding that has been called the fraternal birth order (FBO) effect.⁸⁹ Accordingly, the incidence of homosexuality increases by approximately 33% with each older brother.⁹⁰ The FBO effect has been confirmed many times, including by independent investigators and in non-Western sample populations. The leading hypothesis to explain this phenomenon posits that some mothers develop antibodies against a Y-linked factor important for male brain development, and that the response increases incrementally with each male gestation leading, in turn, to the alteration of brain structures underlying sexual orientation in later-born boys. In support of the immune hypothesis, Bogaert et al⁹¹ demonstrated recently that mothers of homosexual sons, particularly those with older brothers, have higher antibody titers to neuroligin 4 (NLGN4Y), an extracellular protein involved in synaptic functioning and presumed to play a role in foetal brain development.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

The data summarised in the present review suggest that both gender identity and sexual orientation are significantly influenced by events occurring during the early developmental period when the brain is differentiating under the influence of gonadal steroid hormones, genes and maternal factors. However, our current understanding of these factors is far from complete and the results are not always consistent. Animal studies form both the theoretical underpinnings of the prenatal hormone hypothesis and provide causal evidence for the effect of prenatal hormones on sexual orientation as modelled by tests of sexual partner preferences, although they do not translate to gender identity.

Sexual differentiation of the genitals takes place before sexual differentiation of the brain, making it possible that they are not always congruent. Structural and functional differences of hypothalamic nuclei and other brain areas differ in relation to sexual identity and sexual orientation, indicating that these traits develop independently. This may be a result of differing hormone sensitivities and/or separate critical periods, although this remains to be explored. Most findings are consistent with a predisposing influence of hormones or genes, rather than a determining influence. For example, only some people exposed to atypical hormone environments prenatally show altered gender identity or sexual orientation, whereas many do not. Family and twin studies indicate that genes play a role, but no specific candidate genes have been identified. Evidence that relates to the number of older brothers implicates maternal immune responses as a contributing factor for male sexual orientation. All of these mechanisms rely on correlations and our current understanding suffers from many limitations in the data, such as a reliance on retrospective clinical studies of individuals with rare conditions, small study populations sizes, biases in recruiting subjects, too much reliance on studies of male homosexuals, and the assumption that sexuality is easily categorised and binary. Moreover, none of the biological factors identified so far can explain all of the variances in sexual identity or orientation, nor is it known whether or how these factors may interact. Despite these limitations, the existing empirical evidence makes it clear that there is a significant biological contribution to the development of an individual's sexual identity and sexual orientation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Charles Estill, Robert Shapiro and Fred Stormshak for their thoughtful comments on this review. This work was supported by NIH R01OD011047.

Funding information

This work was supported by NIH R01OD011047 (CER)

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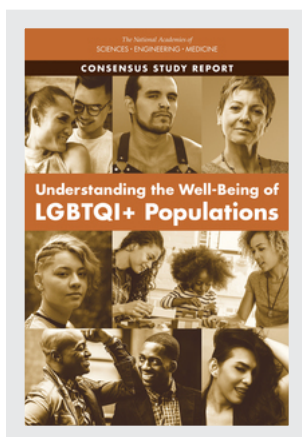
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Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations (2020)

DETAILS

436 pages | 6 x 9 | PAPERBACK

ISBN 978-0-309-68081-3 | DOI 10.17226/25877

CONTRIBUTORS

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SUGGESTED CITATION

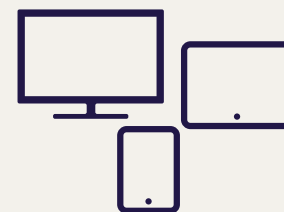
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Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations

Committee on Understanding the Well-Being of Sexual and
Gender Diverse Populations

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A Consensus Study Report of

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

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This activity was supported by contracts between the National Academy of Sciences and Gilead Sciences (award no. 05352), the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office of the National Institutes of Health (award no. 75N98019F00850), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (award no. 75874), the TAWANI Foundation (unnumbered), and the Tegan and Sara Foundation (unnumbered). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of any organization or agency that provided support for the project.

International Standard Book Number-13: 978-0-309-68081-3

International Standard Book Number-10: 0-309-68081-6

Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.17226/25877>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020949996

Additional copies of this publication are available from the National Academies Press, 500 Fifth Street, NW, Keck 360, Washington, DC 20001; (800) 624-6242 or (202) 334-3313; <http://www.nap.edu>.

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Printed in the United States of America

Suggested citation: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020). *Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25877>.

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COMMITTEE ON UNDERSTANDING THE STATUS AND WELL-
BEING OF SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE POPULATIONS

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Acknowledgments

In 2011 the Institute of Medicine of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) published *The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People*, a landmark report about the health of this population. The report discussed the existing body of research about the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, identified opportunities for further research, and made recommendations for actions to improve the health of LGBT people. By mid-2020 the report had been downloaded more than 15,000 times, and it had been used by researchers, educators, attorneys, health care professionals, government workers, journalists, community groups, and many others. It has influenced the work of the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Since 2011 much has changed. Some of the challenges identified in the 2011 volume have been met, but others certainly remain. Research on LGBT health has burgeoned, but there is still much to learn. In 2019, the National Academies convened a committee to assess the current state of knowledge about the status and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people to identify important gaps in knowledge and to recommend research and research infrastructure actions to help fill these gaps. The committee's work was supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Gilead Foundation, the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office at the National Institutes of Health, the TAWANI Foundation, and the Tegan and Sara Foundation.

The task set for the committee was broader than the one addressed by the 2011 report. The committee was charged with reviewing data on people with differences of sex development (sometimes called “intersex”), as well as those who could, by virtue of their identities, behaviors, or attractions, either identify or be seen as LGBT. In undertaking its work, the committee was asked to address not only the mental and physical health of these populations, but also additional aspects of well-being in their lives as lived in families, communities, and in the context of cultural, legal, educational, economic, and religious institutions. The committee undertook to provide an overview of both existing evidence and of future research needs in these areas.

Thus, this report presents a considerable body of information across a wide array of topics and disciplines. The report was made possible by a year of discussion, information gathering, review, and deliberation among committee members, aided by a dedicated staff. We thank all of the committee members for their dedication and spirit as well as for their invaluable expertise.

In addition to the invited guests, reviewers, and members of the public who contributed to this report, and on behalf of the entire committee, we want to thank the National Academies staff members who made this report possible. In particular, we extend our sincere thanks to Jordyn White, study director; Kenne Dibner, senior program officer; Tara Becker, program officer; Kellan Baker, project consultant; Mary Ghitelman, senior program assistant; and Malay K. Majmundar, director of the Committee on Population. We would also like to thank Daniel Desautels for his contribution during his time at the National Academies as a Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellow. Without the constant support and guidance from these individuals, the report could not have been completed.

This Consensus Study Report was reviewed in draft form by individuals chosen for their diverse perspectives and technical expertise. The purpose of this independent review is to provide candid and critical comments that will assist the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in making each published report as sound as possible and to ensure that it meets the institutional standards for quality, objectivity, evidence, and responsiveness to the study charge. The review comments and draft manuscript remain confidential to protect the integrity of the deliberative process.

We thank the following individuals for their review of this report: Walter O. Bockting, Program for the Study of LGBT Health, Columbia University Irving Medical Center; Christopher (Kitt) S. Carpenter, Vanderbilt LGBT Policy Lab, Vanderbilt University; Laura E. Durso, executive director and chief learning officer, Whitman-Walker Institute; Heath Fogg Davis, Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Political Science, Temple University; Donald Haider-Markel, Kentucky University; Jennifer S. Hirsch,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Although the reviewers listed above provided many constructive comments and suggestions, they were not asked to endorse the conclusions or recommendations of this report, nor did they see the final draft before its release. The review of this report was overseen by Marshall H. Chin, Department of Medicine, University of Chicago, and Sara Rosenbaum, Department of Health Policy and Management, Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University. They were responsible for making certain that an independent examination of this report was carried out in accordance with the standards of the National Academies and that all review comments were carefully considered. Responsibility for the final content rests entirely with the authoring committee and the National Academies.

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Committee on Understanding the Status and Well-Being of
Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations

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Summary

At more than 11 million, the number of self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals living in the United States is roughly equivalent to the population of Ohio. The LGBT population has increased substantially over the past decade, with much of this growth driven by younger generations, women, bisexual people, and racial and ethnic minorities. In a shift from prior years, a majority of Americans now approve of same-sex relationships and support legal protections to ensure fundamental civil liberties on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The laws, too, have changed: in 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (576 U.S. 644) extended marriage equality for same-sex couples nationwide. In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* (140 S. Ct. 1731) that the prohibition of sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment. Many states, municipalities, and private corporations have expanded nondiscrimination protections in workplaces, health care settings, and schools to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The demographic shifts observed in LGBT populations challenge researchers and policy makers to collect more and better data and to consider the degree to which research questions, media discussions, and policy decisions reflect the most pressing needs of these populations and the contemporary challenges they face (Conclusions 3-1, 3-2).

As the population evolves, so do the terms used to describe individuals who identify as or exhibit attractions to people outside of the traditional

male-female gender binary. The acronym LGBTQ is often used in place of LGBT, in which the “Q” may refer to queer or questioning. In some contexts, the acronym is expanded further to include “I” for intersex, “A” for asexual or ally, or “+” as an acknowledgment of the diversity of non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals.

Throughout this report, the phrase “sexual and gender diverse” is used to describe individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, non-binary, or who exhibit attractions and behaviors that do not align with heterosexual or traditional gender norms. The committee acknowledges that no term is perfect or completely inclusive, and our intention is not to promote the phrase or its acronym, SGD, for widespread use. Instead, the goal is to highlight the variety of identities and communities within SGD populations and the need for greater understanding of the differences that exist within and between them.

A GROWING NEED FOR ENHANCED DATA COLLECTION

Despite the population trends, many current national surveys and other data collection instruments lack measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual behavior and attraction, which makes it difficult to accurately report the size and other characteristics of SGD populations. Questions about sexual orientation and gender identity that do appear in data collection instruments are presented inconsistently with differing terms and are often separated from other demographic measures (Conclusion 4-1). Gaps in gender identity data collection preclude insights into trends in transgender population size over time, and population-level data about people with intersex traits are not available at all. In addition, little research has been conducted on sexual attraction and behaviors, and almost no population-level data exist for people with intersex traits (Conclusion 4-2).

To address the lack of broad and consistent data, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened a committee of experts to review the available evidence and identify future research needs related to the well-being of sexual and gender diverse populations across the life course. The committee focused on eight domains of well-being: the effects of various laws and the legal system on SGD populations; the effects of various public policies and structural stigma; community and civic engagement; families and social relationships; education, including school climate and level of attainment; economic experiences (e.g., employment, compensation, and housing); physical and mental health; and health care access and gender-affirming interventions. The well-being of an individual can be thought of as an outcome of experiences with family and personal relationships, as well as interactions with many societal sectors and such systems as education, employment, and government.

CHANGES TO THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

SGD populations come into contact with the law in a variety of contexts, including employment, health care, housing, public accommodations, interactions with the criminal justice system, and government-administered systems, such as foster care, adoption, and immigration. In some of these realms, there have been important reforms that have enhanced the quality of life for SGD people; in others, mistreatment and discrimination remain frequent occurrences, especially for marginalized groups within SGD populations. In the face of changing public attitudes as well as evolving law, the effect of the legal system on the well-being of these groups is uneven and, at times, contradictory (Conclusion 5-1). Approximately 50 percent of the U.S. population lives where there is a state law that explicitly protects SGD people from at least one form of discrimination. The laws pertaining to such issues as gender markers on essential documents, family proceedings, and religious exemptions from anti-discrimination laws vary greatly in scope between levels of government and across states (Conclusion 5-2).

Mistreatment during interactions with the police and the prison system is a common experience for SGD people (Conclusion 5-3). The criminalization of HIV exposure and the criminalization of sex work disproportionately affect homeless youth and transgender women, especially transgender women of color. Data suggest that sexual orientation and gender identity bias and hate crimes have increased since 2013, and although they account for a small share of all hate crimes, they tend to be more violent and result in severe bodily injury.

EFFECTS OF PUBLIC POLICY AND STIGMA

Policies seldom change without outside social forces organizing to create that change. Policy advocates and social movements can activate public opinion by drawing attention to social problems. Recently, the attitudes of adults in the United States have undergone a massive shift in accepting SGD populations and on numerous policies that would further the well-being of SGD people. However, the pursuit of policies likely to garner public favorability can potentially stigmatize or erase certain SGD groups, such as bisexual and transgender people (Conclusion 6-1). The attitudes of the general public affect public policies both directly and indirectly. In general, the emergence of more inclusive laws and policies is often perceived as a signal that society has changed to be less stigmatizing of SGD populations (Conclusion 6-2).

The well-being of SGD populations is affected by stigma, which can occur at individual, interpersonal, and structural levels. The concept of stigma helps explain how dominant cultural beliefs and differences in

access to power can lead to labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination for those who do not align with societal norms. Structural stigma—which includes institutional policies and practices, as well as public attitudes—is an important mechanism that contributes to inequalities for SGD populations across numerous domains that are essential for living healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives, including socioeconomic well-being, physical and mental health, and physical safety (Conclusion 6-3).

There is now a growing body of evidence that structural stigma affects the health and well-being of people of diverse sexualities and genders, but there has been little research on the ways in which structural stigma develops and evolves over the life course. Furthermore, most structural stigma research has focused on gay men and lesbian women and has not considered intersectional characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, geography, and socioeconomic status (Conclusion 6-4).

COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

SGD communities represent a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural identities and experiences. Over the past several years, spaces for public convening and engagement in social, cultural, and personal activities have diminished substantially for SGD people. Online SGD communities often arise out of the need for information, connection, and support. Because access to space is linked to participation in public culture, which is also influenced by the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and social class, less visible and marginalized SGD groups, as well as SGD people of color, do not always have access to the same spaces as do SGD people of other races and classes (Conclusion 7-1).

The past several years have seen the insurgence of LGBTQ+-affirming churches, denominations, and non-institutional spiritual practices, as well as gay-straight alliances on school, college, and university campuses. Community connectedness has been shown to help SGD people address health disparities by connecting them to important resources (Conclusion 7-2).

In civic affairs, lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults tend to be more civically and politically engaged than heterosexual adults (Conclusion 7-3). In addition, transgender people are registered to vote at higher rates than the cisgender population. Connectedness to other SGD people is a strong predictor of sociopolitical involvement.

FAMILIES AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Close, supportive, and stable relationships foster health and well-being, and relationships early in life have implications for the quality and stability

of social ties in adolescence and adulthood. SGD youth are at higher risk of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and suicidality than other similarly situated youth. Parental acceptance of their SGD youth is associated with positive adjustment; conversely, parental rejection is associated with a range of emotional and behavioral health problems. Supportive teachers are among the most important nonfamily adults in the lives of contemporary SGD youth. Maintaining friendships throughout and following the coming out process supports positive adjustment for SGD youth.

Romantic relationships in youth are also supportive in many cases, although the risk of intimate partner violence is higher for SGD youth than for other youth (Conclusion 8-1). Throughout adulthood, people who are more socially connected have better mental and physical health and lower mortality than those who are more socially isolated. Friends and chosen family members may also play an important role in SGD communities.

The legal status of romantic unions is associated with the health and well-being of SGD populations, as well as other markers of advantage and disadvantage—particularly socioeconomic status (Conclusion 8-2). Those of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to marry, and marriage itself may also provide economic benefits. As with different-sex couples, legally recognized same-sex relationships are less likely than others to dissolve over time.

Lesbian, gay, and intersex individuals are less likely than heterosexual individuals to become parents. Less is known about the prevalence of parenthood among bisexual and transgender people. Both children and adolescents have been found to enjoy supportive relationships with lesbian and gay parents, and children of lesbian and gay parents have shown the typical development of other children (Conclusion 8-3). Additional research is needed on relationship development in adolescence, adult family formation among SGD (especially bisexual, transgender, and intersex) people, as well as family processes and couple dynamics among older SGD individuals and families.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Experiences that SGD students have in school are important not only because negative experiences undermine personal well-being, but also because school experiences set the groundwork for educational attainment, future occupational achievement, and socioeconomic status (Conclusion 9-1). Although most research has focused on secondary schools, similar patterns of discriminatory behavior, bullying, and victimization have been documented for sexual minority and transgender students in higher education. Because SGD youth are coming out at younger ages than in previous years, research on school experiences that extends to elementary schools

and continues through higher education could help researchers gain a clearer understanding of the way these experiences affect students over their life course.

Although no federal law explicitly prohibits discrimination in education based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or intersex characteristics, federal courts and agencies have found that such discrimination may be covered under the federal ban on sex discrimination. State and local K–12 education policies with clear language regarding protection of SGD students from bullying and discrimination (including sexual orientation and gender identity) are associated with positive school climates and with student well-being and success (Conclusion 9-2). In schools with such policies, teachers are also seen as being more supportive of LGBT students and are more likely to intervene in bullying.

Several small studies of same-sex couple families have shown that they may experience homophobia expressed by teachers and that teachers may exclude those parents from activities or events (Conclusion 9-4). Schools can adopt such strategies as professional education and training for teachers, administrators, and other personnel (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria workers) to improve school experiences and promote a positive school climate for all students (Conclusion 9-3). Students with access to LGBTQ-related resources are more likely to believe that adults care about them and that teachers are fair.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Evidence suggests that transgender people—and possibly bisexual people—have lower incomes and higher poverty than lesbian, gay, and cisgender heterosexual people (Conclusion 10-1). Research on individual earnings suggests that, after controlling for differences in income-related characteristics, gay and bisexual men earn less than heterosexual men, while lesbian and bisexual women earn less than heterosexual men but more than heterosexual women. Lesbian women and gay men may have mitigated some of the effects of discrimination on earnings and household income through adaptive strategies in education, occupations, and family decisions, but they still face discrimination in the labor force.

Poverty and economic insecurity are more common among LGBT people than among cisgender heterosexual people. Among self-identified single and coupled LGBT people, bisexual and transgender people are more at risk of poverty than lesbian and gay people are at equal risk of poverty compared to self-identified heterosexual cisgender people of the same sex. Some groups within the LGBT population are at greater risk of poverty or low-income status: unmarried people, people with children, Black people, people living in rural areas, and people over age 50.

Studies based on self-report data show that many LGBT people believe that they have been treated unequally in the workforce (Conclusion 10-2). Many individual employers have created their own nondiscrimination policies, but these are voluntary. SGD populations have also experienced compensation and benefit discrimination in the workplace. In 2020, the Supreme Court held in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is prohibited by Title VII, the federal law that is part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The efficacy of this nationwide anti-discrimination protection will depend on how well federal and state agencies and courts carry out its mandate.

There is a greater risk of homelessness among LGBTQ youth than other youth, with elevated risk for LGBTQ youth of color. Adult homelessness may be particularly acute among transgender and gender-nonconforming populations. There are four main factors associated with LGBTQ homelessness: stigma, discrimination, and exclusion; mental health issues and substance use; sexual risks and vulnerability; and a lack of access to interventions and supports.

Some research finds that LGBT populations have lower homeownership rates than cisgender heterosexual people, which may point to discrimination in mortgage lending practices (Conclusion 10-3). SGD populations may also face barriers in the markets for credit and rental housing. Nearly a quarter of respondents to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey said they had experienced housing discrimination in the past year. There is also evidence of differential and discriminatory treatment among men in same-sex couples compared with women in same-sex couples.

More research is needed to assess the economic well-being of transgender people, non-binary people, and people with intersex traits. There is also much more to be understood about how certain economic conditions affect SGD populations—particularly for groups identified as having bigger economic challenges, such as people in rural areas, older SGD people, and SGD people of color.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

The physical and mental health of SGD populations is substantially affected by external influences that include discrimination, stigma, prejudice, and other social, political, and economic determinants of health. In addition to health disparities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, many SGD people also experience health disparities related to intersecting aspects of identity that include but are not limited to race and ethnicity (Conclusion 11-1).

Lesbian and bisexual women have higher odds of risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as hypertension and diabetes, and they also have more

risk factors for breast cancer than heterosexual women. Transgender adults may have more elevated rates of cardiovascular disease and myocardial infarction than their cisgender counterparts. LGBT people and people with intersex traits are at risk of violence from family members, peers, intimate partners, and strangers as a result of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. Some of the highest risks of violence affect bisexual women and transgender people, particularly transgender women of color. Black transgender women are also disproportionately affected by HIV, as are cisgender gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men.

Mental health disparities in SGD populations include heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms and greater suicidality among LGBT people in comparison with heterosexual or cisgender individuals. Substance use and behavioral health disparities include greater use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs among LGBT people than among heterosexual or cisgender individuals. Sexual minority individuals are also less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report healthy sleep, and similar disparities may exist for transgender people.

Because both clinical and population research studies rarely include measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, the full scope and magnitude of physical and mental health disparities and their differential effects across and within SGD populations is not known (Conclusion 11-2). There is a particular lack of longitudinal research, as well as a relative dearth of data on intersections with other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability.

The disparities affecting SGD populations are driven by experiences of minority stress, which include both structural and interpersonal stigma, prejudice, discrimination, violence, and trauma (Conclusion 11-3). Another important concept in relation to minority stress is resilience, which is the ability to maintain normal physical and psychological functioning when stress and trauma occur. More research is needed to elucidate the origins, pathways, and health consequences of minority stress and factors that support resilience among SGD populations.

Evidence-based interventions are needed to prevent and address health inequities (Conclusion 11-4). These interventions need to address the root causes and multilevel factors driving SGD health disparities. Leveraging resilience, including building on strategies SGD people have used to resist societal oppression, is an important part of optimizing SGD health and well-being.

COVERAGE, ACCESS, AND UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CARE

Access to comprehensive, affirming, and high-quality health care services is a human right for all people. Laws that guarantee access to health

care services, health insurance coverage, and public health programs for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, are critical to the health and well-being of SGD people. Similarly, laws and policies that provide affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage could combat health risks, such as uninsurance and poverty, among SGD populations.

It is important to provide culturally responsive and clinically appropriate care for SGD populations. Health services and procedures that are particularly important for the health and well-being of SGD populations include but are not limited to pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV; HIV treatment and care; abortion, fertility, and other reproductive health services; affirming mental and behavioral health care services; and gender-affirming care for transgender people. SGD people also need access to timely and anatomically appropriate preventive screenings (Conclusion 12-1).

Gender-affirming care for transgender, non-binary, and other gender diverse people is an essential intervention to improve health and well-being (Conclusion 12-2). Provision of this care needs to be individualized and conducted in partnership between patients and their providers. Insurance coverage of gender-affirming services and procedures by public and private payers is necessary to facilitate access to these services and to avoid discrimination on the basis of sex and gender identity.

Conversion therapy to change sexual orientation or gender identity can cause significant trauma (Conclusion 12-3). Elective genital surgeries on children with intersex traits who cannot participate in consent can be similarly detrimental to health and well-being.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Though trends in SGD population data collection have shifted, the data that exist and the research methodologies behind current study measures are not sufficient to capture and convey the richness of SGD communities or to underscore the varied effects that unique and intersecting identities have on health and well-being outcomes for SGD people. The 2011 report of the Institute of Medicine on the health of LGBT populations noted that these populations are often considered a single monolithic group, which obscures important differences among individuals and communities. This committee emphasizes an urgent need for robust scientific evidence that includes not just lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, but also intersex people, people with same-sex or same-gender attractions or behaviors, and people who identify as asexual, Two Spirit, queer, or other terms under the SGD umbrella.

In the wake of social change and ongoing legal developments regarding protections for SGD people in employment, health care, military service,

family formation, and other key areas of life, it is increasingly important to understand how the provision or the denial of access to opportunities and resources affects SGD people over the entire life course. A varied, comprehensive, and inclusive research infrastructure for SGD populations is essential in understanding the unique and shared challenges these individuals and communities face and for guiding actions to improve their well-being across domains, including social justice and legal equality, health and health care, employment, education, and housing.

Effectively addressing disparities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status will require collaborative and coordinated efforts among federal, state, and private stakeholders. In addition, it will be important to involve SGD communities themselves, including SGD people of color, in all aspects of the research process. Meaningful community participation is a critical way that SGD population research can retain accountability and accurately reflect the lives and experiences of the communities that are under study. In all research activities, SGD communities should be treated as partners rather than solely as research subjects, and all data should be collected and analyzed in ways that ensure respondent privacy and confidentiality and provide robust protections from discrimination.

The committee's recommendations aim to identify opportunities to advance understanding of how individuals experience sexuality and gender and how sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status affect SGD people over the life course. Our recommendations are in five categories: (1) population data; (2) measurement challenges related to understanding SGD populations; (3) critical data gaps; (4) improvement of the research community's ability to use these data; and (5) application of data to the development of high-quality, evidence-based interventions and programs. In each category, the committee makes efforts to identify specific actors that are best positioned to respond to particular aspects of the research landscape. The committee has concluded that investing in research infrastructure and in a robust and comprehensive program of research in the ways described below will support the development of stronger, evidence-based policies and practices in the areas addressed in this report.

POPULATION DATA

In order to make valid claims about the status of SGD populations in the United States, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners need accurate, consistent, and representative population-level data that describe SGD populations in all their complexity.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Entities throughout the federal statistical system; other federal agencies; state, local, and tribal departments and

agencies; private entities; and other relevant stakeholders should consider adding measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status to all data collection efforts and instruments, such as population-based surveys, administrative records, clinical records, and forms used to collect demographic data.

In response to Recommendation 1, the Office of Management and Budget should reconvene the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys and charge it with developing government-wide standards for the collection of data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. The establishment of measurement standards could bolster high-priority data collection activities throughout the relevant entities.

MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Because of the complicated ways that race, class, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other factors interact to create people's experiences, current measures do not always sufficiently reflect the lived experiences of these populations.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Federal statistical agencies; state, local, and tribal departments and agencies; private entities; and other relevant stakeholders should fund and conduct methodological research to develop, improve, and expand measures that capture the full range of sexual and gender diversity in the population—including but not limited to intersex status and emerging sexual and gender identities, sexual behaviors, and intersecting identities—as well as determinants of well-being for sexual and gender diverse populations.

The routine inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status questions on federally supported surveys and in other research can also advance the generation and use of measures that help researchers understand how factors such as stigma and disclosure affect the health and well-being of SGD populations across the life course.

CRITICAL DATA GAPS

When focusing on underrepresented groups, it is sometimes necessary to employ alternative methods that capture adequate samples of the population in question for effective study. Some data gaps could be addressed through observational studies of specific populations, while others might

require experimental studies, qualitative explorations of specific topics, or other methods.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Public and private funders should support, and researchers should conduct, studies using a variety of methods and sampling techniques—driven by the questions under study—in order to examine family and other social relationships, community, health, education, economic, and legal issues that will enhance understanding of sexual and gender diverse populations.

Data needs of this kind are particularly important for the study of small groups, such as transgender women of color, Native American Two Spirit people, and people with intersex traits.

DATA USE

Once comprehensive, accurate data are collected, it is critical that researchers have the ability to access these data to address emerging research questions. By improving the research community’s ability to access, link, and use existing data, stakeholders could substantially advance the relevance and impact of research.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The U.S. Office of Management and Budget should convene federal, state, and private funders, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to address significant problems in linking data from different datasets to facilitate research on the health status and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people. These stakeholders will differ by content area but could include researchers, legal advocacy groups, research institutions and centers, think tanks, policy-tracking groups, health, and surveillance organizations.

The goal of this recommendation is to allow data that have been housed within specific agencies or industries to be linked in ways that provide the research community a more complete picture of the prevalence, distribution, and lived experiences of SGD populations.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING AND INTERVENTIONS

The ultimate goal of collecting more accurate and relevant data should be to enhance understanding of the mediating factors that can highlight the positive differences and close the disparities that exist between SGD and heterosexual or cisgender populations. Comprehensive and accurate population-level data can play a critical role in the development, implemen-

tation, and evaluation of programs, services, and interventions that support the health and well-being of SGD populations. The data deficits described throughout this report have led to a relative dearth of programming to address the specific needs of these populations, as well as an absence of evidence-based processes to evaluate programs.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Public and private research funders, together with federal statistical agencies, should prioritize research into the development, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based services, programs, and interventions that promote the well-being of SGD populations.

Placing scientific evidence at the forefront of program planning will allow researchers, policy makers, and public and private stakeholders to develop services and interventions that will directly benefit SGD communities.

CONCLUSION

The increase in prevalence and visibility of SGD populations illuminates the need for greater understanding of the ways in which current laws, systems, and programs affect their well-being. Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, non-binary, queer, or intersex, as well as those who express same-sex or -gender attractions or behaviors, will have experiences across their life course that differ from those of cis-gender and heterosexual individuals. Characteristics such as age, race and ethnicity, and geographic location intersect to play a distinct role in the challenges and opportunities SGD people face. This report underscores the need for researchers to seek to understand disparities and advance equity both within and across SGD populations.

PART I

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Prologue

As this report was nearing completion, the enormous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic battering the United States was becoming clear, transforming lives and affecting every sector of society. At the time of this writing, more than 5 million Americans have been diagnosed with the infection, and more than 200,000 have died. Tens of millions of people have lost their jobs, and aspects of health, economic status, and social life have changed drastically for families and communities across the country. Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and other disadvantaged populations have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, due largely to inequities in social determinants of health, such as poverty and health care access.¹

There are many reasons to believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and non-binary people (LGBTQI+) might also be at high risk for COVID-19. There are LGBTQI+ groups that have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and HIV; that have higher poverty rates; and that lack adequate health insurance coverage (Alzahani et al., 2019; Caceres et al., 2017; Williams Institute, 2019). Little is known about COVID-19 rates of transmission, morbidity, or mortality among individuals who identify as LGBTQI+: currently, only California, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and the District of Columbia collect sexual orientation and gender identity data in context of the coronavirus pandemic, and even these states have not yet reported those data. Because LGBTQI+ identities are

¹See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html>.

seldom recorded in public health surveillance and medical records, sexual and gender diverse people often remain essentially invisible in context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May 2020, deep into the pandemic, an unarmed Black man named George Floyd was taken into police custody on the streets of Minneapolis and suffocated by a white police officer who knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes, until he was dead. The grief and outrage that followed led to an international outpouring of protest and activism and underscored the ways in which racial, ethnic, and other identities can have a dramatic effect on health and well-being in the United States (NASEM, 2016). Then in June 2020, which is commonly regarded as LGBTQI+ pride month, at least five transgender people of color—Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells, Merci Mack, Riah Milton, Brian “Egypt” Powers, and Brayla Stone—were brutally murdered.² These events highlight the ways in which violence has historically been and continues to be used as a tool of suppression towards LGBTQI+ populations and populations of color within the United States.

These two sets of events—the COVID-19 pandemic and the demonstrations of violent racism—point to the need for heightened awareness of the social and structural inequities that exist for LGBTQI+ people and for people of color and, especially, for sexual and gender diverse people of color. Too often, inequities cannot be identified because of failures to collect and measure sexual orientation and gender identity information. The systematic application of standardized measures of sexual and gender diverse status in governmental and health care delivery data systems would be a critical step towards promoting much-needed research on the health and well-being of LGBTQI+ populations.

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²For information on the individual events, see <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-trans-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2020>.

1

Introduction

BACKGROUND

More than 11 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals live in the United States according to 2019 estimates. The past decade has brought remarkable changes in the social, political, and legal status of these individuals. A majority of Americans approve of same-sex relationships and support legal protections to ensure fundamental civil liberties on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, representing a dramatic shift from prior years (Gallup, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2017).¹

In addition to shifts in public opinion, the laws have changed. The 2015 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (576 U.S. 644) extended marriage equality for same-sex couples nationwide. In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the prohibition of sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment (*Bostock v. Clayton County*, 140 S. Ct. 171). The logic of the ruling would apply to other federal anti-discrimination laws as well, in such fields as housing, education, and credit. Similarly, many states and municipalities, as well as numerous private corporations, have expanded nondiscrimination protections in workplaces, health care settings, and schools to

¹Information retrieved from data analyses of the General Social Survey by Gary Gates in 2018, using the Survey Documentation and Analysis online tool maintained by the Institute for Scientific Analysis, San Francisco, CA, under a licensing agreement with the University of California. Tool is available at <https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss18>.

include sexual orientation and gender identity. With regard to intersex individuals, a federal court of appeals decision in 2020 ordered the State Department to reconsider its refusal to provide a non-binary gender code for the passport of an intersex individual (*Zzyym v. Pompeo*, No. 18-1453, 10th Cir. 2020).

Despite increased visibility and social acceptance of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations, discriminatory policies and practices remain. Many people who are members of SGD populations—particularly those who are also members of other marginalized populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities—continue to experience stigma, discrimination, and violence where they live, work, play, and pray. In fact, recent evidence among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth shows more reports of discriminatory experiences in adolescence than for earlier cohorts (Toomey and Russell, 2013), as well as disparities that are growing rather than narrowing for several key health indicators (Fish et al., 2017).

In 2016, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) formally designated sexual and gender minorities as a health disparity population. Researchers have recently begun to explore the relationship between the health disparities affecting the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) population and specific state- and local-level policy changes using a range of methods, including observational studies, quasi-experimental study designs, field experiments, and laboratory studies (Hatzenbuehler, 2016).

While research on LGBT populations has burgeoned in recent years, much remains to be learned about the status and well-being of these individuals and the ways in which their experiences may differ from those of the general population across many areas, such as physical and mental health, education, relationships, the workforce, and civic participation. Though an increasing number of nationwide surveys include questions about sexual orientation, gender identity, and same-sex partnerships, the extent to which empirical data accurately reflect the communities in question hinges on individuals' willingness to participate in and disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity on such surveys.

In a major report that described the status of health research on LGBT populations, the Institute of Medicine (2011) identified several challenges to describing and studying the population in question. These challenges included the multifaceted nature of sexual orientation and gender identity, the complexities of defining and operationalizing those constructs, and the resources required for obtaining probability samples of small populations whose members might be reluctant to answer questions about their sexual orientation or gender identity due to concerns about discrimination and victimization. In addition to the lack of standardized, inclusive methods to capture and measure this diverse population, the definitions and analysis of demographic processes, such as fertility and family formation,

are predicated on presumed relationships between cisgender, heterosexual individuals. Finally, identifying intersex people in population surveys can be difficult because individuals with differences of sex development may not refer to themselves as “intersex” or see intersex as a social identity (GenIUSS Group, 2014).²

This work highlights the need to understand more fully how current U.S. legal, social, and cultural shifts are affecting LGB people, their families, and their communities. There is a dearth of research on how transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals are affected by changes to state and local policies.

In response to these challenges, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened an ad hoc committee to explore what is currently known about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex populations—in families and in environments such as school, work, and civic groups; at the ballot box; and in legal and health care systems—and to identify the gaps in knowledge around their experiences and consider how their well-being might be enhanced with improved research across several different domains. This report is designed to describe the opportunities and challenges facing these populations and to offer recommendations about future research.

CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee on Understanding the Status and Well-Being of Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations, convened in 2019, was composed of expert professionals from many disciplines, including human development, psychology, sociology, demography, economics, law, medicine, public health, and gender and sexuality studies. They were asked to prepare a report examining the available data on and significant research needs relevant to persons of diverse sexualities and genders and persons with differences in sex development across multiple dimensions over the life course; see Box 1-1 for the complete statement of task.

Considered as a whole, the findings of this report are intended to describe the current status of sexual and gender diverse populations and to offer recommendations about ways in which research can be improved to advance the health and well-being of those populations. It builds not only on the 2011 report of the Institute of Medicine but also on previous studies and activities related to these populations; see Appendix A.

²Intersex people are individuals born with any of several variations in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals; see below for more information on why intersex individuals are included in this report.

BOX 1-1 **Statement of Task**

The Committee on Population (CPOP) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will undertake a consensus study that will review the available data and future research needs on persons of diverse sexualities and genders (e.g., LGBTQ+ and MSM), as well as persons with differences in sex development (sometimes known as intersex), along multiple intersecting dimensions across the life course. Areas of focus will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Families and social relationships
- Patterns of stigma, violence, and victimization
- Role of community, cultural, educational, healthcare, and religious organizations and institutions
- Civic engagement, political participation, and military service
- Socioeconomic status/stratification, housing, and workforce issues
- Justice and legal systems
- Social change and geographic variations in public attitudes and public policies
- Population health and well-being

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

This report uses numerous terms to describe sexual and gender diverse groups of people, some which might be unfamiliar to some readers or which may have varying colloquial or contextual meanings. This section describes how the committee understands these terms and how they are used in this report.

Many studies we reference in this report refer to LGBT individuals. The first three terms—*lesbian*, *gay*, and *bisexual*—refer to sexual orientation, which is understood by researchers to have three distinct components: sexual attraction, sexual behavior, and self-identification. Sexual attraction refers to the gender(s) of the people to whom someone feels physically or romantically attracted. The delineation between sexual orientation and sexual attraction is often particularly important for people who may not be sexually active. Sexual behavior refers to the gender(s) of one's sexual partners. Self-identification refers to how people describe their own sexual orientation.

Lesbian and *gay* are commonly used to refer to people whose attraction, behavior, and identities are oriented toward people of the same gender. *Bisexual* refers to people whose attraction, behavior, or both is toward people of both the same and different genders. Other terms that describe

sexual orientation include *heterosexual* or *straight*, which refer to people whose attraction and behavior are oriented toward people of a different gender; *men who have sex with men* (often referred to as MSM), which refers to men who may or may not identify as gay or bisexual but who have male sexual partners; and *asexual*, which refers to people who do not experience sexual attraction. People who are not heterosexual or straight may also identify using terms that reflect specific cultural or age groups. For example, *same-gender-loving* is often used in Black communities to describe non-heterosexual relationships, *queer* is more common among younger people as a description of non-binary or non-heterosexual identity, and *Two Spirit* is used in many Native American communities to denote the fluidity of gender.³

The term *transgender* refers to gender identity, which is distinct from sexual orientation. *Transgender* is a broad term that describes people who identify as a sex or gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a transgender woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth, and a transgender man is a man who was assigned female at birth. Other terms, such as *non-binary*, *agender*, *bigender*, *genderqueer*, *gender fluid*, and *gender-nonconforming*, refer to people who identify outside the categories of male or female. People who embrace these identities may or may not identify as transgender. Some people also use the terms *Two Spirit* and *queer* to describe gender identity as well as sexual orientation. People who are not transgender are *cisgender*. Like cisgender people, transgender people can be of any sexual orientation.

Concepts and terminology related to sexual orientation and gender identity are constantly in flux. For instance, many community members and researchers now prefer to replace the acronym LGBT with LGBTQ, in which the Q may refer to *queer* or *questioning*, which is a particularly important concept for those on the path to developing or exploring an LGBTQ-related identity, especially in adolescence. In some contexts, the acronym is expanded further to include “I” for *intersex*, “A” for *asexual* or *ally*, or “+” as an acknowledgment of the diversity of non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals. Other newer terms related to sexual orientation include *monosexual*, which means people who are attracted to only one gender, such as straight, gay, and lesbian people; *non-monosexual*, which describes people attracted to more than one gender (including bisexual people), and *pansexual*, which refers to people attracted to several genders.

Intersex and *differences of sex development* are terms that describe people born with primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not

³Two Spirit is also used in some Native American cultures to describe people who fulfill a traditional third-gender ceremonial role in their communities.

fit binary medical definitions of male or female reproductive or sexual anatomy. Intersex traits are widely heterogeneous and include variations in number of sex chromosomes, structure or function of gonadal tissue, synthesis or action of sex hormones, appearance of external genitalia, and patterns of secondary sex traits. The prevalence of intersex traits ranges depending on the specific definition used. For instance, as few as 1 in 2,000–4,500 people are born with external genitals that lie somewhere between binary male or female genitalia, but as many as 17 in 1,000 people are born with any variation in their physical reproductive or sexual characteristics.

The language used to describe these traits, and the people born with them, is complex and shifting. For example, in recognition of leaps in understanding of the physiology of intersex traits, a consensus group of researchers and providers in 2006 developed the phrase “*disorders of sex development*” to replace what had been an inconsistent, confusing, and stigmatizing array of terms. Although some clinicians have suggested that use of the term “disorders” helps underscore serious health concerns that may accompany an intersex trait, others argue that “disorders” is stigmatizing and pathologizing. Increasingly, clinicians, researchers, and advocates have adopted the term *differences of sex development* (DSD). DSD is frequently used in medical literature, and some individuals find that this language offers the opportunity to identify as having, rather than being, a medical condition. Others, including most advocacy groups, prefer the less medical term, *intersex* or *intersex traits*.

In one clinical survey, *intersex* and *differences of sex development* were about equally preferable. Some advocates and providers are increasingly using the term *endosex* to describe people whose reproductive or secondary sex characteristics align with medical binaries, just as the term *cisgender* is used in parallel with the term *transgender*. Since people who describe themselves as LGBT or intersex are numerically minority populations in the United States, researchers thus sometimes describe these populations as *sexual and gender minorities*. The Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office at the National Institutes of Health defines sexual and gender minority populations as including, but not being limited to, “individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, Two Spirit, queer, and/or intersex. Individuals with same-sex or -gender attractions or behaviors and those with a difference in sex development are also included.”⁴ While in a research context the word “minority” points to the prevalence of a group within a population, in nonclinical contexts the word can carry a connotation of “lesser than” and can denote “a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics

⁴See <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-19-149.html>.

and often subjected to differential treatment.”⁵ As the community grows and becomes more diverse, the language that is used to refer to it will undoubtedly shift.

These and other terms will continue to evolve and take on different forms and meanings across different cultures and age groups, and it is important for researchers and other stakeholders working with these populations to be aware of and open to changing trends in terminology.

Just as there are different ways to think of sexual and gender diverse people, there are also different ways of describing the positions they occupy in society and the unique difficulties they may face because of their identity. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) defined *stigma* as an attribute, behavior, or reputation that is socially discrediting in a particular way. Societies generally apply value to certain normalized traits while devaluing others, such as sexual and gender diversity, and thereby assigning those people to an inferior social status. *Sexual prejudice* is another term to describe the negative view of sexual and gender diverse people held by individuals who have internalized the aforementioned social stigma.

Discrimination describes the negative treatment of sexual and gender diverse people compared to their heterosexual or cisgender counterparts. Discrimination can be interpersonal, such as denial of services based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and it can also be structural, such as laws or policies that systematically disadvantage sexual or gender diverse individuals in such areas as employment and education.

Even in the absence of active discrimination or recognizable social stigma, there are occasions in which sexual and gender diverse people do not have the same access to opportunities and achievement of outcomes as others. *Inclusion*, in this context, defines an individual’s access to opportunity and ability to fully participate in social institutions, such as the labor force, the health care system, and civic and political processes. *Exclusion* refers to situations in which sexual and gender diverse people do not have the same opportunities or access. Sometimes exclusion happens as a result of the way sexual and gender diverse people are relegated to less important positions in society or made to feel powerless against the mainstream—a phenomenon called *marginalization*.

Finally, the terms *homophobia*, *biphobia*, and *transphobia* refer to societal bias and internalized fear of LGBT people; they can denote the presence of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, or violence toward LGBT people, as well as a denial of access to opportunity.

⁵ See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/minority>.

ADDRESSING THE CHARGE

Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations

As discussed above, contemporary understandings of sexual orientation and gender identity continue to evolve, as does the terminology used to describe individuals who do not align with the male-female dichotomy or who exhibit attractions to people of the same sex or outside of the traditional gender binary—a factor that complicates scholarly attempts to identify these populations for effective study. In this report, when discussing these populations at large, the phrase *sexual and gender diverse* (SGD) is used to acknowledge the broad spectrum of natural human variation in sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex development. Other designations or terms encompassing multiple population groups of SGD people—such as LGB, LGBT, LGBTQ, and others—are used when discussing data and evidence based on those specific designations.

The committee acknowledges that no term is perfect or completely inclusive; the beauty of individuality is that self-expression, as well as personal and romantic choices, can manifest in a multitude of ways. Furthermore, the intention is not to promote the phrase *sexual and gender diverse* (or SGD) as terminology for widespread use. Instead, the committee's goal is to draw the attention of researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and society to the diversity of these groups and the need for greater understanding of differences that exist within and between them.

Inclusion of Intersex People

Little is known about the population health or well-being of people with intersex traits. The vast majority of research exploring the health of people with intersex traits is conducted in clinical samples. Intersex status is almost never queried in population surveys, and the stigma associated with having intersex traits may inhibit people from self-identifying. Moreover, because medical providers until recently did not routinely educate intersex patients about their traits, many people have limited awareness of their own medical history in this area. Fortunately, researchers and advocates have identified questions that can be used to assess intersex status in population surveys.

The medical impact of these traits varies widely and usually with the specific trait: for instance, people with congenital adrenal hyperplasia may require lifelong hormonal treatment for cortisol deficiency. Similarly, individuals with gonadal dysgenesis, who are born with gonads that do not produce hormones, are at markedly elevated risk of gonadal cancer and

may benefit from removal of gonadal tissue in early adolescence.⁶ As discussed in detail later in the report, however, there is an emerging body of knowledge documenting significant adverse consequences from irreversible interventions performed in early childhood primarily to align sex characteristics with gender assignment.

Understanding intersex as a medical problem might suggest that intersex populations should not be included in a report on the health and well-being of SGD populations, which are more commonly understood to be defined by non-normative identities. Indeed, not all people with intersex traits or DSD will identify as intersex; instead, they may identify as having a medical condition. Many people with intersex traits have cisgender experiences and identify as heterosexual. Moreover, some adults or parents of children with intersex traits may explicitly wish to distance themselves from SGD communities and any words that imply atypical gender or sexuality. There is also concern that simply adding “I” to the LGBTQ acronym may imply that intersex is monolithic, thereby obscuring the diversity of intersex-related health care needs and concerns of this population (Callens et al., 2012).

However, the committee found that there is sufficient overlap with other SGD populations to justify the inclusion of intersex in this report. First, many people with intersex traits do identify as non-heterosexual or non-cisgender, with evidence that the rates of non-heterosexuality and non-cisgender experiences are significantly higher than among endosex populations (Almasri et al., 2018). People with intersex traits/DSD were identified as a health disparity population by NIH, as well as by the American Association of Medical Colleges; both of these groups noted that intersex people may experience difficulties in accessing expert medical and psychosocial care similar to those encountered by SGD people.

Intersex health disparities appear to be driven in large part by the medical approach to intersex traits, which has been informed by the same stigmas experienced by SGD populations. Starting in the 1950s, infants born with intersex traits were exposed to medical and surgical interventions to align their anatomy with male or female (endosex) anatomy, with the explicit goal of rearing a cisgender, heterosexual child. Surgical decision making was often driven by the priority of creating genitals capable of penovaginal intercourse. Fearful that children might otherwise question their gender or sexuality, diagnostic information was routinely withheld from children and often even from their families. This model of care has reinforced cultural stigmas around sex and gender atypicality in an attempt to ensure sex and gender normalization (Dreger, 1998).

⁶A full account of the medical and surgical support of specific intersex traits is far beyond the scope of this report; Chapter 12 provides additional information.

Still today, a desire to avoid the stigma of a non-normative sexual body is a stated goal of genital surgery for intersex children (see discussion in Chapter 12). Accordingly, intersex advocates have drawn parallels between normalizing genital surgery and sexuality and gender identity conversion therapy. However, little research has explored the effects of stigma within intersex populations.

Finally, while the committee recognizes the risk of obfuscating the unique individualities of intersex bodies, it also acknowledges that recent SGD research has illuminated the diversity of those populations. Just as research on the health of men who have sex with men validates and reinforces the difference between sexual identity and behavior, transgender health research has illuminated the spectrum of affirming medical and surgical procedures. It well may be that disparities in health and well-being among the intersex population are wholly distinct from those of other SGD populations, but given the intersections with SGD experiences and the absence of robust intersex population health research, it is difficult to justify the exclusion of intersex populations from our study.

Understanding Well-Being

The concept of well-being embodies both how people feel and how they function. The way a person feels is informed by the person's physical health, mental health, and emotions (e.g., happiness, contentment, anger), as well as personal judgments about one's life (e.g., purpose and satisfaction); the way a person functions, on both personal and social levels, incorporates such elements as sense of competency, agency and ability to act autonomously, and sense of being connected to others (New Economics Foundation, 2012). As health is a key component to well-being, so is well-being to health; the two concepts are closely related regarding states of human existence. The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization, 1948). The concepts of well-being and health will be explored in this report with respect to sexual and gender diverse populations.

The determinants of health and well-being for every sexual and gender diverse individual vary over the course of a lifetime (life course) and include factors related to each person, people (social spheres of influence), and the environment (social systems). Person-level factors include contributors to identity such as age, race, ethnicity, military status, disability, socioeconomic position, and involvement in the criminal justice system. People-level factors are a person's social spheres of influence, meaning peers, family, social networks, and community. Environmental-level determinants of health and well-being are related to the structures, processes, and behaviors of societal systems, sectors, and institutions (or agents) toward sexual and

gender diverse people. Together, these determinants interact with one another in ways that can intensify or ameliorate barriers to good health and a positive sense of well-being. For example, an SGD youth who experiences bullying and physical violence from classmates in a school system that lacks policies, training, and practices to prevent and address these behaviors may later struggle with depression, anxiety, self-injury, suicide attempts, and other physical and mental health conditions, but avoid seeking health care because of prior experiences with stigma and discrimination in the health care delivery system. These three elements—personal identities, social spheres of influence, and interacting societal systems—and other core frameworks are further developed in Chapter 2.

In this report the committee focuses on eight domains of well-being: the effects of various laws and the legal system on SGD populations; the effects of various public policies and structural stigma; community and civic engagement; families and social relationships; education, including school climate and level of attainment; economic experiences (e.g., employment, compensation, and housing); physical and mental health; and health care access and gender-affirming interventions.

People with different sexual orientations and gender identities have different experiences in each of these domains over the course of their lives. For example, one study found that in the labor market, gay men face a large negative wage gap, lesbian women earn higher wages than similarly situated heterosexual women, and bisexual men and women appear to be the most economically disadvantaged (Mize, 2016). Other studies show that transgender people face higher rates of discrimination and poverty than LGB people. Furthermore, when considering the opportunities and disadvantages for SGD individuals in each domain, one must also acknowledge intersectionality of identities—conditions that, when combined, can create unique outcomes for individuals. Those intersections include race and ethnicity, age, military status, incarceration, disability, and the ways in which the person is perceived by others. Frameworks such as these can yield important variations both within and across SGD groups (Goldberg and Conron, 2018).⁷

COMMITTEE'S APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The committee took a multipronged approach toward gathering and analyzing the necessary evidence for its work. In addition to reviewing published literature, the committee also heard testimony from relevant experts in a variety of topic areas and held a number of open-session conversations to engage in person with stakeholders and community leaders.

⁷Intersectionality and other frameworks are discussed further in Chapter 2.

At the first meeting, the committee heard from the report’s sponsors in order to get a clear sense of the goals of this project: David Adler of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Karen Parker of the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office at the National Institutes of Health; Darwin Thompson of Gilead Foundation; and Kika Chatterjee, Szena Dayo, and Faiza Riaz of the Tegan and Sara Foundation all shared with the committee their organizations’ priorities for this work. At that same meeting, the committee also heard from Cecilia Chung of the Transgender Law Center, Ellen Kahn of the Human Rights Campaign, and Sandy James of FreeState Justice⁸ in an attempt to better understand the potential value and utility of this report for the communities to whom it pertains. Additionally, committee members Angelique Harris and Stephen Russell briefed attendees on the content and findings of two meetings held in 2018 and 2019 at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that helped to lay the foundation for this consensus study (see Appendix A).

At the second in-person committee meeting, the committee organized a large public seminar in order to engage this project’s relevant constituent communities. The committee held panels on culture, representation, and community frameworks; intersex individuals and families; non-binary and plurisexual⁹ identities; sexual and gender diversity law and policy; and civic engagement. See the agenda for this seminar in Appendix B. In its closed meetings, the committee reviewed multiple sources of evidence, evaluated the methodologies of research studies, and discussed possible interpretations. Throughout these deliberative processes, committee members were asked to apply their expertise in their respective fields. In addition to its four in-person meetings, the committee held two online meetings to ensure sufficient discussion and to advance progress on the study.

METHODS AND APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

This report draws on evidence from a number of sources of empirical research on SGD populations. One important dimension of these sources is the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. Because of the broad focus of its charge, the committee reviewed the relevant bodies of knowledge from a number of academic disciplines—public health, medicine, psychology, economics, sociology, gender studies, history, law, demography, and political science—along with interdisciplinary fields, such as African American studies, each of which has different standards of evidence. Over the last few decades, research on SGD populations has expanded in each of these disciplines and fields, pro-

⁸James is now working at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁹The term “plurisexual” is used to describe individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

viding a basis for understanding more about the lives of people of diverse sexualities, genders, and with differences in sex development.

The committee sought out research published in peer-reviewed academic publications (journals and books) and supplemented that with research from other sources, such as government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and think tanks. The committee also took care to ensure that for each area of focus, the work engaged with the lived experience of individuals representing SGD populations: because of the deeply personal nature of this work, the committee centered the expert testimony of members of the communities affected by the results of this work. In all cases, the committee evaluated how effectively the research adhered to broadly accepted research norms, such as whether a study included an adequate reporting of data, methods, and analysis to allow assessment of the quality and accuracy of the conclusions drawn by the authors. Those foundations provided a basis for judgments and conclusions about what is known about SGD populations.

In terms of the published literature, the committee believes it is critical to draw particular attention to three general methodological considerations that affect the conclusions that can be drawn from existing research: the nature of the data and samples used; the research designs used; and the use of sources other than survey or experimental data for the study of some areas. Much of the research reviewed for this report has been made possible by the inclusion of questions about sexual orientation and gender identity in surveys of probability samples of the U.S. population (see Chapter 4 for a list of those surveys). Data generated by probability-based sampling methods are likely to be representative of the populations and subgroups in question, allowing generalizations to be made from those samples. That representativeness is essential for making comparisons across diverse sexual and gender populations in order to, e.g., compare rates of a particular health condition among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people to that of heterosexual people or to compare transgender people to cisgender people.

However, the fact that the SGD populations studied in this report, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people, are relatively small means that only large samples of the whole population will include sizable numbers of people in sexual and gender diverse groups as usually defined. This situation has a number of consequences for researchers, such as limiting the ability to use probability samples for comparisons of detailed racial, ethnic, age, or geographic groups of LGBT people, for example, or to study in detail rare health or economic outcomes. In addition, the underlying surveys are not likely to have questions that relate to important aspects of SGD people's lives, even when the surveys capture sexual and gender diversity for respondents, unless the questions also happen to be relevant for the lives of the population at large.

Partly because of such limitations, studies using non-probability-based sampling methods, such as community recruitment or snowball sampling, are common in many disciplines and can provide important insights. In this report, the committee exercised care in interpreting the relevance of findings from such samples to apply to the broader SGD population. For example, clinical studies might involve samples of individuals with poorer health who are not representative of the larger population. Convenience sampling techniques might result in biases toward certain groups, such as those with higher-than-average levels of income or education. Administrative datasets, such as health insurance claims or discrimination charge filings, reduce concerns about sampling bias but still require an assessment of who had access to the services that resulted in the creation of the administrative records.

The second important consideration is research design. The committee acknowledges that all research designs have strengths and weaknesses for answering the questions defined in its statement of task. Many studies reviewed for this report are observational studies—that is, those studies made comparisons based on observed differences in sexual orientation or gender identity in a sample, usually holding other observed characteristics constant. This general approach is appropriate for assessing whether there is a statistical association between being a member of a sexual or gender diverse group and a specific health, economic, or other social outcome. However, drawing a causal conclusion about whether and how having an SGD status or identity affects a research outcome is difficult because of the ways in which unobserved characteristics could vary by groups or by individuals and therefore affect outcomes. For example, the wage gap between lesbian and heterosexual women could be a byproduct of lesbian women having more labor market experience, but there is a lack of data on that particular issue.

Another issue for many studies is that they are cross-sectional, focusing on data collected on individuals at only one point in time. Thus, it may not be possible to know when a variable of interest—such as an experience of stigma—occurred in relation to the outcome being studied. Longitudinal surveys that collect data on the same people over time can help with both issues, allowing researchers to assess the role of personal characteristics and to examine whether changes in important variables are associated with changes in outcomes. Though they have increased in recent years, such datasets are still rare in research on SGD populations.

Experimental research methods are designed to allow more conclusive assessments of causal connections, since an exposure or intervention is varied randomly across groups and researchers then test for differences in outcomes by group. However, there are limitations in the application of those methods to the issues of interest in this report. In particular, it is

obviously not possible to randomly assign a particular sexual orientation or gender identity to individual people, or to randomly assign an experience of stigma, and then to compare outcomes across groups. Some studies have used experimental and quasi-experimental methods to answer other questions about the effects of policies, interventions, or other possible experiences of SGD populations. Since those policies or other conditions are different across time and place, researchers can study whether particular effects are present or are stronger in those places that are “treated” by a particular policy than in those places without the “treatment.”

The third issue concerns research that is rooted in methods other than surveys or experiments, as referenced particularly in the chapters on communities, law, and public policy. Some of the research on development of communities draws on ethnographic and historical research methods. Such studies may involve archival research, observations, interviews, or the analysis of cultural phenomena (e.g., art, literature, and film). The chapters on law and public policy include some studies using quantitative methods, but they also include the review of case law, statutes, and legal institutions, as well as legal scholarship.

Given the above considerations and the varying sources of the findings discussed in this report, wherever possible the committee sought findings that are consistent across different datasets and research methods—an established procedure for assessing validity (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). The committee also notes strengths and weaknesses of various research methods described in this report.

Lastly, when reviewing many studies, including those that demonstrate an adherence to scientific rigor, the committee was frequently reminded that the heteronormativity of common research designs (collecting data on males, females, and heterosexual relationships; not accounting for alternate identities and romantic relationships) may not enable data collection that provides detail on less prominent SGD groups or characteristics. When pertinent data do not exist or are not presented in ways that advance the understanding of SGD populations, the committee makes recommendations on how to collect new data or to analyze existing data in ways that could advance that understanding.

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2

Health and Well-Being in Diverse Populations: Frameworks and Concepts

Sexual and gender diverse (SGD) people experience the world in different ways than their heterosexual, monosexual, endosexual, or cisgender counterparts. They also have varied experiences both across and within sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex groups. It cannot be assumed that lesbian and bisexual women face the same environmental and societal challenges, nor can it be assumed that two gay men of different ethnicities and social statuses have similar experiences simply because they share a sexual orientation. An individual's health and well-being over the life course are determined by a combination of experiences, opportunities, and decisions that are influenced by their social relationships as well as their interactions with institutions and social structures, such as education, health care, government, public safety, housing, immigration, criminal justice, the military, and employment.

The identities and lived experiences of SGD individuals are complex, multidimensional systems. By applying a complex systems perspective in our work, the committee acknowledges the dynamic nature of human development, individuals' immediate environments, and the broader contexts in which they live their lives. In a complex system, each element interacts with and provides feedback to others and to the individual, potentially leading to changes in behaviors, roles, and functions that may result in nonlinearity or disproportionality (small effects in one area and large effects in another), novelty (yielding unexpected outcomes or responses), or time discordance (having delayed effects): see Figure 2-1.

This report reflects the committee's awareness that multiple systems simultaneously affect opportunities and outcomes for SGD communities. The

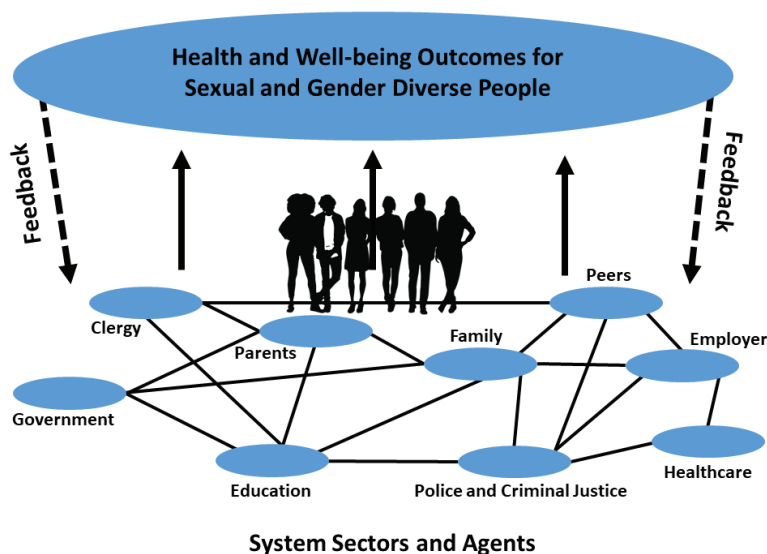


FIGURE 2-1 Complex systems illustration.

committee used the following frameworks to organize its thinking around these systems and their complex interactions:

- social ecology—how individuals are embedded in families, communities, societies, and the environment;
- social constructionism—how individuals experience their own lives and identities and the meaning they and others give to experiences and events;
- identity affirmation—how people become aware of, express, and affirm their sexual orientation, gender identity, and other aspects of identity;
- stigma—how dominant cultural beliefs and differences in access to power can lead to labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination for those who do not align with societal norms;
- life course—how experiences from early to late in life accumulate and affect health and well-being at different ages and stages of development; and
- intersectionality—how multiple forms of structural inequality and discrimination, such as racism, sexism, and classism, combine to produce complex, cumulative systems of disadvantage for people who live at the intersections of multiple marginalized groups.

The frameworks are intended to provide readers with a depth of understanding of the influences and dynamics of multiple systems on the health and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people. They are not tools by which to evaluate an individual's or group's experiences and identity; rather, the frameworks act as lenses through which one can see how these systems combine to produce novel and nonlinear outcomes that can affect an individual's well-being. Though all the frameworks and concepts are not equally pertinent to the content of this report, understanding this scholarly landscape allows the committee to situate the specific issues addressed throughout this report in broader theoretical contexts.

SOCIAL ECOLOGY

The social ecological approach enhances understanding of how human well-being is shaped by multiple interacting levels of influence between individuals, their immediate environment, and larger contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994). These levels are interconnected, reciprocal, and complex, and they include

- individual-level factors, such as age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, intersex status, and genetics;
- interpersonal-level factors such as relationships with partners, family members, friends, and peers;
- community-level factors such as schools, workplaces, community spaces, and religious institutions;
- societal-level factors such as laws, policies, and cultural and social norms; and
- environmental-level factors such as the natural environment and large-scale historical trends.

In this approach, people are embedded in families, communities, societies, and broader environments, and the interplay across and between these factors influences the health and well-being of individuals and populations (Institute of Medicine, 2011; Secretary's Advisory Committee on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2020 [hereafter, Secretary's Advisory Committee], 2010). At each level, SGD populations experience unique stressors and sources of resilience related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. This constellation of stressors and resources shapes their well-being across all domains, such as education, economics, relationships, and health. The social ecology model also recognizes that the experiences of SGD populations at each level vary as a function of gender, race, ethnicity, and other intersecting aspects of identity.

The social ecology approach is important in understanding patterns and etiology of risk and resilience, and it also offers a framework for developing strategies at multiple levels to support the well-being of SGD populations. There is substantial evidence that multilevel interventions have more potential for success than those that concentrate only on a single level (Sallis, Owen, and Fisher, 2008; Secretary’s Advisory Committee, 2010). The Secretary’s Advisory Committee 2010 report for *Healthy People 2020* states, “Motivating people to change health-related behaviors when social and physical environments are not supportive often leads to weak, temporary change” (p. 29). Thus, if SGD populations are at greater risk for a behavior such as substance use, policies or interventions to address this disparity are more likely to be successful if they address not only individual behavior but also factors at interpersonal (e.g., family rejection), community (e.g., bullying in schools), and societal (e.g., employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity) levels. The social ecology approach is also useful for synthesizing diverse sources of data and research methods to understand how multiple levels of influence shape the well-being of SGD populations across different domains.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Social forces influence people’s shared understandings of reality. The theoretical framework called social constructionism examines the ways in which individuals, groups, cultures, and societies perceive social issues and problems. Social constructionism is often used to explore the influences of culture, society, and history on the ways in which individuals experience their own lives and the meanings that they give to these experiences. This perspective also suggests that facts and knowledge must be understood in the context of the particular culture or society that generated them, and it maintains that knowledge is influenced by and made tangible through social interactions.

A key tenet of social constructionism is the effect that socially constructed concepts and ideas have on individuals and the role that those in power have in constructing ideas, concepts, and even realities. For example, instead of focusing solely on the effect of a disease on people’s bodies, social constructionism emphasizes the meaning that the illness has for the affected individuals and for those around them and how that shapes their experiences (Lupton, 2000). Likewise, it emphasizes the role that those in power have to construct how society, as a whole, understands diseases and illnesses and the context that is applied to certain groups. As such, social constructionism is frequently used as a framework to explain why some health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, obesity, and cancer, are stigmatized, and to examine societal responses to those stigmatized health issues. Beyond

the objective condition of a disease state, social understandings, reactions, and beliefs about a disease shape how a person understands or experiences the disease.

Symbols and shared group meanings also play a central role in conceptualizations of individual identity and social and group interactions. The meanings behind the power and privileges given to traits, behaviors, and identities attributed to particular groups are constructed aspects of culture that can be questioned. For example, understanding concepts such as “race”; racial categories; and privileges associated with skin complexion, hair color, facial features, and nation of origin as culturally constructed illuminates the ways that race is not a biological category but rather a social construct. Similarly, feminist scholars have questioned the meanings and privileges associated with gender roles in different cultures around the world and throughout history.

The approach of social constructionism highlights social and cultural forces that affect how gender and sexuality are perceived by different individuals, groups, and societies. This perspective may illuminate the effect that social issues and problems have on specific groups, particularly those most marginalized. For example, research on health and wellness among gay and bisexual men often describes them using the term “men who have sex with men.” A social constructionist approach reveals that the emphasis on their behavior, which is typically described as “risky,” erases the sexualities and identities of these men. Similarly, social constructionism is an important lens for understanding limits to the universal applicability of specific terms used to define and categorize sexual and gender diversity, which can vary within and between communities, societies, geographies, and time periods; it can help people better understand the power, privileges, and resources to which these groups have access.

STIGMA

Since Goffman’s pioneering book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963), social scientists have sought to identify the causes and consequences of stigma. Many definitions of stigma have been offered, which has led to some confusion about the meaning of this term. In part to address this confusion, Link and Phelan (2001, p. 367) advanced a highly influential conceptualization of stigma, which defines stigma as follows:

In our conceptualization, stigma exists when the following interrelated components converge. In the first component, people distinguish and label human differences. In the second, dominant cultural beliefs link labeled persons to undesirable characteristics—to negative stereotypes. In the

third, labeled persons are placed in distinct categories so as to accomplish some degree of separation of “us” from “them.” In the fourth, labeled persons experience status loss and discrimination that lead to unequal outcomes. Stigmatization is entirely contingent on access to social, economic and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion and discrimination. Thus, we apply the term stigma when elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows them to unfold.

There are several important aspects to the conceptualization of stigma. First, it is important to distinguish between the related, though distinct, concepts of stigma and discrimination. While discrimination is a constitutive feature of stigma—in fact, the term stigma “cannot hold the meaning we commonly assign to it” when discrimination is left out (Link and Phelan, 2001, p. 370)—stigma is broader because it incorporates several other elements in addition to discrimination, such as labeling and stereotyping (Phelan, Link, and Dovidio, 2008). Moreover, stigma produces negative consequences even in the absence of discrimination and even without another person present in the immediate situation (Link and Phelan, 2001; Major and O’Brien, 2005). Thus, the concept of stigma captures numerous pathways that produce disadvantage outside of discriminatory action.

Second, stigma is dependent on power. Link and Phelan’s (2001) definition illuminates the idea that power is present whenever stigmatization occurs. Power is necessary for people who stigmatize others (i.e., “stigmatizers”) to achieve the ends they desire. As summarized by Phelan and colleagues (2008), the ends that are attained by stigmatization include “keeping people down” (exploitation/dominance), “keeping people in” (norm enforcement), and “keeping people away” (disease avoidance). In each instance, the dominant group gets something they want by stigmatizing others—that is, there are motives or interests that underlie and perpetuate stigmatization (Link and Phelan, 2001).

Stigma-driven motives are exercised through individual, interpersonal, and structural mechanisms, each of which contributes to negative outcomes for the stigmatized (Hatzenbuehler, 2016; Link and Phelan, 2001). *Individual forms of stigma* refer to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes in which individuals engage in response to stigma, such as (1) identity concealment, or hiding aspects of one’s stigmatized status/condition/identity to avoid rejection and discrimination (e.g., Pachankis, 2007); (2) self-stigmatization, or the internalization of negative societal views about one’s own group (Corrigan, Sokol, and Rüsch, 2013); and (3) rejection sensitivity, or the tendency to anxiously expect, and readily

perceive, rejection based on one’s stigmatized status/identity/condition (e.g., Mendoza-Denton et al., 2003).

In contrast, *interpersonal stigma* refers to interactional processes that occur between stigmatized and non-stigmatized people. These interpersonal processes include both intentional, overt actions (e.g., bias-based hate crimes; Herek, 2009), as well as unintentional, covert actions (e.g., micro-aggressions; Sue et al., 2007). *Structural stigma*, which refers to processes that occur above the individual and interpersonal levels, is defined as “societal-level conditions, cultural norms, and institutional policies that constrain the opportunities, resources, and well-being of the stigmatized” (Hatzenbuehler and Link, 2014, p. 2). Examples include laws and policies that disadvantage specific groups, such as marriage bans for same-sex couples or differential sentencing for crack as opposed to powdered cocaine for racial and ethnic minorities.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a term that describes how categories such as race, class, gender, and sexuality create and maintain forms of structural inequality and discrimination. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) to describe the experience of living under interlocking systems of oppression—particularly around race, gender, and class—about which she and other Black feminists had theorized. An intersectional lens frames systemic influences in a broad context, emphasizing the complexity and variety of individual experiences in an effort to understand the workings of privilege and power (Tomlinson and Baruch, 2013). Other categories of social identity and vectors of power often examined through an intersectional lens are ethnicity, nationality/migration, ability/disability, and HIV disease status (Crenshaw, 2017).

While many early Black feminist thinkers advanced intersectional analyses of the social location and conditions of Black women, some especially important work was done by the Black lesbian feminists of the Combahee River Collective (CRC) beginning in the 1970s. The CRC used the idea of intersectionality to illustrate how multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of human suffering (May, 2015; Taylor, 2017). The CRC made it clear that race, class, gender, and sexuality are vectors of power as well as social identity categories. They argued that social categories are not independent and unidirectional; rather, they are co-constitutive and interdependent. The CRC and other scholars also argued that individual social categories reflect larger structural forms of inequality, such as racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and class oppression (Bowleg, 2013).

In her research on intersectionality, feminist Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2002) emphasized how categories of identity are often constructed using opposites and dichotomies rather than integrated and relational terms. She argued that this requires suppressing variability within categories so that dominant characteristics, such as whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality, are normalized. In other words, white appears raceless, man appears genderless, and heterosexuality appears to be void of sexualization (Glenn, 2002). In this way, the powerful or dominant elements in society are not questioned.

The concept of intersectionality has influenced how scholars, activists, advocates, artists, and policy makers conceptualize individual and group identities, how they craft and sustain political alliances, and how they analyze and address systems that produce and maintain social inequities (May, 2015). It suggests an analytic framework that assists in examining the nature and workings of forms of interlocking structural stigma, inequality, and discrimination. It functions as a heuristic that reveals and highlights specific dynamics that privilege binary distinctions and single-axis thinking (May, 2015). Intersectionality is an approach to inquiry and a way to organize knowledge. For example, Berger and colleagues (2001) suggest that “intersectional stigma” is a complex process by which, in their study, women of color—who are already experiencing race, class, and gender oppression—are also labeled, judged, and given inferior treatment because of their status as drug users, sex workers, or HIV-positive women. For women who are lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or otherwise members of SGD communities, discrimination and disadvantage based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status may add additional layers of oppression. Writing from an intersectional perspective attends to the complex nature of power and how its intersectional qualities inform the experiences of SGD communities.

IDENTITY AFFIRMATION

The processes by which members of SGD communities come to explore, understand, declare, and affirm aspects of their identities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status are complex. Each aspect of one’s identity has distinct characteristics and follows different developmental pathways; at the same time, however, they are deeply intertwined (Doreleijers and Cohen-Kettenis, 2007). Processes of “coming out” and affirming one’s identity vary widely by factors such as stage of life, family circumstances, and socioeconomic and political influences. There has been a long-standing predominant research focus on adolescence because of the well-documented vulnerabilities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth (Russell and Fish, 2016) and because individual knowledge and awareness of one’s own sexual orientation, gender identity,

or intersex status often emerges with the biopsychosocial changes associated with puberty (Herdt and McClintock, 2000). Yet many young people are aware of differences in their thoughts and feelings associated with sexuality earlier in childhood, and for many transgender and other gender diverse youth, transgender identity awareness emerges in very early childhood (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014). Both psychosocial and biological factors influence gender identity development, yet most research approaches these areas of influence in isolation, so little is known about the complex dynamics among psychosocial and biological influences (Steensma et al., 2013). In addition, there are diverse expressions of differences in sexual development, which raise a range of developmental questions for how people with intersex characteristics come to understand and express various aspects of their identities (Roen, 2019).

Gender affirmation has been broadly defined as an interpersonal and shared process through which a person’s identity is socially recognized (Sevelius, 2013). More specifically, it refers to the process by which people are affirmed or recognized in their gender identity (Reisner, Radix, and Deutsch, 2016). Gender affirmation can be conceptualized as having four core facets: psychological, social, medical, and legal (Reisner et al., 2016):

1. psychological gender affirmation, such as self-actualization and validation;
2. social gender affirmation, such as gender roles and use of appropriate names and pronouns that correspond with the person’s gender identity;
3. medical gender affirmation, such as use of puberty suppression, hormone therapy, and gender-affirming surgeries; and
4. legal gender affirmation, such as nondiscrimination protections and accessibility of legal processes to change names and gender markers on identity documents.

Gender affirmation sometimes, but not always, conforms to binary categories of being female or male. Gender affirmation does not require following a discrete or linear series of “transition” events; on the contrary, it can be conceptualized as an evolving process throughout a person’s life course.

There is no single path to gender affirmation—no one pathway that describes how or when people affirm their gender. For many transgender people, awareness and expression of one’s own gender identity is further complicated by having to affirm that identity in both personal and social contexts. Gender affirmation has thus emerged as an important framework for understanding transgender health.

Increasing evidence suggests that gender affirmation is a key determinant of health and well-being for transgender people. Some transgender individuals do not seek any medical interventions; others use hormones and do not seek surgery, and some undergo surgical interventions. Medical gender affirmation therapies (e.g., hormones and surgical interventions) have been found to improve psychological functioning and quality of life for transgender people (Murad et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018; Rowniak, Bolt, and Sharifi, 2019; Wernick et al., 2019; White Hughto and Reisner, 2016). Social, psychological, and medical gender affirmation were found to be associated with lower levels of depression and higher self-esteem in a community sample of transgender women (Glynn et al., 2016). There is also evidence supporting gender affirmation as a target of intervention to improve viral suppression for transgender women of color living with HIV (Sevelius et al., 2019). Among Black transgender women with and without HIV infection, gender affirmation has further been associated with increased personal competence and acceptance of self and life (resiliency) and decreased perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Crosby, Salazar, and Hill, 2016). In Black transgender youth, gender affirmation was shown to moderate the association between anticipated stigma and health care avoidance: anticipated stigma around health care treatment and subsequent avoidance decreased for youth who had undergone gender affirmation (Goldenberg et al., 2019). The gender affirmation matrix and its psychological, social, medical, and legal contexts and implications have been useful tools to advance understandings of the health and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people, but additional research utilizing this framework is needed.

LIFE COURSE

A life course perspective offers a framework for understanding how experiences accumulate over the life course, from early through late life, to shape advantage and disadvantage in health and well-being across diverse populations. Some population groups experience more disadvantage than others due to their identities, social locations, or sociohistorical contexts. Social patterns accumulate over time (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe, 2003) and can be affected by variation in stressors and resources across groups. The life course experiences of SGD populations further vary in relation to such factors as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Kim and Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016). There is more research on some SGD populations than on others; for example, more studies have focused on gay and lesbian populations than on bisexual, transgender, and intersex populations (Reczek, 2020).

Time and place are central to a life course perspective. Life course experiences and individual development are shaped by historical and geographic

contexts (Hammack et al., 2018). Because sexual and gender diversity is now more openly portrayed in popular culture than in previous eras, and because public attitudes around LGBTQ+ individuals and relationships have shifted, SGD youth may be more likely to come out during adolescence (Floyd and Bakeman, 2006). In the case of intersex people, there have been significant shifts in recent decades in cultural awareness and understanding of differences of sex development, as well as advances in patient-centered medical approaches to supporting the health and well-being of people with intersex traits (Roen, 2019). Individual development and life course experiences also vary geographically—both in terms of rural or urban areas and across states or localities. For example, prior to the nationwide expansion of marriage equality in 2015, lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals who lived in states that enacted more supportive policies for SGD populations (e.g., civil union legislation) experienced higher levels of psychological well-being and lower rates of hazardous drinking than those in states with more restrictive policies (Everett, Hatzenbuehler, and Hughes, 2016).

Across the life course, members of SGD populations face many unique stressors in their social environments that are directly attributable to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status—a phenomenon called “minority stress” (Brooks, 1981; Meyer, 2003). For many years, few people learned they were intersex or came out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender before adulthood. In recent years, however, many young people have begun to come out in adolescence. Those who self-identify as LGBTQI+ at a younger age may experience more minority stressors related to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status, such as conflict within their families or hostile school environments (Russell and Fish, 2016). In addition, adults who are members of SGD communities may face stigma and discrimination in their social networks, workplaces, and health care settings. Exposure to increased stress can activate biological processes (e.g., cardiovascular arousal), psychosocial processes (e.g., anxiety, depression, sleep problems), and behavioral processes (e.g., substance use, isolation) that take a toll on one’s health and well-being.

Protective or resilience factors over the life course can buffer the effects of stress, reduce stress exposure, and, on their own, contribute to cumulative advantage in well-being. A key concept here is that of “linked lives,” which refers to social connections, particularly close and supportive social relationships. In childhood, parents and families of origin can offer highly salient and important resources that promote well-being. For example, parental rejection is particularly undermining for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth (Ryan et al., 2009), while parental support can mitigate stress for children and adolescents at high risk of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Thomeer, Paine, and Bryant, 2018). Peer and school ties can be an important resource

through adolescence (Martin-Storey et al., 2015; Watson, Grossman, and Russell, 2019), and intimate partner and other chosen family ties are important throughout the life course (Donnelly, Robinson, and Umberson, 2019).

In contrast to stressors that undermine health and well-being, protective factors can activate biopsychosocial processes that contribute to cumulative advantage in health and well-being over the life course. A life course approach emphasizes the power of social contexts to influence individual development and well-being, but it also emphasizes individual agency in the choices individuals make to shape their life experiences and affect their social contexts.

A life course perspective attends to developmental processes across the entire life course, as well as to variation in development across historical and geographic contexts. Life course experiences spill over from one life stage to the next—a process that results in cumulative advantage or disadvantage over a person’s life (Umberson and Thomeer, 2020). Early life course exposure to discrimination and stigma based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status can thus have lifelong consequences. For example, substantial empirical research shows that exposure to high levels of stress and adversity in childhood sets in motion distinct developmental changes that can undermine health and well-being years and even decades later (Shonkoff et al., 2012). First, childhood adversity associated with discrimination and stigma may be the beginning of a long process of repeated insults to health and well-being that take place over a period of years. Second, childhood may be a sensitive period in the life course, during which significant stress exposure triggers patterns of heightened psychological and physiological reactivity to stress (e.g., hypervigilance, anxiety, cardiovascular arousal) that are detrimental to health. Thus, early life course experiences can set trajectories of health and well-being into motion that may be exacerbated by subsequent exposures to discrimination or interrupted by subsequent exposures to protective factors.

Little research has been conducted on how outcomes for aging SGD populations differ from those experienced by cisgender and heterosexual populations. Because marriage is associated with improved economic status and better health outcomes (see Chapter 8), it could become increasingly important to health and well-being as aging spouses experience declining health. There is a dearth of research on illness, caregiving, and end-of-life issues among SGD populations. Further study is needed to determine the effects of various experiences on the life course of aging populations and what types of social and economic support would improve outcomes for this population.

SUMMARY

In a complex system, elements interact with and provide feedback to other elements and to the individual at the center of the system, potentially

leading to changes in behaviors, roles, and functions that yield unique effects. By applying a complex systems perspective in this report, the committee acknowledges that an individual's health and well-being emerge from dynamic interactions involving many subsystems or sectors in society.

Three key components of a complex social system are social ecology (how an individual's social spheres influence health and well-being), social constructionism (how culture, society, and history influence the ways in which individuals experience life and the meanings they derive from these experiences), and stigma (how dominant cultural beliefs and the distribution of power can lead to labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination). Additional concepts that are particularly relevant to understanding sexual and gender diverse communities are intersectionality (how categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic class, and HIV/disease status create and maintain forms of structural inequality and discrimination); identity affirmation (how people affirm their sexual orientation, gender identity, and other aspects of identity); and life course (how experiences over an entire lifetime accumulate and affect health and well-being at different ages and stages of development).

These theories and concepts can serve as lenses through which multidisciplinary forms of research evidence can be interpreted: they are included in this report to provide readers with depth of understanding of these influences and dynamics on the health and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people. In the following chapters, the committee uses these ideas where applicable to inform analyses of various domains of well-being.

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PART II

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE POPULATIONS

3

Demography and Public Attitudes of Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations

This chapter reviews demographic patterns and trends among sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations. In any assessment of the demographic characteristics of these groups, visibility and the coming out process are critical considerations in interpretations of findings, particularly those focused on historical trends. Nearly all research in this area has focused on sexual orientation or same-sex sexual behavior or relationships. More recently and to a lesser extent there has been demographic research on transgender populations. There are still almost no demographic data on people with differences of sex development (DSD) in the general population or on people who might identify as intersex. This is a significant gap in terms of identifying and understanding the well-being of intersex populations.

This chapter focuses on overall prevalence estimates of sexual and gender diverse populations and provides some detail on geographic variation, age, race and ethnicity, and child-rearing practices of these populations. This does not represent an exhaustive list of important demographic traits. Information relating to economic status, immigration status, disability, and religion are discussed in greater detail in other chapters in this report.

The decision to disclose one's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status in any data collection setting can be affected by factors that include a sense of social acceptance, the presence of nondiscrimination protections, and perceptions of confidentiality and privacy. In the absence of affirming and protective environments, policies, and practices, some who consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), who have intersex traits/DSD, or who otherwise identify as not cisgender or

heterosexual may decide not to disclose details of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. Those decisions introduce a potentially inherent bias into assessments of SGD communities. Thus, it is important to understand that knowledge of the demographic characteristics of SGD populations is largely limited to information about those willing to disclose aspects of identity, behavior, or medical history that have been or still are stigmatized as non-normative.

PREVALENCE

Findings from both the General Social Survey (GSS) and Gallup show substantial increases in LGBT identification over the last decade. In combined GSS data for 2008–2012, 3.0 percent of adults identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. That figure increased by 60 percent, to 4.8 percent, in combined data for 2014–2018. In 2012, Gallup reported that 3.5 percent of U.S. adults identified as LGBT. That figure increased by almost 30 percent, to 4.5 percent, in the 2017 Gallup data. The GSS and Gallup figures imply that an estimated 11.4–12.2 million U.S. adults identify as LGBT: see Figure 3-1.¹ This number is roughly equivalent to the population of Ohio. Analyses of Gallup data suggest that virtually all of the change in LGBT identification is among younger age cohorts.²

Findings from 10 states using population-based data from the state-level Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System show increases in adolescents aged 14–18 identifying as non-heterosexual, from 7.3 percent in 2009 to 14.3 percent in 2017. These data also show increases in same-sex sexual contact, from 7.7 percent in 2009 to 13.1 percent in 2017 (Raifman et al., 2020).

A lack of historical data on the transgender population limits the ability to consider changes to population estimates over time. In studies that rely on clinical records, primarily from Europe, estimates of the transgender population size range between 1 and 30 people per 100,000 (0.001 to 0.03 percent) (Goodman et al., 2019). Studies that focus instead on self-report among nonclinical populations find estimates that range between 0.1 and 2.0 percent (Goodman et al., 2019). A 2016 nationwide estimate using population data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) estimated that 0.6 percent of U.S. adults identify as transgender (Flores et al., 2016), along with 0.7 percent of adolescents aged 13–17 (Herman et

¹These numbers are based on a calculation by Gary J. Gates using Census Bureau estimates that there are nearly 254,000,000 adults aged 18 and older in the United States (see <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-detail.html>), of whom 4.5–4.8 percent are LGBT.

²See <https://news.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>.

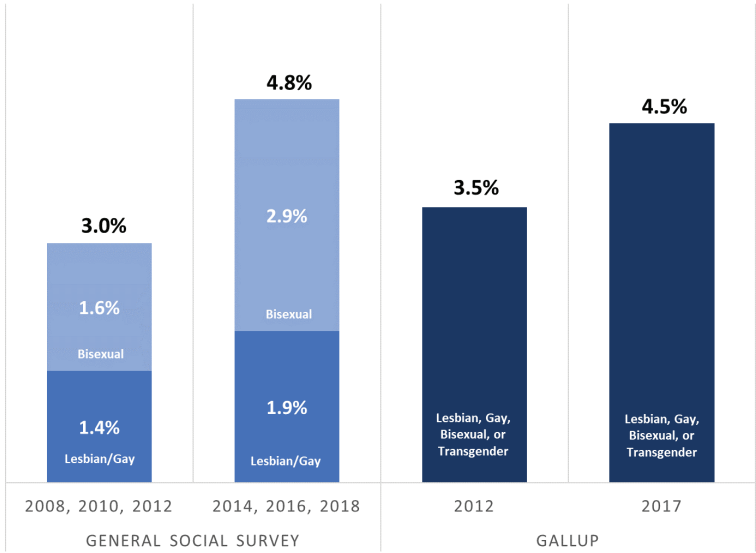


FIGURE 3-1 Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identification.
SOURCE: Data from the General Social Survey and Gallup Poll, 2008–2017.

al., 2017). This estimate implies that approximately 1.4 million adults³ and 150,000 adolescents aged 13–17 identify as transgender in the United States (Herman et al., 2017). A meta-analysis of multiple data sources from 2007 to 2015 found a similar estimate of approximately 1 million transgender people (0.39 percent of the U.S. population), with higher proportions among younger age groups (Meerwijk and Sevelius, 2017). In California, findings from a population-based sample of high school students found that 1.1 percent identified as transgender (Perez-Brumer et al., 2017). Of note, many surveys that ask about gender identity simply add a “transgender” option to an existing binary (male/female) sex question, which has been shown to result in substantial undercounts of transgender individuals in comparison with a two-step question design that asks about both current gender identity and sex assigned at birth (Tate, Ledbetter, and Youssef, 2013; Tordoff et al., 2019).

Increases have also been found in reported same-sex sexual behavior, though more so among women. In the 2002 National Survey of Family

³This figure is based on a calculation by Gary J. Gates using Census Bureau estimates that there are nearly 254,000,000 adults age 18 and older in the United States (see <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-detail.html>), of whom 0.6 percent are transgender.

Growth (NSFG), 11.2 percent of women aged 15–44 reported having had same-sex sexual contact (Mosher, Chandra, and Jones, 2005); in the 2011–2015 NSFG, that figure had increased to 17.6 percent.⁴ That pattern does not hold for men. Among men aged 15–44, 6.0 percent reported any same-sex anal or oral sexual activity in the 2002 NSFG (Mosher, Chandra, and Jones, 2005), compared with 5.1 percent in 2011–2015.⁵ Findings from the GSS show increases across birth cohorts in the proportion of adults who have had sex with both men and women since age 18: among those born prior to 1965, less than 5 percent of both men and women report such sexual activity; among those born between 1984 and 2000, the figure is more than 20 percent for women and 12 percent for men (Mishel et al., 2020).

The NSFG has also reported increases in same-sex sexual attraction. Among women aged 18–44 in the 2006–2010 data, 4.4 percent report being equally attracted to both men and women or mostly or exclusively attracted to women. In the 2011–2015 data, that figure was 5.5 percent. Women who said they were mostly rather than exclusively attracted to men also increased, from 12.1 percent to 12.7 percent. Among men aged 18–44, those who reported equal attraction to men and women or mostly or exclusively attracted to men increased in the two surveys from 2.7 percent to 3.1 percent. The proportion of men who said they were mostly rather than exclusively attracted to women increased from 3.5 percent to 4.0 percent.⁶

Recent estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS) suggest that there are 1,012,000 same-sex couples in the United States, of whom 543,000 (54%) are married (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In comparison, estimates from the 2010 census found approximately 650,000 same-sex couples (O’Connell and Feliz, 2011).⁷ Estimates based on Gallup data from June 2016 to June 2017 suggest that 23.3 percent of all LGBT-identified adults are married, with 10.2 percent married to a same-sex spouse and 13.1 percent married to a different-sex spouse. An additional 10.8 percent are cohabiting with a partner: 6.6 percent are cohabiting with a same-sex partner and 4.2 percent with a different-sex partner (Jones, 2017). It is important to note that many bisexuals, who account for more than half of adults who identify as LGBT, report cohabitation with different-sex partners and spouses, likely accounting for many of the LGBT adults who report living with different-sex partners or spouses.

⁴ See https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/key_statistics/s.htm#sexualfemales.

⁵ See https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/key_statistics/s.htm#oralanal.

⁶ Key Statistics from the National Survey of Family Growth: see https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/key_statistics/s.htm#sexualattraction.

⁷ Of note, there are methodological differences in how the CPS and the 2010 census identify same-sex couples. Also, the 2010 figure is adjusted from original census tabulations to account for measurement error due to potential sex miscoding among different-sex couples.

Increases in LGBT identification are likely a result of more people in SGD populations being willing and able to self-identify and be visible. Analyses of several population-based data sources, however, show that these increases are not uniform by sexual orientation identity, age, race, or ethnicity. In particular, the evidence suggests that increases in LGBT identification are more prominent among bisexual people, women, younger adults, and racial and ethnic minorities.⁸ Unfortunately, research explaining why particular groups have become more willing to disclose their LGBT identification remains sparse.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Historic trends in national LGBT prevalence estimates offer evidence of a link between social acceptance and LGBT identification. In 1972 the GSS reported that 73 percent of American adults believed that homosexuality was always wrong, while 11 percent believed that homosexuality was not wrong at all. In 2008, only a small majority, 52 percent, said such relationships were always wrong, while 38 percent said that same-sex sexual relationships are not wrong at all. By 2018, only 32 percent said homosexuality was always wrong, and 58 percent said it was not wrong at all (Gates, 2017): see Figure 3-2.

Gallup analyses show similar trends. In 2008, 55 percent of U.S. adults thought that gay and lesbian relationships between consenting adults should be legal. By 2019, that figure had risen to 73 percent (Gallup, 2019). There

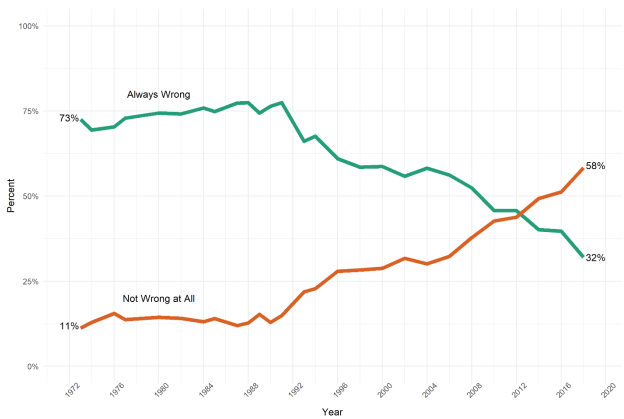


FIGURE 3-2 Approval of homosexuality, 1972–2018.
SOURCE: Data from the General Social Survey cumulative data file, 1972–2018.

⁸See <https://news.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>.

are insufficient longitudinal data to draw conclusions about historical trends in public attitudes about transgender people, but the growing visibility of transgender people in the media and in public life over the past 10 years may indicate a social climate of growing acceptance. For example, Jones and colleagues (2019b) found that, from 2017 to 2019, people favorable attitudes toward transgender rights markedly increased. Almost half (49%) of U.S. adults across all age groups and partisan affiliations in a 2020 poll from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) believed U.S. society had not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender, compared with only 15 percent who said society has gone too far (Kirzinger et al., 2020). The percentage who say society has not gone far enough has increased by 10 points since a similar poll conducted in 2017 (Horowitz, Parker, and Stepler, 2017).⁹

In a 2019 poll, 63 percent of all respondents said that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people experience “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of discrimination in the United States today, and 69 percent said the same about transgender.¹⁰ In a recent poll, large majorities of the American public said that there is at least some discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (74%) and transgender people (79%) in the United States today, which is comparable to the proportion who believe discrimination exists against Black (84%) and Hispanic people (77%) (Kirzinger et al., 2020). In the KFF poll, the proportion of respondents who said there is “a lot” of discrimination against transgender people in the United States today was comparable to those who said the same about Black people (45% and 53%, respectively) (Kirzinger et al., 2020).

In tandem with awareness of ongoing discrimination against SGD people, there is also widespread support for policies that address discrimination. A recent study found that 71 percent of U.S. adults supported nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people in employment, public accommodations, and housing (Jones et al., 2019a). Although support varied by partisan and individual demographic characteristics, it is rare to find less than a majority of any demographic group supporting nondiscrimination protections. For example, 56 percent of Republicans, 70 percent of Mormons, 60 percent of Muslims, 54 percent of white evangelical Protestants, and 65 percent of Southerners supported broad nondiscrimination protections (Jones et al., 2019a). In a 2016 poll on education, 86 percent said they believed laws should be in place to protect transgender children from bullying (Taylor et al., 2018). Public attitudes about transgender people

⁹ See <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/08/transgender-issues-divide-republicans-and-democrats/>.

¹⁰ See https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/x3neaunoh2/econTabReport.pdf.

serving openly in the military tend to also be broadly supportive: a 2016 survey found 68 percent of adults favored allowing transgender people to serve openly (Taylor et al., 2018; see also Lewis et al., 2017). Among active-duty military personnel, 66 percent supported transgender military service (Dunlap et al., 2020). In health care, a 2020 poll found that large majorities said it should be illegal for doctors and other health care providers to refuse to treat people because they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (89 percent) or transgender (88%) (Kirzinger et al., 2020). Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed that health insurance companies should not be able to discriminate against transgender people in health insurance coverage (Kirzinger et al., 2020).

The public appears more divided on other policies, such as including gender identity protections in public accommodations (e.g., public restrooms), and whether businesses and others should be allowed to deny services to LGBT people on the grounds of a sincerely held religious belief (Taylor et al., 2018). In a recent poll, however, majorities of the public opposed allowing a range of entities to invoke religious exemptions to avoid serving gay and lesbian people, including small business owners (5%), licensed professionals (67%), adoption agencies (60 percent), and companies providing wedding services (55%) (Jones et al., 2019b). In a 2015 poll, two-thirds of respondents agreed that government officials should be obligated to serve everyone the same regardless of their religious beliefs.¹¹ Adults were ambivalent about permitting transgender people to participate in sex-segregated sports according to their current gender identity: a 2015 survey found that about one-third approved of transgender people playing sports in accordance with their gender identity, about one-third disapproved, and about one-third did not approve or disapprove (Flores et al., 2020).

Acceptance has not grown uniformly among American adults. A variety of studies have shown that five demographic characteristics and personal experiences lead people to be more accepting than others (Baunach, 2011, 2012). One factor that contributes to an individual's accepting attitudes about SGD people and their rights is demographic characteristics (lesbian women and gay men: Baunach, 2011, 2012; Becker, 2012; Becker and Scheufele, 2011; transgender people: Flores, 2015; Norton and Herek, 2013; Taylor et al., 2018). A second factor is values, such as egalitarianism, traditionalism, and authoritarianism (lesbian women and gay men: Brewer, 2003a, 2003b, 2007; Gaines and Garand, 2010; transgender people: Miller et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2018). A third factor is religion (lesbian women

¹¹ See <https://theharrispoll.com/as-kentuckys-rowan-county-clerk-kim-davis-may-now-realize-most-americans-believe-that-government-officials-should-not-allow-their-religious-beliefs-to-stand-in-the-way-of-issuing-marriage-li/>.

and gay men: Olson, Cadge, and Harrison, 2006; transgender people: Taylor et al., 2018). A fourth factor is emotional predispositions (lesbian women and gay men: Gadarian and van der Vort, 2018; Harrison and Michelson, 2017; transgender people: Michelson and Harrison, 2020; Miller et al., 2017). The fifth factor is personal experiences, such as knowing individual SGD people (lesbian women and gay men: Herek and Capitanio, 1996; Lewis, 2011; transgender people: Jones et al., 2018; Tadlock et al., 2017). Table 3-1 presents a summary of these patterns. It is worth noting that adults in the United States tend to more often report they personally know at least one LGB person (82%; MTV, 2017) than they know at least one transgender person (36%; Kirzinger et al., 2020).

TABLE 3-1 Characteristics that Relate to Attitudes toward Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations

Trait	Less Support	More Support	Citation
Demographic Characteristics			
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexuals	Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals	Haider-Markel and Miller (2017)
Gender Identity	Cisgender	Transgender	Flores et al. (2020)
Age	Older individuals	Younger Individuals	Garretson (2015)
Gender	Males	Females	Herek (2002)
Educational Attainment	High School or less	College degree or more	Flores (2015)
Race	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Abrajano (2010); Lewis et al. (2017)
Ethnicity	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Abrajano (2010); Lewis et al. (2017)
Values			
Moral Traditionalism	More traditionalist	Less traditionalist	Flores et al. (2020); Gaines and Garand (2010)
Authoritarianism	More authoritarian	Less authoritarian	Flores et al. (2020); Miller et al. (2017)
Religion	Evangelical Christians	Agnostics and Atheists	Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006); Taylor et al. (2018)
Religiosity	Strong adherents	Weak adherents	Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006)
Emotion			
Disgust	More sensitive	Less sensitive	Gadarian and van der Vort (2018); Miller et al. (2017)
Context			
Region	Residing in the South	Residing not in the South	Lewis and Galope (2014)
LGB Population Density	Fewer LGB People	More LGB People	Flores (2014)

GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Assessments of geographic differences in LGBT identification also offer evidence of the associations among social acceptance, legal protections, and willingness to disclose. Even with changing public attitudes about SGD populations, there remain regional differences in levels of acceptance. Rural locations, locations with smaller SGD populations, and locations with larger socially conservative religious communities all show higher levels of stigma and less acceptance (Eldridge, Mack, and Swank, 2006; Flores, 2014; Snively et al., 2004; Taylor, Lewis, and Haider-Markel, 2018; Taylor et al., 2018). A Williams Institute analysis of 2017 data from Gallup showed that LGBT identification was higher in the Northeast and along the West coast, which are areas that tend to have higher levels of social acceptance and legal protections for SGD populations: see Figure 3-3.

Although there may be some differences in the mobility patterns of LGBT individuals—for example, some LGBT people with the ability and resources to relocate may disproportionately move to places with greater social acceptance and legal protections—evidence from the GSS suggests that this likely does not account for most of the geographic differences observed in the Gallup data. Analysis of combined GSS data from 2014, 2016, and 2018 suggests that 37 percent of respondents who identified as

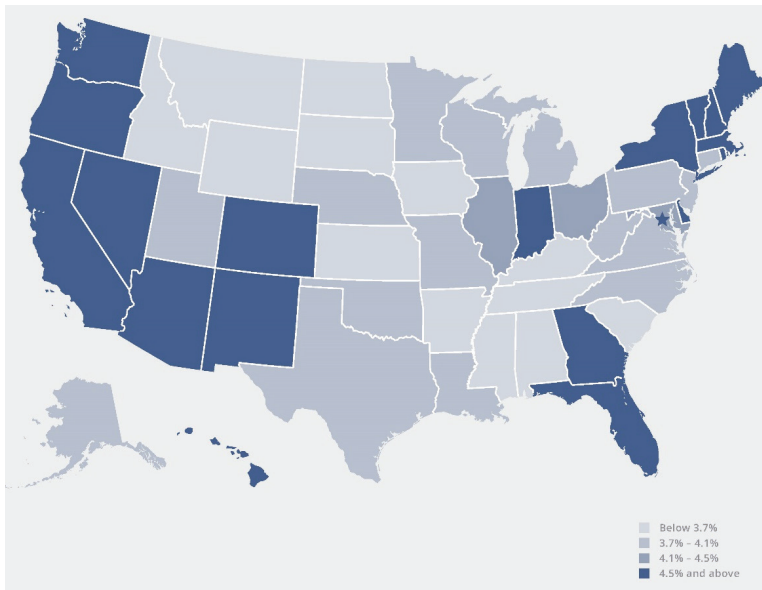


FIGURE 3-3 Proportion of adults age 18 and older identifying as LGBT, by state.
SOURCE: Williams Institute. (2019). *LGBT Demographic Data Interactive*. UCLA School of Law.

lesbian, gay, or bisexual say that they live in a state that differs from the state where they lived when they were 16 years old, which is not statistically different from the 35 percent of heterosexual respondents with the same response.¹² Even if the mobility patterns of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people differ from those of heterosexuals, the similarity between the two groups in the probability of moving likely means that there is not enough mobility among the former group to explain substantial state-level variation in LGBT population sizes. It is more likely that higher levels of social acceptance and legal protections are associated with increased willingness among LGBT people to identify as such on surveys.

In a statewide estimate of support for legal marriage recognition for same-sex couples, Flores and Barclay (2015) found that each state increased in level of support between 1992 and 2014, though some states are far more accepting than others: see Figure 3-4. In 2014 the District of Columbia was notably the most favorable at 86 percent, while southern states such as Alabama remained less approving at 35 percent. Thus, regional differences in

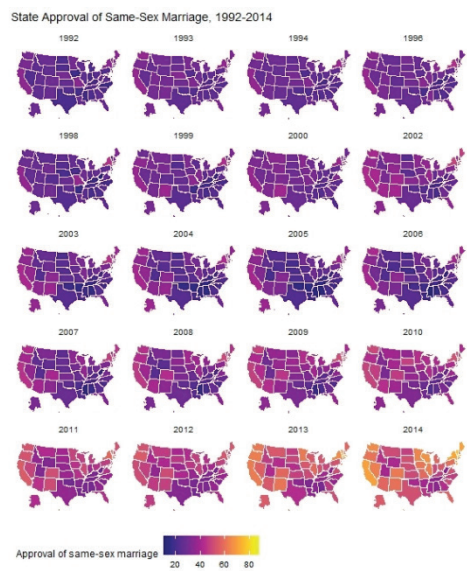


FIGURE 3-4 State approval of same-sex marriage, 1992–2014.
SOURCE: Created by committee with data from Flores and Barclay (2015).

¹² Information retrieved from analyses of General Social Survey data by Gary Gates in 2018, using the Survey Documentation and Analysis online tool maintained by the Institute for Scientific Analysis, San Francisco, CA, under a licensing agreement with the University of California. Tool is available at <https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss18>.

societal stigma and acceptance both at the state and local levels characterize the variety of contexts in which SGD populations live. In 2019, however, the majority of residents in every state supported sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination protections in employment, accommodations, and housing (Jones et al., 2019a).

GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Analyses of data from the GSS and the National Health Interview Study (NHIS) show a consistent pattern in which increases in lesbian, gay, and bisexual identification have been more pronounced among women and bisexual people: see Figure 3-5. In the 2008–2012 GSS, women comprised 59 percent of the sample of such self-identified adults, with 37 percent of the LGB sample identifying as bisexual women. In the 2014–2018 data, the share of women increased to 66 percent, with 46 percent of the LGB adult sample identifying as bisexual women. The pattern is similar in the NHIS, although the changes are somewhat more modest. In 2013, 53 percent of self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults on the NHIS were female; by 2018, that proportion had increased to 56 percent. The proportion of NHIS respondents identifying as bisexual also increased over the 5-year

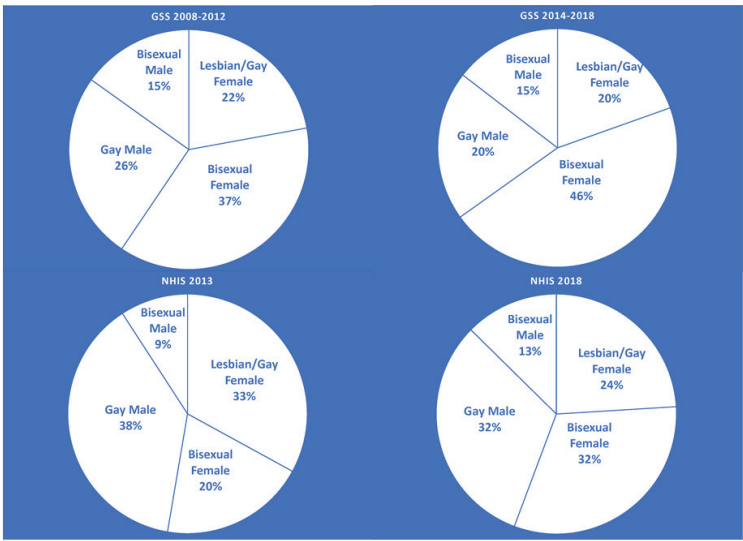


FIGURE 3-5 Sexual orientation identity and gender among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults age 18 and older.
NOTES: GSS, General Social Survey; NHIS, National Health Interview Survey.

period, from 20 percent to 32 percent among women and from 9 percent to 13 percent among men. Women also represent a majority of same-sex couples. Analyses of Census Bureau data show that 54 percent of cohabiting same-sex couples are female (Williams Institute, 2019).

Among transgender people, 46 percent of all transgender respondents on the 2015–2016 California Health Interview Study (CHIS) reported that they were assigned female at birth, and 54 percent were assigned male. Among all transgender respondents, 7 percent identified their current gender as male, 32 percent as female, 46 percent as transgender, and 15 percent indicated that they identified as a gender not listed (Herman, Wilson, and Becker, 2017). Analyses of multiyear pooled BRFSS data from the jurisdictions that fielded the sexual orientation and gender identity module between 2014 and 2016 indicate that approximately half (48%) of transgender BRFSS respondents identified as transgender women, almost one-third (31%) identified as transgender men, and one-fifth (20 percent) identified as gender nonconforming (Downing and Przedworski, 2018).

In the BRFSS sample, 74.6 percent of transgender women identified as heterosexual, compared with 69.8 percent of transgender men and 52.3 percent of gender-nonconforming respondents. The group with the highest proportion of bisexual respondents was gender-nonconforming people (22.9%) compared with 11.5 percent of transgender women and 10.2 percent of transgender men. Among transgender women, 4 percent identified as lesbian or gay, compared with 11.1 percent of transgender men and 2.0 percent of gender-nonconforming respondents.

In the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), a nationwide purposive sample of almost 28,000 transgender and non-binary adults, 57 percent of respondents said they were assigned female at birth, and 43 percent were assigned male at birth (James et al., 2016). Gender identity was assessed differently on the CHIS, the BRFSS, and the USTS, but in the USTS, 29 percent of respondents identified as transgender men, 33 percent as transgender women, 35 percent as non-binary, and 3 percent as crossdressers. Among USTS respondents, 21 percent identified their sexual orientation as queer; 18 percent as pansexual; 16 percent as gay, lesbian, or same-gender-loving; 15 percent as straight; 14 percent as bisexual; and 10 percent as asexual.

AGE

Increases in LGBT identification are more pronounced in younger age cohorts. Gallup analyses show that virtually all the growth in the proportion of the U.S. population identifying as LGBT between 2012 and 2017 can be attributed to increases among those born between 1980 and 1999, often called the millennial generation. The proportion of that group identifying as LGBT was 5.8 percent in 2012 and 8.2 percent in 2017. Other age cohorts were

virtually unchanged (Newport, 2018). In the 2013 NHIS, 1.9 percent of those aged 18–44 identified as lesbian or gay, and 1.1 percent identified as bisexual. In the 2018 NHIS, those figures were 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively. Among those aged 45–64, there was virtually no change: in 2013, 1.8 percent identified as lesbian or gay and 0.4 percent identified as bisexual; in 2018 the percentages were 1.8 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively.¹³

Analyses of the GSS data show similar patterns. Among those born between 1980 and 1999, 1.7 percent identified as lesbian or gay, and 2.8 percent identified as bisexual in combined data from 2008, 2010, and 2012. In the 2014, 2016, and 2018 combined data, those figures rose to 2.8 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively. Among all other respondents, the proportions went from 1.4 percent lesbian or gay and 1.2 percent bisexual in the earlier data to 1.5 percent lesbian or gay and 1.5 percent bisexual in the later data, a much more modest increase.

The prevalence of transgender identity is also slightly higher in younger populations, although age differences are less pronounced than for sexual orientation. Estimates from the BRFSS show that 0.7 percent of both 13- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds identify as transgender, compared with 0.6 percent of those aged 25–64 and 0.5 percent of those aged 65 and older (Flores et al., 2017).

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In general, the racial and ethnic characteristics of the LGBT population are similar to those of the general population, and changes over the last decade have mirrored changes in the general population. Data from the 2010 census showed that 36.3 percent of individuals in same-sex couples identified their race or ethnicity as something other than non-Hispanic white (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez, 2011). That figure had increased to 39.6 percent in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In the 2012 Gallup data, 33 percent of LGBT-identified respondents indicated they were something other than non-Hispanic white. That figure increased to 42 percent in the 2017 Gallup data.¹⁴ In the GSS, the proportion changed from 34 percent to 38 percent between the combined 2008–2012 data and the 2014–2018 data. In the NHIS data, the numbers were 31 percent in 2013 and 34 percent in 2018 (Gates, 2018).¹⁵ By comparison, Census Bureau statistics from

¹³See <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/data-questionnaires-documentation.htm>.

¹⁴See <https://news.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>.

¹⁵Information retrieved from data analyses of the General Social Survey by Gary Gates in 2018, using the Survey Documentation and Analysis online tool maintained by the Institute for Scientific Analysis, San Francisco, CA, under a licensing agreement with the University of California. Tool is available at <https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss18>.

2019 show that 39.6 percent of the U.S. population identifies as something other than non-Hispanic white.¹⁶

In general, data providing detail on the race and ethnicity of sexual and gender diverse populations remain rare, often due to small sample sizes. One exception is Gallup data, which in 2016 showed higher rates of LGBT identification among non-Hispanic Black (4.6%), Hispanic (5.4%), non-Hispanic Asian (4.9%), and non-Hispanic individuals of other races (6.3%), than among non-Hispanic whites (3.6%).¹⁷

Analyses of the 2014 BRFSS data suggest that transgender adults in the United States are more likely to be nonwhite than the general population: 55 percent of transgender adults identified as white, compared with 66 percent in the general adult population. On a more detailed level, 16 percent of transgender adults identified as African American or Black, 21 percent as Hispanic or Latino, and 8 percent as another race or ethnicity. In the general population, the corresponding numbers are 12 percent, 15 percent, and 8 percent, respectively (Flores, Brown, and Herman, 2016).

CHILD REARING

Based on analyses of 2014–2018 GSS data, an estimated 37 percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals report having ever had a child. By comparison, 74 percent of heterosexual adults in those data report the same, making heterosexuals twice as likely to report having a child (Gates, 2018).¹⁸ This dynamic is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Estimates from 2017 Gallup data suggest that 29 percent of LGBT adults aged 25 and older are currently living with a child under age 18 (Williams Institute, 2019). Among same-sex couples, 2010 Census Bureau data suggest that 19 percent are raising a child under age 18 (Gates, 2013). The comparable figure for different-sex couples was 41 percent.¹⁹ LGBT-identified women and women in same-sex couples in Gallup and U.S. Census Bureau data, respectively, are much more likely than their male counterparts to be raising children (Gates, 2013). A review of 51 studies focused on transgender parenting suggests that between a quarter and a half of transgender individuals report parenthood. This compares with 65 percent of adult males and 74 percent of adult females in the U.S. general

¹⁶ See <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

¹⁷ See <https://news.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>.

¹⁸ Information retrieved from data analyses of the General Social Survey by Gary Gates in 2018, using the Survey Documentation and Analysis online tool maintained by the Institute for Scientific Analysis, San Francisco, CA, under a licensing agreement with the University of California. Tool is available at <https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss18>.

¹⁹ See <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/same-sex/time-series/ssc-house-characteristics/sssex-tables-2011.xls>.

population (Stotzer, Herman, and Hasenbush, 2014). There are no statistics available on parenting among the intersex population.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The available data on sexual and gender diverse populations show a picture of dynamic and rapidly evolving populations. SGD populations are becoming younger, more female, and more racially and ethnically diverse, and they include an increasing proportion of bisexual individuals. Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual people also have children. It seems possible that similar trends are occurring among transgender and other gender diverse populations, though data to track population-wide trends among these groups are not yet available. Population-based data on intersex populations are generally not available at all.

One challenge in assessing SGD population demographics is that many currently used demographic data collection instruments do not measure sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status at all. Instruments that do measure sexual orientation tend to assess only sexual orientation identity; they do not cover other important aspects of sexual diversity, most notably sexual attraction and sexual behavior. Moreover, instruments that measure gender identity tend to use a single-item approach that may result in undercounts of transgender respondents.

Social acceptance of sexual and gender diversity has been increasing. A majority of Americans approve of same-sex relationships and support federal discrimination protections for LGBT people. Taken together, the available evidence suggests that changes in LGBT populations may be a product of factors that include growing societal awareness and acceptance of diverse sexual and gender identities; expansion of laws, policies, and practices that protect and support communities and individuals regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity; and an increasing willingness and ability among LGBT and other SGD populations to self-identify or disclose their transgender identity or same-sex attraction, behavior, identity, or relationship.

CONCLUSION 3-1: Demographic analyses of sexual and gender diverse populations are complicated by the fact that visibility among these groups is rapidly changing, with a generally improving but fluctuating social climate.

Although the possibility that the underlying distribution of SGD people has changed or is changing cannot be ruled out, it is clear that the evolving societal and political context has created new possibilities for diverse sexual and gender identities to be understood and claimed by growing

numbers of people. The demographic shifts observed in SGD populations challenge researchers and policy makers to collect more and better data and to consider the degree to which research questions, media discussions, and policy proposals reflect the most pressing needs of these populations and the contemporary challenges they face.

CONCLUSION 3-2: Understanding the changing demography of sexual and gender diverse populations is important for guiding policy efforts and the allocation of often limited resources to address health, economic status, and other disparities that affect these populations.

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4

Current State of Data Collection

Data collection on such demographic characteristics as sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status is a critical component of improving the well-being of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations across all domains of life. Recognizing the central role of consistent, high-quality data in understanding and addressing disparities, the Institute of Medicine (2011) report on LGBT health recommended the routine collection of data on sexual orientation and gender identity in federally funded surveys and electronic medical records (EMRs), as well as the development and standardization of measures of sexual orientation and gender identity. Since that report, there has been significant progress in the development, standardization, and deployment of relevant metrics. These efforts parallel the evolution of measures to assess other aspects of identity that are equally important in understanding disparities affecting SGD populations, such as race, ethnicity, primary language, and disability.¹

Most of the existing research on the demography of SGD populations has focused on sexual orientation identity (e.g., self-identification as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, or another sexual orientation) and same-sex sexual behavior and attraction. Another important dimension is measurement of same-sex partnered and marital relationships. More recently, demographic research has also begun to include such measures of gender identity as current gender identity, sex assigned at birth, gender expression, and transgender status. There are no large-scale demographic data available on people who have intersex traits (differences of sex development [DSD])

¹See <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=53>.

or others who might identify as intersex, which is a significant barrier to understanding and improving the well-being of intersex populations.

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION

In 2015 the U.S. Office of Management and Budget convened the Federal Interagency Working Group Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to consider topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity data collection throughout the federal statistical system. According to a 2016 report from this working group (Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys [hereafter, Federal Interagency Working Group], 2016a), as well as the report from an expert meeting on methods and measurement in SGD populations convened by the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office (SGMRO) (2018b) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), data elements that are particularly relevant to SGD population research include but are not limited to

- sexual orientation identity
- sexual behavior
- sexual attraction
- gender composition of partnered and marital relationships
- gender identity
- sex assigned at birth
- gender expression
- transgender status
- intersex status

Although these data elements are often assumed to be associated solely with LGBT, intersex, and other SGD populations, it is important to note that these elements apply equally to all people. Every person has a sexual orientation, a gender identity, and physical sex characteristics, and partnered and marital relationships are a fundamental part of life for many people. Thus, these data elements are relevant for any data collection instrument, system, or activity that includes demographic characteristics.

Similarly, concerns about respondents' experiences of discrimination as a result of disclosing personal demographic information are not unique to sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. It is essential to ensure that all data collection efforts advance in tandem with laws, policies, and practices that ensure respondent privacy and confidentiality, do not require disclosure of personal demographic information to access programs or services, and provide robust protections from discrimination. It is also important to remember that collecting data about the experiences of people

who may be targeted for discrimination on the basis of such personal characteristics as sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status is a crucial component of establishing and enforcing effective nondiscrimination protections.

There are at least three broad domains in which it is important to collect sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status data:

1. survey research, including population surveys, needs assessments, and other survey efforts fielded or supported by private entities or any level of government;
2. nonsurvey research, such as clinical trials, biomedical research, program evaluations, and paired testing to assess discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas; and
3. administrative and program data systems, including intake forms, applications for programs, such as Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and data generated during enforcement processes related to civil rights or criminal justice.

In the health context, these data should also be collected in EMRs and other forms of clinical recordkeeping (Institute of Medicine, 2013). Federal interoperability standards for health information technology have required certified EMR systems to have the capacity to record, change, and access structured data on sexual orientation and gender identity since 2018, and it is incumbent on health care organizations and providers to ensure these fields are active in their EMRs, to seek training on collecting these data in a culturally competent manner, and to incorporate the collection and use of these data in routine clinical workflows² (Cahill et al., 2016). These federal criteria do not require data collection about intersex status, which stymies efforts to assess and improve the health of people with intersex traits.

Data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status are becoming more available as federally supported surveys and other systems begin to collect them. Table 4-1, although not exhaustive, identifies several large and widely used surveys and other data sources that include some or all of these measures. There are many examples of publicly and privately sponsored data collection activities, however, in which these data are not yet collected. The well-being of SGD populations across the United States could be improved by the addition of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status measures to a wide variety of data collection instruments, including but not limited to those listed in Table 4-1. More detailed descriptions of the types of questions referenced in this table are discussed below.

²See <https://www.healthit.gov/isa/section/sex-birth-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>.

TABLE 4-1 State of Data Collection on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Intersex Status in Federally Supported Surveys and Other Data Systems

Instrument	Lead Sponsor Agency or Organization	Most Recent Year with Relevant Data ^a
All of Us Research Program	National Institutes of Health (HHS) [*]	Present
American Community Survey (ACS)	Census Bureau (DOC)	N/A
American National Election Studies (ANES)	Stanford University and University of Michigan	2016
American Time Use Survey (ATUS)	Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL)	N/A
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	National Center for Health Statistics (CDC, HHS)	Present
Common Clinical Data Set (CCDS)	Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (HHS)	N/A
Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (HHS)	N/A
Current Population Survey (CPS)	Bureau of Labor Statistics (HHS)	N/A
Daily Tracking Survey	Gallup	Present
Decennial Census	Census Bureau (DOC)	N/A
Early Career Doctorates Survey (ECDS)	National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF)	N/A
General Social Survey (GSS)	National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago	Present
Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Plans and Metrics	U.S. Executive Branch agencies	Varies
Growing Up Today Study (GUTS)	Harvard University	Varies
The Health and Retirement Survey (HRS)	University of Michigan	Present
Health Center Patient Survey ^d (HCPS)	Health Resources and Services Administration (HHS)	2014

	Relevant Data		
	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Intersex Status
	Identity	Sex assigned at birth; gender question includes transgender options	Sex assigned at birth includes intersex option
	No	No	No
	Identity	No	No
	No	No	No
	Identity ^b	Transgender status ^b	No
	No	No	No
	No	No	No
	No	No	No
	Identity	Transgender combined with lesbian, gay, and bisexual	No
	No	No	No
	No	No	No
	Identity, behavior	No	No
	Rare	Rare	No
	Identity and attraction combined, behavior	Gender question includes transgender options, gender expression	No
	Identity	No	No
	Identity	Modified two-step	No

continued

TABLE 4-1 Continued

Instrument	Lead Sponsor Agency or Organization	Most Recent Year with Relevant Data ^d
High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09)	National Center for Education Statistics (ED)	2018
Interoperability Standards Advisory for Health Information Technology	Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (HHS)	Present
Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS)	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (HHS)	N/A
Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS)	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (HHS)	N/A
National Alcohol and Tobacco Survey (NATS)	National Center for Health Statistics (CDC, HHS)	2014
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	Bureau of Justice Statistics (DOJ)	Present
National Epidemiologic Survey of Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)	National Institutes of Health (HHS)	2013
National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)	National Center for Health Statistics (CDC, HHS)	Present
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)	National Center for Health Statistics (CDC, HHS)	Present
National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System (NHBS)	Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention (CDC, HHS)	Present
National Inmate Survey (NIS)	Bureau of Justice Statistics (DOJ)	2012
National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)	National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC, HHS)	2010
National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)	University of North Carolina	2019
National Longitudinal Surveys (e.g., NLSY97)	Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL)	N/A
National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP)	NORC at the University of Chicago	2016
National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG)	National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF)	N/A
National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (HHS)	Present

Sexual Orientation	Relevant Data	
	Gender Identity	Intersex Status
Identity	Gender question includes transgender options	No
Identity, attraction	Gender identity, sex assigned at birth	No
No	No	No
No	No	No
Identity	Modified two-step	No
Identity	Two-step	No
Identity, attraction, behavior	No	No
Identity	No	No
Identity, behavior	No	No
Identity, behavior	Two-step ^f	Sex assigned at birth includes intersex option
Identity, behavior	Gender question includes transgender option	No
Identity	No	No
Identity, attraction, behavior	Two-step, gender expression	No
No	No	No
Identity, behavior	No	No
No	No	No
Identity, attraction	No	No

continued

TABLE 4-1 Continued

Instrument	Lead Sponsor Agency or Organization	Most Recent Year with Relevant Data ^a
National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG)	National Center for Health Statistics (CDC, HHS)	Present
National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (NSOAAP)	Administration for Community Living (HHS)	Present
National Survey of Veterans (NSV)	National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	N/A
National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)	National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC, HHS)	Present ^c
Nurses' Health Studies (NHS, NHS II)	Harvard University	N/A
Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)	University of Michigan	N/A
Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH)	Food and Drug Administration and National Institutes of Health (HHS)	Present
School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSCS)	National Center for Education Statistics (ED)	Present
Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR)	National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF)	N/A
Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)	National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF)	N/A
Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)	Census Bureau (DOC)	N/A
Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCR)	Federal Bureau of Investigation (DOJ)	Present
Uniform Data System (UDS)	Health Resources and Services Administration (HHS)	Present
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS)	Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC, HHS)	Present

NOTES: CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; DOC, U.S. Department of Commerce; DOJ, U.S. Department of Justice; DOL, U.S. Department of Labor; ED, U.S. Department of Education; HHS, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; NSF, National Science Foundation; VA, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

^aData on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.
^bThis topic is not part of the national survey core measures, but 37 jurisdictions have used a CDC-sponsored question module to gather data about sexual orientation and gender identity; several other states assess sexual orientation or gender identity using their own question designs.
^cMore detailed sexual orientation and gender identity fields are available in a form that scene investigators may use when reporting a violent death (see <https://www.lgbtmortality.com/resources>).

Relevant Data		
Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Intersex Status
Identity, attraction, behavior	No	No
Identity	No	No
No	No	No
Identity	Transgender status	No
No	No	No
No	No	No
Identity, attraction	Transgender status	No
Hate crime victimization on basis of sexual orientation	Hate crime victimization on basis of gender identity	No
No	No	No
No	No	No
No	No	No
Identity	Gender question includes transgender options	No
Identity	Gender question includes transgender options	No
Identity, behavior	Transgender status ^e	No

^dAs of August 2020, not being fielded.

^eA gender identity measure was piloted by 19 jurisdictions (10 states and 9 school districts) on the 2017 survey.

^fThe NHBS-Trans was conducted in 2019–2020 among transgender women in seven states.

METRICS AND MEASUREMENT

General Methodological Considerations

Over the last two decades, numerous studies have assessed the construct validity of sexual orientation and gender identity measures and investigated their performance in the field. Several validated questions, which are described in more detail below, exist and can be readily used to assess sexual orientation and gender identity (Sexual Minority Assessment Research Team [SMART], 2009; Gender Identity in US Surveillance [GenIUSS] Group, 2014; Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016a, 2016b). Aspects of performance that have been evaluated include respondent comprehension, survey breakoff, language considerations, mode effects, and proxy reporting.

Cognitive testing shows that concepts related to sexual orientation and gender identity are broadly comprehensible for the general U.S. population, though it is important to ensure that translations into languages other than English are accurate and culturally appropriate (Clark, Armstrong, and Bonacore, 2005; Ingraham, Pratt, and Gorton, 2015; Ridolfo, Miller, and Maitland, 2012; Stern et al., 2016; NORC at the University of Chicago, 2016). Incidents of survey breakoff (premature termination of the survey by the respondent) in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity questions are infrequent, and item nonresponse is low, ranging from less than 1 percent to just over 6 percent (Case et al., 2006; Conron, Mimiaga, and Landers, 2010; Dahlhamer et al., 2014; Grant and Jans, n.d.; Grant et al., 2015; Ortman et al., 2017; Ridolfo, Miller, and Maitland, 2012; VanKim et al., 2010). This is significantly better than the nonresponse rates for some common demographic questions: for instance, income can have a nonresponse rate of more than 20 percent (Atrostic and Kalenkoski, 2002). Research on mode (e.g., computer-assisted personal interview compared with audio computer-assisted self-interview) has found no main effects of mode on item nonresponse (Dahlhamer, Galinsky, and Joestl, 2019).

In 2016, researchers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau conducted cognitive interviews and exploratory focus groups to consider the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity questions on the Current Population Survey (CPS), which uses proxy reporting. Most participants did not consider sexual orientation or gender identity questions to be particularly difficult or sensitive either for themselves or for others in their households, and few objected to answering such questions on the survey. The researchers did find that some LGBT individuals, particularly transgender participants, expressed concern that the range of answer options was too narrow (Ellis et al., 2018). This project, however, demonstrated the feasibility of asking sexual orientation and gender iden-

tity questions on surveys that use proxy reporting. Of note, the United Kingdom has included sexual orientation measures in one of its large household surveys using proxy responses since 2014 (U.K. Office of National Statistics, 2020).

Other important considerations in research around sexual orientation and gender identity include the potential fluidity of identity, particularly from the perspective of developmental stages and the life course; probability versus nonprobability sampling; and recruiting techniques, particularly methods for recruiting samples large enough to permit robust analyses of SGD populations by intersecting demographic characteristics, such as race or disability status (Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016c; SGMRO, 2018b).

Another major question is how to balance the need for sufficiently comprehensive response options with the need to work within survey space constraints and to maintain adequate statistical power for analyses. This question relates to the evolving nature of terminology in SGD populations, such as the growing popularity of identities such as “queer” among young people in particular (Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016c; Goldberg et al., 2020); it also reflects the need for response options that can identify groups within SGD populations that are small but may be at high risk of experiencing disparities, such as asexual people (Borgogna et al., 2019), and response options that are culturally specific, such as Two Spirit in Native American communities and same-gender-loving among African Americans (Battle et al., 2002; Bauer et al., 2017). There is also a serious lack of methodological research into how to measure intersex status.

All these methodological questions require exploration in order to optimize the process of collecting, analyzing, and using data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status to improve the well-being of SGD populations. The need for continued methodological research, however, does not mean that these data should not be collected using tools that are currently available: continuous improvement and refinement of sampling techniques and question designs is a normal and necessary iterative process in any type of demographic data collection (Hughes et al., 2016).

Sexual Orientation

Reliable and validated measures of sexual orientation identity, same-sex attraction, and same-sex sexual behavior are readily available. The 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey, which was conducted by the independent National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago with support from a variety of private foundations, was one of the earliest U.S. population-based surveys to measure all these traits (Laumann et al., 2008). The National Survey of Family Growth, overseen by

the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has also included all these measures since 2002 (Mosher, Chandra, and Jones, 2005). In 2009, Williams Institute at the School of Law of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) convened an expert panel of scholars that produced a consensus report on best practices for measuring sexual orientation in population-based surveys (SMART, 2009).

Following calls for data on sexual orientation and other disparities in Healthy People 2020, the Affordable Care Act, and the 2011 Institute of Medicine report, NCHS conducted extensive testing to develop a sexual orientation question for the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).³ Successful completion of that testing resulted in inclusion of a sexual orientation identity question on the annual NHIS survey beginning in 2013 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2014). This question format is also used on the National Crime Victimization Survey under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice (Truman et al., 2019). Questions relating to sexual attraction and behavior have also become increasingly standardized. The NIH Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office and the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity have both collected and made available examples of questions that can be used to measure sexual orientation identity, attraction, and behavior (as well as gender identity, which is discussed below) (Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016b; SGMRO, 2018a). Of note, it has been recommended that NIH expand its “planned enrollment” policy to include the requirement that NIH-funded research proposals outline how sexual orientation and gender identity data will be measured in the study population or explain why these variables are omitted (Sell, 2017). Such a requirement from NIH and other major research funders would significantly advance the degree to which SGD demographic data are collected in major longitudinal surveys and other types of research.

Gender Identity

In 2014 Williams Institute convened a panel of scholars that produced consensus recommendations for measuring gender identity in population-based surveys (GenIUSS Group, 2014). This report served as a guide for researchers at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research in conducting extensive testing in order to measure gender identity on the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), which is a large probability sample of California residents (Grant et al., 2015). The CHIS measure assesses both sex assigned at birth (i.e., on a respondent’s original birth certificate) and

³See <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=57>.

current gender identity as male, female, or some other gender. This “two-step” question was developed based on community-driven research in Philadelphia in the 1990s and has since been adopted by such users as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on its HIV/AIDS adult case report form.

The two-step question is considered better than a single-question design that merely adds transgender response options to an existing binary question about sex or gender (e.g., a single question that asks respondents to indicate whether their gender is male, female, or transgender). In fact, research indicates that the two-step question can result in almost five times more identifications of transgender people than this single-item design (Tordoff et al., 2019). The two-step question allows for transgender people to be identified in either of two ways. First, individuals may indicate that they currently describe their gender identity as “transgender.” Alternatively, individuals may endorse an assigned sex that is different from their current gender identity. The two-step question captures people who identify as a gender different than the one that they were assigned at birth but who may not use the term “transgender” to describe themselves.

The two-step question is also often preferred to a single-item “transgender status” question (e.g., “are you transgender?” with yes/no/not sure response options), though a transgender status question may be more appropriate in contexts where sex assigned at birth is not an important variable. In administrative contexts, limited research has looked at tracking changes to recorded gender over time, for example, in Social Security records (Cerf, 2015). This is not a reliable means of ascertaining self-identification, however, and directly asking the two-step question or a single-item “transgender status” question are the preferred means of incorporating gender identity data in administrative records.

Very little evidence on ordering effects for the two-step question is available. It is important to note, however, that the respondent’s answer to the current gender identity component is of primary importance and is what should inform how fields such as name, gendered honorific, pronoun, and sex are populated. The sex assigned at birth component should be used only to aid in identification of transgender respondents who identify simply as male or female. In clinical settings, sex assigned at birth may also underpin such decision support algorithms as preventive screening indications, but anatomical inventories may be used instead of assigned sex data to inform clinical decision support (Deutsch et al., 2013).

Some studies have also begun to explore measures of gender expression, meaning perceptions of the masculinity or femininity of a person’s appearance, behavior, and mannerisms. Gender expression is an external manifestation of gender identity that has aspects of both self-perception and the perceptions of others (Wylie et al., 2010). In this sense, it draws from

work done by Camara Jones and others around self- and social perceptions of individuals' race and ethnicity (Jones et al., 2008). Gender expression measures are most often used in the context of research with youth, reflecting the importance of assessing sexual orientation and gender identity at various development stages (Roberts et al., 2013). A measure of socially assigned gender nonconformity has been validated among 18- to 30-year-olds for health research purposes (Wylie et al., 2010).

Intersex Status

Measures to assess intersex status in large-scale demographic studies have been proposed but not yet consistently validated. The 2014 GenIUSS Group report recognized three challenges facing researchers in assessing intersex status: some people with intersex traits do not identify as being intersex; some people who identify as intersex do not have intersex traits; and “intersex” is not a legal assigned sex in the United States. The report therefore recommended that intersex not be included as an option for assigned sex at birth. It also proposed two possible questions that could be the subject of future research:

1. “Have you ever been diagnosed by a medical doctor with an intersex condition or a difference of sex development, or were you born with (or developed naturally in puberty) genitals, reproductive organs, or chromosomal patterns that do not fit standard definitions of male or female?”
2. “Some people are assigned male or female at birth, but are born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, or chromosome patterns that do not fit the typical definition of male or female. This physical condition is known as intersex. Are you intersex?”

A community-based group of researchers qualitatively assessed the first question in an online survey of 111 intersex adults (Tamar-Mattis et al., 2018). Overall, 72 percent of participants responded that the question was accessible and important to include in surveys; some responded that the language was too medicalizing and may exclude people who have not had access to care. Further research is needed to assess the validity of population-based measures for intersex status.

Relationship Status

Relationship status is another important component of demographic data collection about SGD populations. Although identifying the gender composition of couples provides a sample of a subset of SGD populations,

it is important to note that this does not actually provide direct information about either sexual orientation or gender identity. The 1990 decennial census was the first U.S. census to include “unmarried partner” as a possible relationship status for individuals in a household. Combining information about relationship and gender of the partner made it possible for the first time to identify same-sex unmarried couples. In general, same-sex couples are identified when the householder (the reference person who fills out the census form) identifies another person in the household as a spouse or unmarried partner and that person is the same sex as the householder. Census Bureau procedures have varied, however, for tabulating responses from same-sex couples in decennial censuses and in the annual American Community Survey (ACS), which replaced the long-form census in 2005. For example, in the 2000 census, the Bureau also included same-sex couples who indicated that they were spouses in counts of same-sex unmarried couples (at that time, marriages of same-sex couples were not legal in the United States). A wide range of federal surveys use this method to identify inter-household relationships, introducing even further variation in measurement approaches. Some of this variation has unfortunately exacerbated problems with measurement and comparability over time and across surveys related to how same- and different-sex couples are enumerated.

In addition to measurement issues raised by how the Census Bureau classifies household composition, small errors in the sex responses of different-sex couples resulted in a large proportion of reported same-sex couples (mostly those who identified as spouses) likely being mis-identified as different-sex couples. Census Bureau analyses suggest that 28 percent of reported same-sex couples in the 2010 census were likely miscoded different-sex couples. The estimated error was even higher in the 2000 census data (O’Connell and Feliz, 2011). Following extensive analyses and testing, the Census Bureau altered possible responses to the relationship to householder question in the 2017 CPS, the 2019 ACS, and the 2020 census to allow respondents to separately identify different- (the surveys use the term “opposite-sex”) and same-sex spouses and unmarried partners. These changes are designed to substantially improve accuracy in measurement of same-sex married and unmarried couples (Kreider, Bates, and Lofquist, 2016).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SGD demographic data collection efforts to date have focused largely on sexual orientation identity. There are a few national surveys that also include measurements of sexual behavior (e.g., the General Social Survey) or both sexual behavior and attraction (e.g., the National Survey of Family Growth). However, even among surveys that include measurement of

sexual attraction and behavior, survey questions largely remain dependent on binary assessments of gender. Research gaps remain in how best to include gender fluidity in the measurement of sexual orientation identity, behavior, and attraction.

CONCLUSION 4-1: Sexual orientation and gender identity questions are presented inconsistently across data collection tools, are often separated from other demographic measures, and frequently use binary assessments of gender, which do not effectively capture gender diversity.

Surveys measuring gender identity have increasingly adopted a two-step approach that measures both gender identity and sex assigned at birth, but population-based data on gender diversity remain rare. There are currently no national population-based data that allow for assessment of the demographics of intersex populations. Measurement of SGD populations on longitudinal surveys also remains scarce. These data gaps limit the ability to understand how sexual orientation and gender identity develop over the life course and the roles that these aspects of identity, along with intersex status, play in affecting the well-being of SGD people.

CONCLUSION 4-2: Point-in-time and longitudinal demographic data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status are needed to drive research agendas, monitor population trends, guide the equitable distribution of funding and other resources, and inform policies to advance equity by effectively addressing disparities affecting sexual and gender diverse populations.

The standardization of measures at the federal level would promote the well-being of SGD populations by advancing the collection of these data both throughout the federal statistical system and in other public and private data collection activities.

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PART III

DOMAINS OF WELL-BEING

5

Law and Legal Systems

Law can enhance or impede people's economic security, physical safety, and capacity to participate in almost all dimensions of life; for these reasons, it is an important social determinant of health and well-being (Burris et al., 2010). For many years, the legal system functioned largely in ways that undermined the health and well-being of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations. Criminal laws were used to harass, imprison, and ruin the lives of those who were considered sexual or gender deviants. Immigration laws forbade them from entering the country. They were subject to being fired from their jobs, evicted from their homes, and less than honorably discharged from military service without legal redress. Their family relationships were not recognized as legitimate, much less protected from interference. SGD people were forced to live in a world of ubiquitous state-enforced hostility.

The legal landscape has now changed dramatically, even if not completely. In an extraordinarily successful example of the American civil rights narrative, LGBT rights advocates have secured protection from most of the past forms of negative treatment.

However, as one can see from the examples of women and people of color, the achievement of broad formal equality under law does not automatically stop the kinds of mistreatment that can diminish a person's capacity for well-being. For SGD people, legal equality is still new and somewhat precarious. Many U.S. institutions and individuals continue to undermine new norms of fairness. Enforcement of legal protections can be uneven. Multiple chapters in this report document recent and continuing forms of

negative treatment, some of which may now be the product more of custom than of law but which nonetheless can be devastating to the people affected.

In addition, the policies and practices that continue to harm SGD people have a disproportionate effect on those within the community who also face income insecurity, racial bias, and transphobia. A transgender Latinx woman or a Black lesbian couple raising children have to contend with additional marginalization that results from intersecting axes of disadvantage and stigma. As a result, they face radically different life circumstances than cisgender white people.

In the realm of law, the primary site for compounded stigma is criminal law. The punitive aspects of the criminal justice system—such as the criminalization of certain behaviors, the likelihood of arrest and detention, and hostile treatment within institutions such as prisons—produce burdens experienced overwhelmingly by SGD people of color, transgender women, and those who lack regular or sufficient incomes (Goldberg et al., 2019; Meyer et al., 2017).

This chapter summarizes the changes that have occurred in recent years, describes continuing challenges posed by the legal system to the well-being of SGD people, and provides basic legal information related to the particular domains of life that are analyzed in greater detail throughout this book. The chapter concludes with a description of what is likely to be an increasingly important question: the extent to which businesses and individuals can secure an exemption from anti-discrimination laws on the basis of their religious beliefs. Because current legal change in this field has been substantial and rapid, the reader should keep in mind that this summary can offer only a snapshot of the legal status of SGD populations as this report goes to press.

THE NEW BASELINE

In June 2020 the Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* (140 S. Ct. 1731) that workplace discrimination based on either sexual orientation or gender identity constitutes a form of sex discrimination. The decision means that the federal law which prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on sex—Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act—also prohibits job discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. With this decision, the Court put into place the final component of what has become the new baseline for the law’s treatment of SGD people: nationwide protection for LGBT people with respect to employment, marriage, intimate sexual conduct in a domestic setting, and, partially, military service (this is explained in further detail below). Twenty years ago, none of these federal protections existed (Eskridge, Hunter, and Joslin, 2018). The ripple effects from each of these examples of progress illustrate how

important the legal system is to everyday quality of life for members of minority groups.

For example, in 2003 the Supreme Court ruled that states could not criminalize private consensual sexual acts between two people of the same sex in *Lawrence v. Texas* (539 U.S. 558). One of the most consequential results of this decision was the elimination of secondary aspects of criminalization, meaning the use of such laws to categorize LGB people as presumptive criminals in the context of child custody and visitation rights disputes; eligibility for certain jobs, especially in law enforcement; and for some occupational licenses (Eskridge, Hunter, and Joslin, 2018).

In 2010 Congress ended the “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding LGB Americans in military service. Since that time, LGB people have served openly in all branches of the armed forces. Aside from the dignity that comes from not being considered unfit for military service, the experience has opened up job training and other professional opportunities for countless people who formerly would have been excluded. However, a ban on enlistment by transgender people remains in place.

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (135 S. Ct. 2584) that all states are required to allow same-sex couples to marry. Because marital status is determinative of more than 1,000 rights and obligations under federal law alone, securing access to marriage allowed couples to change their legal status for purposes of Social Security and insurance benefits, taxation, parental relationships, and eligibility for “family” status in a variety of public and private programs and services.

In the most recent example, noted above, the sex discrimination ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County* is especially important because it will apply to all federal statutes that prohibit sex discrimination. Such laws cover education (Title IX), housing (Title VIII), credit (the Equal Credit Opportunity Act), and access to health care and health insurance coverage (the Affordable Care Act). In all these arenas, SGD people now have federal protections against discrimination.

These developments represent the achievements of reform efforts on behalf of LGBT rights, and they are remarkable. However, they do not constitute the entire story. The following section describes the legal problems still remaining.

CONTINUING GAPS IN LEGAL PROTECTION

There are many reasons that SGD people continue to experience adverse treatment in the legal system. In some areas of law, there are no or very few anti-discrimination laws as such. Criminal law, family law, policies regarding identity documents, and the rules governing military service are

examples. In areas of law where anti-discrimination laws do apply, federal coverage is limited by the size or type of the entity subject to it. State laws may fill in the missing protections, but only about half the states have explicit coverage for sexual orientation and gender identity, and the scope of sex discrimination under most state laws has not been determined. Even in situations in which there are now protective laws, the degree of enforcement varies.

The following summaries of existing law are intended to give the reader context for the discussions of the different domains of health and well-being in the remainder of this report. They describe the background framework for understanding the research into discrimination that has been published in particular fields. More details are provided in the chapters that address a particular context, such as education (Chapter 9), employment (Chapter 10), and health care (Chapters 11 and 12).

The rest of this section addresses legal topics in two major areas: laws that apply to those situations in which an individual's physical liberty is at stake, and anti-discrimination laws of various kinds. The following two major sections of this chapter address areas of law in which explicit protections against discrimination usually do not exist and the increasingly important question of whether religious liberty can form the basis for an exception to anti-discrimination law.

The Possible Loss of Physical Liberty

Individuals who are brought within the jurisdiction of the criminal law system, including juvenile detention, and those who are caught up in the immigration system face potential loss of liberty in the literal sense that they may be incarcerated.

Criminalization

The Supreme Court decriminalized most private consensual adult sexual conduct in its 2003 decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (539 U.S. 558). However, SGD people continue to be subject to heightened surveillance and engagement with police for a variety of other criminalized behaviors because of intersecting factors, such as gender-nonconforming appearance and the high rate of homelessness among LGBT youth (Goldberg et al., 2019). In addition, the ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas* did not extend to two types of criminalized conduct that disproportionately affect SGD people: sex involving payment and behavior that may cause exposure to HIV.

Every state continues to criminalize sex for which one party pays another (with the exception of some counties in Nevada). High rates of unemployment and homelessness contribute to a high rate of sex work among

transgender women, especially transgender women of color, and homeless youth (Forge and Ream, 2014; Nadal, 2014; Ream, Barnhart, and Lotz, 2012; Van Leeuwen et al., 2006). One in five respondents to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) reported working in the underground economy, defined to include sex work (James et al., 2016). A local study in New York found that transgender people of color were twice as likely to be arrested for sex work as white transgender people (Goldberg et al., 2019). Mistreatment during interactions with the police is also a common experience for sex workers (Platt et al., 2018). Thus, although these laws are neutral on their face, in practice they have a disproportionate impact on some of the most vulnerable SGD groups.

In a systematic literature review of studies about the associations between the legal system and the health of people who engage in sex work, researchers found that harsh enforcement policies, such as violent or abusive behavior by police, are associated with increased risk of HIV infection or sexually transmitted disease and the risk of violence by other actors (Platt et al., 2018). The pathways linking police practices and health risks include the disruption of sex workers' own harm reduction activities, such as negotiating with clients, carrying condoms (which are sometimes used as evidence against them), and avoidance of isolated locations (Platt et al., 2018). Secondary risks of arrest include increased possibility of eviction, loss of other work, and barriers to access to health and other services (Hanssens et al., 2014; Platt et al., 2018).

The second category of criminalized conduct of special interest to SGD people consists of laws that criminalize behavior that may cause exposure to HIV. All but seven states and the District of Columbia have such a law (including laws allowing sentence enhancement for violations of other crimes if the defendant is HIV positive). Some applicable laws are HIV specific; others also cover other transmissible infections. In most states, no proof of actual transmission or intent to transmit is required. People of color are disproportionately arrested and prosecuted for these offenses (Center for HIV Law and Policy, 2019).

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) have recommended that states reexamine the basis for these laws and modify their statutes to align punishment with risk (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; Lehman et al., 2014). Four states—Iowa, California, Michigan, and North Carolina—have done so (Sears, Goldberg, and Mallory, 2020). Currently, laws in 23 states criminalize behavior that carries no risk or “effectively no risk” of transmitting HIV (as determined by the CDC). In 33 states, the crimes are classified as felonies; in eight states, they are misdemeanors; and in three states, prosecutions may invoke a sentence enhancement law. In some states, the law carries greater penalties for exposure to HIV than for exposure to diseases

for which there is a much greater risk of transmission (Center for HIV Law and Policy, 2019). A study of enforcement in Missouri from 1990 to 2019 found that the state spent at least \$10.2 million during that period for costs of incarcerating people convicted of HIV-related crimes, not counting the expenses related to arrest, prosecution, probation, and parole (Sears, Goldberg, and Mallory, 2020). This is the first study that has measured the costs of these laws.

There is a strong association between the criminalization of HIV exposure and the criminalization of sex work. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people are arrested each year for HIV exposure-related crimes, a large number of whom are also arrested for sex work (Hasenbush et al., 2017). A study of HIV-related arrests in California found that approximately 95 percent occurred in the context of solicitation for sex (Goldberg et al., 2019). This enforcement pattern disproportionately affects transgender women, gay and bisexual men, and people of color (Baskin, Ahmed, and Forbes, 2016; Sears, Goldberg, and Mallory, 2020). There is widespread agreement among public health professionals that decriminalization of sex work would contribute significantly to the effort to combat the spread of HIV (Das and Horton, 2015).

Treatment in the Criminal Law System

Studies have repeatedly found routine mistreatment of SGD people by police officers and prison staff (Goldberg et al., 2019). While incarcerated, sexual minorities are more likely than heterosexual inmates to encounter sexual assault. (Meyer et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017). In the 2015 USTS, 58 percent of respondents who interacted with police officers reported experiencing verbal harassment, physical or sexual assault, or other forms of mistreatment. Meyer and colleagues (2017) found that sexual minority inmates encountered administrative segregation more frequently than others—in part because consensual sexual contact was punished, but also because sexual minority inmates have higher rates of psychological distress than heterosexual inmates.

For women, rates of incarceration are higher than for non-SGD women. In both adult and juvenile facilities, lesbian and bisexual women and girls are overrepresented (Meyer et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017). In one study of women in jails, 35.7 percent were sexual minorities, while the comparable rate for sexual minority men in jail was 6.2 percent; similarly, for women in prison, 42.1 percent were sexual minorities, compared with 9.3 percent of men in prison (Meyer et al., 2017).

The federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requires DOJ to collect data, develop standards, and disseminate information in an effort to deter sexual violence in prisons. Regulations issued pursuant to PREA

provide national standards applicable to state and federal prisons, including a model screening process for assessing the likelihood of victimization of inmates and an individualized risk assessment that includes provision of safe housing for SGD inmates (28 C.F.R. 115.41–115.43). In a guidance document issued in 2018, the Bureau of Prisons changed the standards, including by directing that the initial facility assignment will be based on the inmate’s “biological sex,” changing the prior policy in which housing was based on the person’s self-identified gender identity. The 2018 rules stated that placement based on “the inmate’s identified gender would be appropriate only in rare cases.”¹

The enforcement status of PREA, including the new regulations, is unclear. The law requires audits of the institutions to which it applies, but it lacks a mechanism for effective independent oversight of prison conditions (Deitch, 2010). Independent external oversight is considered an essential tool for preventing violence in prison, especially for vulnerable populations, such as inmates who are susceptible to sexual assault (Deitch, 2010). In a conference of the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons (2006), more than 100 correctional experts from inside and outside the United States endorsed the need for such oversight.²

Immigration

Prior to 1990, immigration law was used to exclude people classified as “sexual deviants,” which included SGD people (Eskridge, Hunter, and Joslin, 2018). Currently, the most urgent immigration issue for SGD populations is the treatment of detainees. The Associated Press has reported that approximately 300 individuals who identify as transgender entered Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody between 2003 and 2019 (Bryan, 2019). Widespread abuse and mistreatment of SGD detainees and poor medical care in ICE facilities has been well documented; in 2018–2019, two transgender women died in ICE custody (Evans, 2020; Gruberg, 2018; Hanssens et al., 2014; Oztaskin, 2019).

Because PREA covers all federal and state prisons, jails, and detention facilities, it also applies to immigration detention facilities run by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS has the responsibility to develop and implement procedures to prevent sexual violence in its detention facilities. In January 2020, after continuing reports of abuse and a congress-

¹*Bureau of Prisons Change Order: Transgender Offender Manual*. May 11, 2018. Available: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4459297-BOP-Change-Order-Transgender-Offender-Manual-5.html>.

²See <https://www.vera.org/projects/commission-on-safety-and-abuse-in-americas-prisons/learn-more>.

sional letter demanding release of transgender people in ICE custody, ICE closed one facility for transgender women and transferred them to other units housing transgender people (Evans, 2020). It is unclear whether ICE places transgender detainees only in facilities that meet health and safety standards for that population (Evans, 2020).

Anti-Discrimination Laws

Federal, state, and local laws prohibit some forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but coverage can be inconsistent depending on the scope of each law. A typical anti-discrimination statute enumerates the protected characteristics (such as race or sex) and the arenas in which the laws apply (such as employment or housing). Most anti-discrimination laws apply to both public- and private-sector entities; if the alleged discriminator is a public agency, then the provisions of the Constitution also apply.

States' anti-discrimination laws can differ from federal law in various ways. In general, federal laws provide stronger remedies than state and local laws. With regard to coverage, however, state laws tend to include smaller employers and more types of public accommodations than do federal laws. Approximately 50 percent of the U.S. population lives where there is a state law explicitly protecting SGD people from at least one form of discrimination (Conron and Goldberg, 2019). Several hundred municipalities also have such laws.

Employment

Federal, state, and local laws provide protection against employment discrimination, as do the internal policies of many employers. By far the most important source of protection is the federal statute, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which applies to all workplaces with 15 or more employees. Although federal courts and agencies had begun to apply Title VII to LGBT cases several years prior to the 2020 Supreme Court's decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* (140 S. Ct. 1731), coverage was not certain until the Court definitively interpreted the scope of "discrimination because of sex" to include sexual orientation and gender identity. "Discrimination" includes issues of hiring, firing, promotion, pay, and harassment; however, the Court left undecided the question of how employees' access to bathrooms or locker rooms will be analyzed under the rubric of sex discrimination. That issue may return to the Supreme Court if there is disagreement about it in future cases in the lower courts.

With the question as to inclusion under Title VII resolved, the primary utility of state laws will be for cases involving employers with fewer than 15

employees, many of which are covered by state anti-discrimination law (the threshold for coverage varies from state to state). In 22 states and the District Columbia, statutes explicitly prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. One state—Wisconsin—specifies only sexual orientation. The remaining state laws, like Title VII, prohibit sex discrimination in employment. Several states have issued regulatory guidance that interprets the prohibition of sex discrimination in state law to include sexual orientation and gender identity (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b). For the remaining states, it will be up to state courts to decide whether to interpret state anti-discrimination laws such that “sex” encompasses sexual orientation and gender identity. As a result, for SGD people who work at small employers in roughly half of the United States, there is no certainty of legal protection against job discrimination.

Public Accommodations

The phrase “public accommodations” refers to entities that provide goods and services to the public: it can include everything from retail stores to concerts to the YMCA. This is the arena in which there is the greatest difference between federal and state anti-discrimination laws. The federal law, also enacted as part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, was drafted narrowly to address the most outrageous examples of discrimination suffered by people of color traveling in the United States. It prohibits discrimination based on race and religion, but it does not prohibit discrimination based on sex. Thus, there is no basis under the *Bostock* decision to incorporate protection for SGD people in public accommodations under the umbrella of sex discrimination. The federal law is also narrow in its definition of “public accommodations”: it primarily covers hotels, restaurants, and theaters.

This gap in federal law makes the issue of public accommodations most important in the context of state-level anti-discrimination protection. Most state public accommodations laws include sex as a protected characteristic, and they also often cover more goods and services than does the federal law, largely because they tend to have been enacted or amended more recently than 1964. In 21 states and the District of Columbia, public accommodations statutes explicitly cover both sexual orientation and gender identity. As with employment, one state law covers only sexual orientation, and two other states have interpreted their own laws against sex discrimination to also include these two characteristics (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

The scope of public accommodations coverage is the context for many concerns regarding use of public restrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms by transgender people (Flores and Herman, 2020; Hart, 2014; Hasenbush, Flores, and Herman, 2019; Taylor et al., 2018). There are no laws that

prohibit transgender people from using the bathroom of the sex with which they identify, but the issue remains active in public debate, so the absence of anti-discrimination protection is significant. Opponents of such coverage argue that including gender identity as a protected characteristic would permit predators claiming to be transgender to access opposite-sex bathrooms (Westbrook and Schilt, 2014), but an empirical assessment of such claims has not identified any changes in victimization rates due to the implementation of inclusive policies (Hasenbush, Flores, and Herman, 2019).

Data from the 2015 USTS suggest that transgender people experience significant anxiety regarding these issues: for example, 59 percent of respondents reported sometimes or always avoiding using a public restroom in the past year out of safety concerns or other problems they may encounter, and 26 percent reported being denied access to, having their presence questioned in, or being harassed or assaulted in public restrooms. The survey also found that 31 percent of transgender people who visited a place of public accommodation in the previous year reported being mistreated if employees knew or believed that they were transgender (James et al., 2016).

Education

In 1972, Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act, which barred sex-based discrimination in educational programs and activities (at all levels) that receive federal funding.³ Here again, the logic of the Supreme Court's 2020 ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County* is expected to apply, so that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity will be included within the scope of the prohibition of discrimination based on sex. Although, as noted above, the Court in *Bostock* did not address issues related to bathroom access, two federal appeals courts have ruled that denying students access to bathrooms consistent with their gender identity violates the Title IX prohibition against sex discrimination (*Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District*, 838 F.3d 1034 (7th Cir. 2017); *Adams v. School Board of St. Johns County*, WL 4561817 (11th Cir. 2020).

Another undecided issue concerns participation in athletics by transgender students. Most sports have traditionally been sex segregated, and Title IX permits sex-segregated athletic teams, which has produced policies that have been implemented through sex testing and verification (Ha et al., 2014). Arguments concerning transgender students' participation in athletics often bring up fairness concerns driven by the average physiological differences between those whose assigned sex at birth was male and

³See <https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix-education-amendments-1972>.

those whose assigned sex was female (Carroll, 2014; Davis, 2017; Jones et al., 2017). It is not yet clear how federal Title IX protections will address gender diverse students in athletics. The National Collegiate Athletic Association implemented gender eligibility requirements in 2011 that focus primarily on the use or administration of hormone treatments (Taylor et al., 2018). Some states, sporting leagues, and school districts have adopted guidelines to address these questions (Flores et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2018). No consensus as to best practices has emerged, however, and litigation on this issue is likely to continue.

In addition to Title IX, there are also some state laws that address issues affecting SGD students in K–12 educational systems. In 17 states and the District of Columbia, laws explicitly prohibit sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination (Movement Advancement Project, 2020a). In 24 states and the District of Columbia, laws or regulations prohibit bullying motivated by a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Remarkably, however, two states (Missouri and South Dakota) prohibit the inclusion of sexual orientation or gender identity in their schools’ anti-bullying and nondiscrimination policies (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

There are also conflicting state laws with respect to curriculum and activity restrictions. Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas prohibit discussion of same-sex relationships in sex education (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b), although a federal trial court recently ruled that the South Carolina statute is unconstitutional (*Gender and Sexuality Alliance v. Spearman*, WL 1227345, 2020). In at least three states, by contrast, policies require inclusion of LGBT history in curricular materials.⁴

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance Coverage

Most omnibus anti-discrimination laws, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, do not include health care or health insurance as covered fields; those contexts are addressed in a mix of federal and state laws specific to the health sector. The three most important federal laws (or sets of laws) in the health care field are the Affordable Care Act (ACA); the Social Security Act Amendments of 1965, which created Medicare and Medicaid; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Section 1557 of the ACA created the first comprehensive anti-discrimination provision applicable to the delivery of health care and access to health insurance throughout the United States. It prohibits health

⁴See <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-08-14/states-that-require-schools-to-teach-lgbt-history>.

programs or facilities that receive federal funds from discriminating based on sex and other characteristics. An individual cannot be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination on these bases by any health program or activity of which any part receives federal financial assistance. Shortly before the Supreme Court’s June 2020 ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a regulation that excluded gender identity and sex stereotyping from the sex anti-discrimination protections of Section 1557 (HHS, 2016). As this report goes to press, litigation challenging the validity of this regulation is pending. As in the case of anti-discrimination protections in education under Title IX, however, courts are likely to interpret the scope of sex discrimination in Section 1557 to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Of note while the question of federal protections continues to evolve, the scope of public accommodations protections in state law has sometimes been interpreted to include medical services. SGD plaintiffs have successfully used a California law to challenge the denial of alternative reproductive technology and of a hysterectomy by health care facilities (*North Coast Women’s Care Medical Group v. Superior Court*, 189 P.3d 959 (2008); *Minton v. Dignity Health*, 252 Cal. Rptr. 3d 616 (Ct. App., 1st Dist. 2019)).

The Medicare program provides federal health insurance coverage to all Americans aged 65 and older, as well as to individuals with certain disabling conditions. Medicaid is a joint federal–state health insurance program offered primarily to low-income people. Both Medicare and Medicaid are covered by ACA Section 1557, and HHS has also promulgated a variety of regulations under the ACA and other federal statutes to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (see Chapter 12). The 2020 regulations reinterpreting Section 1557 sought to eliminate these provisions as part of what were called “conforming amendments,”⁵ but this action also appears to be in conflict with *Bostock*.

The ADA prohibits discrimination against people who are qualified to perform a job or participate in an activity but who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Two of its provisions—one positive, one negative—are of particular relevance to SGD people. First, the ADA includes HIV infection as a covered impairment, meaning that individuals with HIV are protected from discrimination. Second, in Section 12211(b) of the law, Congress stated that “‘disability’ shall not include transvestism, transsexualism . . . [or] gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments.” Whether the ADA may

⁵See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/14/2019-11512/nondiscrimination-in-health-and-health-education-programs-or-activities>.

nonetheless cover gender dysphoria is a question that has been answered affirmatively by at least two federal judges, but the issue has not yet been considered by a federal court of appeals.

State law also provides some protection against discrimination in access to health insurance: 14 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia prohibit health insurance discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and 7 states prohibit gender identity-based discrimination (Movement Advancement Project, 2020a). In 24 states and the District of Columbia, exclusion of gender-affirming care by private health insurance plans is prohibited. Many states also prohibit transgender exclusions in their Medicaid programs, but 10 states still explicitly exclude coverage for gender-affirming care under Medicaid, despite the fact that the anti-discrimination requirements of ACA Section 1557 apply to state Medicaid programs (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b; Taylor et al., 2018). See Chapter 12 for more details about insurance coverage of gender-affirming care for transgender people.

In addition to the general coverage questions that arise under the ACA, Medicare, Medicaid, and the ADA, there are particular treatment issues that affect SGD people. The most controversial use of “treatment” for sexual orientation and gender identity is conversion therapy, in which a medical provider attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity (see Chapter 12). Presently, 19 states and the District of Columbia prohibit conversion therapy for minors, and one state bans public funds for conversion therapy services but does not prohibit licensed medical providers from engaging in conversion therapy (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

Another controversial example of medical care arises in the context of children born with differences in sex development (intersex traits) (see Chapter 12). Surgery on newborns raises serious questions of informed consent (Tamar-Mattis, 2006). Although no anti-discrimination statutes explicitly include intersex people as a protected class, it is possible that laws that prohibit discrimination based on sex and the ADA could be applied to such surgery.

Housing and Credit

In light of the reasoning of *Bostock v. Clayton County*, the prohibitions of sex discrimination in the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act can now be interpreted to include sexual orientation and gender identity (Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, 2019). State-level protections specific to sexual orientation and gender identity also exist for housing (22 states) and credit (15 states) (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

AREAS OF LAW THAT LACK PROTECTIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

Military Service

As this report was being completed, the 2019 ban on enlistment for military service by transgender people remained in effect but had been challenged in federal court (*Trump v. Karnoski*, 139 S. Ct. 950, 2019; *Trump v. Stockman*, 139 S. Ct. 946, 2019). Social science research has found no medical or force readiness bases for the exclusion (Elders and Steinman, 2014; Schaefer et al., 2016). The authority for the ban is a Department of Defense policy, which could be changed by a new executive branch policy, congressional action, or a judicial finding that it is unconstitutional.

Documentation of Identity

Proper identity documents are necessary for a broad range of life activities: access to important public goods, services, shelters, or other facilities; acquiring benefits; travel; financial transactions; registering to vote; and securing employment. Some identity documents (e.g., birth certificates) are prerequisites to the acquisition of other identity documents (e.g., passports).

Identity documents present urgent issues for SGD people because the sex markers or names recorded on essential documents often differ from their gender identity or expression (Taylor et al., 2018). Only 11 percent of the transgender respondents in the USTS had updated all their identity documents to reflect their current gender identity or expression, and 68 percent had updated none of their identity documents (James et al., 2016). Not having identity documents that align with a person's gender identity or expression can result in mistreatment by state officials and others (Taylor et al., 2018), and 32 percent of the respondents in the USTS whose documents did not match their gender identity or expression reported having experienced verbal harassment, denial of services or benefits, or assault (James et al., 2016). These patterns are more pronounced for gender diverse people of color (James et al., 2016). The financial costs associated with updating identity documents based on the USTS data can range from nothing to more than \$2,000, with more than half of respondents reporting costs of at least \$100 (James et al., 2016).

Passports, which are issued by the U.S. Department of State, require a sex designation of either male or female based on a person's birth certificate, which is required in an application for a passport. Changing the gender marker on a passport requires that a physician certify that the individual has received medically appropriate treatment (Taylor et al., 2018). There is no non-binary gender marker option for passports, but the U.S. Court

of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit has ruled that the State Department must reconsider its policy (*Zzyym v. Pompeo*, 958 F.3d 1014 (10th Cir. 2020)).

Almost all children born in the United States receive a Social Security number at birth through a Social Security Administration (SSA) program that allows parents to request a birth certificate and Social Security number at the same time. Because the SSA requires a record of birth that contains a gender marker of either male or female before issuing a Social Security number, the parents of an intersex infant who do not wish to immediately designate a gender for their child are effectively barred from obtaining a Social Security number. To later secure a change in the gender marker associated with a Social Security number requires submission of a corrected birth certificate, a court order showing the new gender, or a medical certification of the change in a person's gender (Taylor et al., 2018). The Selective Service System and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services require similar documentation to change a gender marker (Taylor et al., 2018).

For birth certificates, the requirements to change gender markers vary significantly by state (Taylor et al., 2018). In 17 states, there are surgical requirements in order to change birth certificates. In 22 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City, gender markers can be updated without surgery or a court order. Two states, Ohio and Tennessee, do not permit birth certificates to be amended. In all but 10 states, birth certificates must contain either male or female as a gender marker; there is no third option for intersex or other gender diverse people (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

For updating driver's licenses, the requirements to change gender markers tend to be less cumbersome than for birth certificates, although the laws also vary from state to state (Taylor et al., 2018). Applicants trying to change their driver's license gender marker may be required to submit a single form (18 states and the District of Columbia); a form plus certification from among a range of licensed professionals (10 states); a form plus certification from a narrower range of licensed professionals (3 states); or certification specifically from a licensed medical or mental health provider (6 states). Nine states require proof of surgery, a court order, or an amended birth certificate. In several states, the process is unclear. In seven states and the District of Columbia, individuals can also choose a third gender marker, such as an "X" (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

Name changes are obtained at the state level, almost always by court order (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b; Taylor et al., 2018). Federal agencies will change a person's name on receipt of a legal document, such as the court order issued in a proceeding for a name change or from divorce or marriage records (Taylor et al., 2018).

Family Law

Family law issues related to equal treatment are dealt with almost entirely at the state level and are usually addressed in subject-specific statutes or in case law. Several issues raise particular concerns for SGD populations: youth in foster care; the child welfare system; child custody and adoption; and recognition of birth parents.

SGD youth are overrepresented in the foster care system: Fish and colleagues (2019) found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and same-sex-attracted youth were about 2.5 times more likely than heterosexual youth to be in the foster care system. Several studies have documented disparities in the well-being of SGD youth in the child welfare system compared with cisgender, heterosexual youth (Baams, Wilson, and Russell, 2019; Choi and Wilson, 2018; Fish et al., 2019; Wilson and Kastanis, 2015).

There are a range of protections or lack of protections across the states: 30 states and the District of Columbia have policies or regulations that prohibit sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination against youth in the child welfare system; 7 other states have policies or regulations that prohibit sexual orientation discrimination; and 12 states have explicit guidelines for placing transgender youth who are in the child welfare system in sex-segregated housing assignments based on their gender identity, and they also require that child welfare staff or foster parents receive cultural competency training on SGD youth (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

Parental involvement in the child welfare system arises in several ways. Same-sex couples may become parents through adoption (by a parent or parents of a nonbiological child or by a nonbirth parent of the partner's biological child) or through the use of alternative reproductive technologies. When one partner gives birth and the person's spouse seeks recognition on a birth certificate as the other parent, the Supreme Court has ruled that the state must permit it (*Pavan v. Smith*, 137 S. Ct. 2075, 2017). An individual married to a child's birth parent (including in same-sex couples) can petition for adoption of a child in every state. In 15 states and the District of Columbia, second-parent adoptions can be obtained regardless of marital status. In 24 states and the District of Columbia, adoption agencies cannot discriminate against people seeking to adopt on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and 4 other states cover only sexual orientation. In the remaining states, discriminatory actions may be prohibited by laws banning sex discrimination. Eleven states permit child welfare agencies to decline to serve SGD people and same-sex couples based on religious belief (Movement Advancement Project, 2020a). (See below for more discussion of religious liberty defenses.)

For LGBT birth parents, there may be increased risk that their children will be removed from their custody and placed in foster care. In one study

of low-income Black mothers, the 21 percent who identified as lesbian or bisexual were four times more likely than those who identified as heterosexual to have lost their children to the state in child welfare proceedings. The mothers whose children had been placed in state custody (and were eligible for foster care and, potentially, adoption) were three times more likely to identify as lesbian or bisexual than the mothers who were still raising their children (Harp and Oser, 2016). These findings suggest that more attention is needed to protect SGD birth parents from child removal proceedings, in addition to the equal treatment concerns of SGD people who seek to adopt.

In the event of parental divorce, courts apply a “best interests of the child” standard in deciding issues of custody and visitation. Although it used to be common for courts to assume that SGD parents were unfit or less fit than non-SGD parents to parent their children, that presumption has given way to a rule that there must be evidence that a parent’s sexual orientation or gender identity would negatively affect the child in order for it to be considered (Eskridge, Hunter, and Joslin, 2018). The vagueness of the “best interests” standard renders it susceptible to claims that harm could result from prejudice against the children of SGD parents, but fewer such cases have arisen in recent years than previously. Family courts have increasingly relied on scientific experts in their adjudication of cases in which one or both parents are SGD, which has increased fairness in the adjudication process by providing a broad overview of what social science research suggests about SGD parents (George, 2016).

Protection Against Violence

The federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (2009) criminalizes willfully causing or attempting to cause bodily injury with a deadly weapon because of the actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the victim if the crime is linked to interstate or foreign commerce (e.g., the victim or defendant was in transit or a weapon was used that had moved in interstate commerce). In addition, 35 states and the District of Columbia have laws that punish hate crimes committed because of sexual orientation or gender identity (Movement Advancement Project, 2020b).

In 2017 there were 1,303 reported sexual orientation victimizations and 131 gender identity victimizations according to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). From 2013 to 2017, 17.7 percent of hate crimes in the UCR and 25.7 percent of hate crimes in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) were related to sexual orientation bias.⁶ Gender identity hate crimes have increased in recent years, with victims more likely to

⁶See <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hcs1317pp.pdf>.

be transgender people of color than white transgender people (Taylor et al., 2018). The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) documented 1,036 incidents of violence or harassment against LGBTQ people in 2016, 41 percent of which were reported to the police.⁷ Of the 28 homicides documented in the 2016 NCAVP report, 19 of the victims were transgender or gender-nonconforming people, and all the victims except one were people of color.

The CDC found that bisexual women encounter intimate partner violence at higher rates than other SGD populations; 46.1 percent reported being raped in their lifetime, and 74.9 percent reported being victims of sexual violence other than rape (Walters, Chen, and Breiding, 2013). In the 2015 USTS, more than half of respondents reported having experienced intimate partner violence; 47 percent reported lifetime sexual assault; and 10 percent reported having been sexually assaulted in the past year. In many cases, victimization rates were greater for transgender respondents of color than for white transgender people (James et al., 2016).

The inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity questions in federally sponsored surveys, such as the NCVS, represents progress toward expanding data collection efforts. In addition, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in 2016 convened the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys to review existing federal data collection efforts, identify best practices, and articulate a research agenda for conceptual and methodological topics around collecting sexual orientation and gender identity data on federal surveys (see Chapter 4).

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY EXCEPTIONS TO ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

An increasingly important question involving civil rights law is whether and under what circumstances individuals, organizations, and businesses can assert religious beliefs as a legitimate basis for noncompliance with anti-discrimination laws or reproductive rights protections. This area of law presents complex questions that the Supreme Court is likely to continue to address in future cases (Eskridge, Hunter, and Joslin, 2018). This section focuses on the two contexts in which SGD people are most likely to encounter religious liberty issues: employment and public accommodations, the latter either as customers in the marketplace or as clients of social service agencies.

⁷See http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NCAVP_2016HateViolence_REPORT.pdf.

Employment

The Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to give religious organizations an absolute exemption from all anti-discrimination laws in matters that involve the employment of clergy or other people whose job involves religious instruction or conducting of services or ceremonies (*Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*, WL 3808420, 2020). In addition, under the provisions of Title VII, religious organizations are allowed to give preference in hiring to people of the same faith as the organization, including for jobs that do not involve duties related to the faith (*Corporation of Presiding Bishop v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327, 1987).

Applying the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA),⁸ the Supreme Court ruled that a for-profit business that is closely held (i.e., owned by a small number of people) could assert the religious beliefs of its owners as a defense against enforcement of the requirement that workplace health insurance plans include coverage for contraceptives (*Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, 573 U.S. 682, 2014). The Court found that Hobby Lobby satisfied the two-part RFRA test: that requiring the business to comply with the contraceptive law would substantially burden the owners' ability to exercise their religion and that, although the government's interest in providing employees with access to birth control through their workplace health insurance was compelling, mandating all businesses to comply was not the least restrictive way to satisfy that interest.

Under the RFRA standard, courts must assess in each case whether a neutral and generally applicable federal statute, such as Title VII, imposes a substantial burden that is necessary to satisfy a compelling government interest. No case has yet come before the Supreme Court in which a small business has sought to use the religious beliefs of its owners to justify adverse employment decisions against SGD people with respect to issues such as hiring, firing, recognition of a marriage, or coverage of particular medical services, such as transition-related care in a workplace health insurance plan.

It is likely that a state anti-discrimination law would be at issue in an employment case only if Title VII is inapplicable, usually because the business had fewer than 15 employees. For the analysis that would apply in that situation, see the following section on public accommodations laws.

Public Accommodations

As noted above, there is no federal law that bans discrimination in public accommodations based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, so

⁸ See <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/1308>.

religious liberty defenses regarding access to goods and services arise only when there is an applicable state or local civil rights law. In some states, such laws exist but religiously affiliated providers are exempt from compliance (Mallory and Sears, 2020). For commercial providers or in the absence of such an exemption, in 21 states there is a state religious freedom law that directs courts to apply the same case-by-case test as for federal law. In addition, the defendant in such a case could argue that compelling it to provide the services in question would violate the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. The most common contexts for such lawsuits have been either weddings or child adoptions.

Wedding-related goods and services tend to involve for-profit businesses, such as bakers, photographers, florists, or printers. In *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* (138 S. Ct. 1719, 2014), the Supreme Court stopped short of ruling whether a First Amendment defense could bar an anti-discrimination claim, because the Court found that the evaluation by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission of the business owner's reasons for declining to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple was colored by an anti-religious bias. A number of other similar cases are pending in which the Court may reach the merits of a religious liberty defense. State courts that have addressed this question have ruled that commercial businesses must comply with an anti-discrimination law (Mallory and Sears, 2020).

Adoption services are usually provided by state-licensed agencies, often affiliated with a religious faith group. In 11 states, the law includes an explicit exemption for child welfare agencies that permits them to refuse service to LGBT individuals or same-sex couples if doing so would conflict with their religious beliefs (Mallory and Sears, 2020; Movement Advancement Project 2020). In *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* (922 F.3d 140 (3d Cir. 2019)), the Supreme Court will decide whether the First Amendment bars the city from terminating its contract with Catholic Social Services (CSS) for foster care placement services because CSS refused to consider applications from same-sex couples to become foster parents. The Court is expected to announce its decision by June 2021. The ruling in *Fulton* is likely to determine or at least influence similar cases pending in the lower courts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SGD people come into contact with the law in a wide range of life contexts, including employment; health insurance and health care; housing; public accommodations; interactions with police and other parts of the criminal justice system; and access to and participation in government programs and government-administered systems, such as foster care, adop-

tion, and immigration. In several of these realms, there have been important reforms that have enhanced quality of life for SGD people. But in others, mistreatment and discrimination remain frequent occurrences, especially for marginalized groups within the SGD population. In the face of changing public attitudes as well as evolving law, the effect of the legal system on the well-being of these groups is uneven and, at times, contradictory.

CONCLUSION 5-1: Overall, the treatment of sexual and gender diverse people in the legal system has improved during the last 20 years, but equality and fairness across all domains remains incomplete. Moreover, the remaining gaps in the law tend to disproportionately harm people of color, low-income people, and transgender people.

Federal law now protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, a principle that is likely to be extended to education, housing, credit, and access to health care and health insurance. However, in some realms, such as public accommodations, federal law does not offer such protections. In addition, the question of whether denial of access to bathrooms or school athletics programs based on one's gender identity counts as discrimination has not been definitively resolved.

In situations in which federal law does not provide relief, approximately 50 percent of the U.S. population lives where there is a state law that explicitly protects SGD people from at least one form of discrimination. These laws vary greatly in their scope.

The laws regulating modifications of the gender marker on essential documents also vary widely among federal and state authorities. Identity documents present urgent issues for gender diverse people because the sex markers or names recorded on essential documents often differ from their gender identity or expression, subjecting those individuals to adverse treatment.

Family law issues are almost entirely dependent on state rather than federal or local laws and vary widely, which results in unevenness and lack of uniformity. SGD youth are overrepresented in the foster care system and are especially vulnerable to its shortcomings. The treatment of LGBT birth parents in child removal proceedings and of LGBT people who seek to adopt merits more study and monitoring.

Laws related to religious exemptions from anti-discrimination laws are uneven and likely to change further as the Supreme Court and legislatures continue to consider the issue. In higher education, Title IX is likely to be interpreted to ban sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, but it is not yet clear how Title IX protections will affect questions related to gender diverse students in athletics.

CONCLUSION 5-2: The U.S. legal system does not require uniformly equal treatment of sexual and gender diverse people. Different sources of legal authority—federal, state, and local—result in discrimination being both prohibited and permitted, depending on the context and location.

Mistreatment during interactions with the police is a common experience for SGD people. The criminalization of HIV exposure and criminalization of sex work disproportionately affect homeless youth and transgender women, especially transgender women of color. There is widespread agreement among public health professionals that decriminalization of sex work would contribute significantly to the effort to combat the spread of HIV. Both CDC and DOJ have recommended that states reexamine the basis for laws that criminalize exposure to HIV and modify their statutes to align punishment with risk.

The enforcement status of the national standards for prevention of sexual violence in prison is unclear. Federal law does not provide a mechanism for effective independent oversight of prison conditions. Independent external oversight is considered to be an essential tool for preventing violence in prison, especially for vulnerable populations, including inmates who are susceptible to sexual assault.

CONCLUSION 5-3: Sexual and gender diverse people suffer greater levels of violence than other groups in their interactions with police and prison officials. Bias crimes related to sexual orientation and gender identity have increased in recent years. Such assaults tend to disproportionately victimize sexual and gender diverse people of color and transgender people.

Statistics from the Uniform Crime Reports suggest that sexual orientation hate crimes have increased since 2013. While gender identity victimizations comprise a small share of all hate crimes, they tend to be more violent and result in severe bodily injury. SGD populations are at a higher risk of criminal victimizations beyond hate crimes, including intimate partner violence, verbal harassment, and physical or sexual assault.

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6

Public Policy and Structural Stigma

This chapter first provides an overview of three aspects of public life that affect social and gender diverse (SGD) populations: public policy, social movements, and changing public opinion. It then turns to the emerging literature on how structural factors—law, public policy, and public attitudes—influence the well-being of SGD populations, including economic outcomes, experiences of victimization and violence, and mental and physical health. Collectively, this research falls under the umbrella of what researchers call structural stigma, which is defined as “societal-level conditions, cultural norms, and institutional policies that constrain the opportunities, resources, and well-being of the stigmatized” (Hatzenbuehler and Link, 2014, p. 2).

PUBLIC POLICY, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND PUBLIC OPINION

The public policy process includes defining social problems that may require policy solutions, framing public policies for the general public and policy makers, developing strategies to effect policy adoption, effectively implementing public policies, and developing accountability and evaluation mechanisms. Policies seldom change without outside social forces organizing to effect change. Thus, advocacy organizations providing services and seeking changes in public policy, which are often sponsored by government programs, are central to the policy process.

Policy Advocacy Groups

Public policies affecting SGD populations change when advocates articulate what and why changes are needed and how to implement them (Taylor, Lewis, and Haider-Markel, 2018). Given the multiple levels of government—federal, state, and local—and the division of functions associated with the separation of powers, the U.S. political and legal systems offer numerous access points to effect policy change. The complexity also means the process is susceptible to policy gridlock (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). This means that sustained advocacy for policy change is necessary, and social movement organizing and policy advocacy groups need to have the infrastructure to maintain pressure.

Prior to the emergence of a social movement, however, are the contextual and structural factors that define choices, how individuals define problems, and how they see themselves in relation to those problems (Gusfield, 1993, 1996). Among SGD populations, early organizing centered on gay men and lesbian women who had to construct an identity in the context of high degrees of social and structural stigma (Bernstein, 2002; D’Emilio 1983). This stigma led to individuals not embracing a public gay identity until about 1958, where organizations embraced the term “homophile” as opposed to “homosexual” to de-center sex, which was often viewed in the public eye as associated with sexual deviancy (Armstrong, 2002; Bernstein, 2002; D’Emilio, 1983; Schneider and Ingram, 1993). As the social movement developed and contexts changed, the strategies, identities, and definition of problems have also changed (Gusfield, 1993, 1996).

Early organizing in what can be termed the homophile era (1958–1968) began with organizations such as the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis pursuing strategies intended to secure civil liberties for lesbian women and gay men, effectively to remove state policies that criminalized homosexuality (Armstrong, 2002; D’Emilio, 1983). A general way to understand these efforts was a struggle for rights for gay and lesbian people to be left alone, and organizing activities were primarily about quietly lobbying elected officials and engaging with mainstream political institutions (Armstrong, 2002; D’Emilio, 1983). In April 1965, astronomer Frank Kameny and other activists began a new approach by picketing the White House. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and Black politics, activists Kameny and Craig Rodwell embraced the slogan, “Gay Is Good,” and hinted that a change in strategy to one of a proud and public gay identity needed to be embraced to effect change.

The “Stonewall era” (1969–1973) was characterized by a radically different view, embracing gay liberation (Armstrong, 2002; D’Emilio, 2000; Ghaziani, Taylor, and Stone, 2016). In addition to fully embracing an out-of-the-closet proud gay identity, gay liberation organizations, such

as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), embraced a broad policy agenda that supported other liberation movements and direct action protests, seeking to advance economic issues and gender and racial justice, even though there remained sexual stigma in those other movements (Armstrong, 2002). Some gay liberation activists such as Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera created Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) to serve some of the most vulnerable SGD people (Shepard, 2013), while others, frustrated with the priorities of the GLF, established the Gay Activists Alliance to pursue policies directly affecting gay and lesbian people, as well as to hold dances to create space for connection, gay identity building, and community (Armstrong, 2002).

This identity-based movement continued with the establishment of the National Gay Task Force in 1973 and the Gay Rights National Lobby in 1976 (the former was renamed the National LGBTQ Task Force and the latter eventually became the Human Rights Campaign). While still building capacity, these organizations pursued policy change through interaction with mainstream political institutions and embraced a public gay identity by engaging in pride marches (D’Emilio, 2000; Ghaziani, Tayor, and Stone, 2016).

Over time, LGBT social movements have engaged in cycles of mainstream tactics and direct action protest tactics, each with their successes and failures (D’Emilio 2000; Ghaziani, Tayor, and Stone, 2016). For example, the direct action protests by ACT UP during the HIV/AIDS crisis changed policies and practices to address the virus (Cohen, 1999; Gould, 2009). The mainstream strategy, which remains dominant, requires a wide range of organizations and the growth of capacity to take advantage of the numerous access points and political opportunities in the U.S. political system.

Because there are multiple access points, there are numerous opportunities for policy and legal change, but only if an infrastructure is present to take advantage of such opportunities (McAdam, 1982). Early efforts to create national advocacy organizations for SGD people were categorized as “weak, poorly funded, and newly created” (Stone, 2012, p. 41). The contemporary LGBT advocacy coalition has significant infrastructure and capacity. The coalition of organizations that advocate on behalf of SGD populations consists of a myriad of groups (Taylor et al., 2018); some focus on policy advocacy, many prioritize litigation, and others are issue specific, faith based, or work primarily to deliver goods and services. For example, the top-ranked grant-receiving organizations in 2017 included organizations that primarily provide public services (e.g., New York LGBT Community Center and Los Angeles LGBT Center); others that focus on national policy advocacy (e.g., the Human Rights Campaign and the National LGBTQ Task Force); many others that focus on legal advocacy (e.g., Transgender Law Center, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and Lambda

Legal Defense & Education Fund); and select organizations that focus on carrying out research on SGD populations and policies affecting them (e.g., Williams Institute). In 2017, about 29 percent of grants from private groups went to organizations focused on nationwide issues, 5 percent to those focused on regional (multistate) issues, 10 percent to those focused on state issues, 30 percent to those focused on local issues, and 26 percent to those focused on international issues (Wallace, Maulbeck, and Kan, 2019).

Advocacy coalitions and actors who leverage opportunities to effect policy change, collectively known as policy entrepreneurs, frequently share information to spread strategies, tactics, successes, and failures (Boushey, 2010; Mintrom and Norman, 2009). They set policy priorities (Kingdon, 1984), gain access to decision makers and decision-making arenas (Andrews and Edwards, 2004), and engage in public education and lobbying (Wright, 2003). Policy entrepreneurs often monitor the successful implementation of policies (Andrew and Edwards, 2004), and they look for future political opportunities to reinforce their policy priorities (Theodoulou, 2013). Occasionally, the differences between organizations create coordination conflicts that may impede their effectiveness (Engel, 2007; Haider-Markel, 1997).

Alongside the advocacy coalition for SGD people, there is a counter-movement that opposes policy advancements designed to further the well-being of SGD people. These organizations also try to gain access to policy makers to advance their interests and control the policy agenda (Fetner, 2008; Stone, 2012; Wilson and Burack, 2012) and to craft arguments to particular audiences in opposition to policies that may benefit SGD people (Burack, 2008). Like advocacy organizations devoted to the advancement of rights for SGD populations, organizations opposed to such advancement also devote considerable resources to framing and tailoring their messages to the public (Flores, 2019; Stone, 2012). These frames are often delivered through costly initiative and referendum campaigns in an attempt to affect ballot measures (e.g., same-sex marriage bans) (Fetner, 2008; Stone, 2012). The use of direct democracy by the countermovement has historically maneuvered the LGBT advocacy coalition into a defensive position (Fetner, 2008; Stone, 2012).

Thus, over time, the SGD rights movement and the countermovement compete over issue priorities and how to frame those issues. In this dynamic context, structural forms of exclusion (e.g., California's Briggs Initiative to ban gay men and lesbian women from being school teachers) and the context of competing movements propelled lesbian women and gay men into the public eye, mobilizing them to engage in canvassing and other forms of activism to advance their positions (Armstrong, 2002). In this political and social environment, the understanding of sexual and gender diversity in the United States has changed as the SGD rights movement strategically framed policies to the voting public (Stone, 2012). Changing such discourses can

also change how movements understand themselves and their identities (Gusfeld, 1993, 1996), which has happened for SGD populations. This kind of change is consistent with studies of numerous social movements in the United States during the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Issue Framing

Political elites, social movements, and mass media can influence which issues become important for public policy and how those issues are framed (Garretson, 2018; Jones and Brewer, 2020; Iyengar and Kinder, 2010; Lee, 2002; Zaller, 1992). The way issues are communicated affects how people come to understand those issues, particularly when certain values are emphasized to frame proposed policies (Brewer, 2001, 2007). Policy advocates and social movements can activate public opinion by drawing attention to social problems (e.g., direct action protest, litigation, and canvassing) (McAdam, 1996), and they can frame those problems through mass media to reach the general population and try to control a narrative (Carroll and Ratner, 1999; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993; Ryan 1991). Framing can facilitate how individuals evaluate social groups (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989).

For example, Brewer (2007) found that the lesbian and gay rights movement in the 1990s and early 2000s was framed around either egalitarianism or moral traditionalism, which worked to polarize people's views. When HIV/AIDS was framed as a condition affecting social deviants, resources were slow to serve the communities most affected (Cohen, 1999). Early on, advocates in favor of marriage equality adopted a "rights and benefits frame," which emphasized the rights denied to same-sex couples by denying them legal marriage recognition (Solomon, 2014; Stone, 2012). The rights frame was countered by a morality frame, which proved appealing to opponents of marriage equality (Hull, 2001). In the 2010s, there was a strategic shift in framing support for marriage equality to "love and commitment," which emphasized the emotional foundations for why people choose to get married, including people in same-sex relationships (Harrison and Michelson, 2017). The love and commitment frame registered a stronger shift in support for LGBT rights than had the rights frame (Harrison and Michelson, 2017; Solomon, 2014). Efforts to reframe issues have profound consequences in public policies affecting SGD populations (Brewer, 2007).

Because framing and public perception are so important, the pursuit of public policies affecting SGD populations is constrained by prioritizing policies that are politically palatable and crafting respectable ways to present and discuss them (Cohen, 1999). For example, in the 1990s and 2000s the advocacy coalition in favor of LGBT rights avoided direct reference to

transgender people, rendering them invisible in its strategic communications (Stone, 2012). These tactics are tied to traditional electoral politics that primarily focus on the median or “middle” voter (Downs, 1957) and lead campaigns to pursue and present issues that are appealing to political moderates. Initiative and referendum campaigns on issues affecting SGD people tend to hone their political communications to that median (or “persuadable”) voter (Solomon, 2014; Stone, 2012), which can create conflict with advocates embracing a more transformative view of “queer politics” (Cohen, 1997) and others embracing a single-issue, pragmatic campaign (Stone, 2012).

The way the subject of sexual and gender diversity is addressed by advocacy coalitions may benefit the well-being of some individuals but fail to benefit others (Ward, 2008). The extent to which LGBT advocacy groups sustain normative practices and ideologies (Ward, 2008) may increase stigmatization of marginalized SGD groups by increasing minority stress (Cyrus, 2017) and decreasing community belonging (Barr, Budge, and Adelson, 2016). Some groups that have felt underrepresented by LGBT advocacy coalitions, such as transgender people and people of color, have challenged how the coalitions have approached diversity, which in many cases led to greater inclusion, representation, and greater outreach (Armstrong, 2002). However, challenges remain. In policy and legal discourses on LGBT rights, for example, Marcus (2015) found that bisexual people have effectively been erased. Even intersectional coalitions like the coordination between LGBTQ and immigrant rights advocacy organizations can advance some policy goals but may perpetuate a single-issue framework that further marginalizes immigrant LGBTQ people who do not meet a “respectable” image (Mayo-Adam, 2020).

Thus, the policy process creates an apparent tension between policy priorities and how inclusive those priorities are of the most vulnerable SGD populations (Hindman, 2017; Murib, 2017; Strolovitch, 2007, 2012). For some, the policies that may affect the well-being of SGD people most may be along other dimensions of marginalization (e.g., race, class, immigration status). As a result, the identity politics framework of LGBT advocacy can overlook policy proposals that can have the most impact on the well-being of multiply marginalized SGD people (Cohen, 1999; Mayo-Adam, 2020; Strolovitch, 2007). In addition, the policies that most affect multiply marginalized SGD populations (e.g., policies relating to sex work) may be avoided due to the political system and the politics of respectability.

The way groups are socially constructed affects whether and how public policies distribute costs and benefits. Schneider and Ingram (1993) noted that policy makers might design policies to create, sustain, or reduce disparities among numerous social strata. They also established that social

groups may be categorized into one of four typologies based on their degree of deservingness and political power: those who lack deservingness or power (deviants); those who are deserving but lack power (dependents); those who lack deservingness but have power (contenders); and those who are seen as both deserving of and having political power (advantaged). Just as changing frames can shift the way people come to understand issues, the social construction of groups can change over time. In their original categorization scheme, Schneider and Ingram (1993) categorized gay men and lesbian women as deviants, which aligns with research showing that lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations have lacked political power and have been stigmatized (Sherrill, 1996). More recently, people have perceived LGBT people as slightly more deserving of support but still lacking political power relative to other groups (Kreitzer and Smith, 2018). Policy makers and the public may support policies benefiting SGD populations based on how such populations are socially constructed. This perception varies geographically, temporally, and contextually.

Because they still make up a small percentage of the U.S. population, SGD people have had to depend on heterosexual and cisgender individuals to advance their interests in elections (Haider-Markel, 2010) and institutions (Hansen and Treul, 2015; Proctor, 2020). Given their high propensity to vote for the Democratic Party, lesbian and gay people may be considered to be electorally captured—when a political party does not seem compelled to respond to the demands of a constituent group because the group is unlikely to vote for the other political party (Smith, 2007)—though research is inconclusive (Bishin and Smith, 2013; McThomas and Buchanan, 2012). Direct democracy and electoral politics also mean that the attitudes of the general public, both directly and indirectly, affect policies pertaining to the well-being of SGD populations. The frequent use of ballot initiatives and referendums in the passage of state and local policies affecting SGD populations directly involves the attitudes of voters in policy making (Stone, 2012), and it is far more likely than other approaches to position LGBT rights on the losing end of policy debates (Haider-Markel, Querze, and Lindaman, 2007; Lewis, 2019; Stone, 2012).

Public Opinion and Public Policy

Although there is a strong correlation between public opinion on specific gay and transgender rights and whether public policies exist on those specific issues, studies find policies are sometimes out of step with the majority opinion (Flores, Herman, and Mallory, 2015; Lax and Phillips, 2009; Lax and Phillips, 2012). On many issues affecting SGD populations, there is a “democratic deficit,” which means that a majority view is not reflected in public policy; in such a situation, a super-majority is needed (Flores,

Herman, and Mallory, 2015; Krimmel, Lax, and Phillips, 2016; Lax and Phillips, 2009). One source of this difference may be that elected officials, particularly Republican officials, frequently overestimate how conservative their constituents are (Broockman and Skovron, 2018; Krimmel, Lax, and Phillips, 2016). Although policy makers are more likely to vote for gay rights when their constituents include a relatively larger share of same-sex couples (Bishin, 2009; Bishin and Smith, 2013), this effect may be conditioned by local acceptance of such rights (Hansen and Treul, 2015).

Changing Public Attitudes

Because public opinion affects both law and policy, social movements engage in policy and legal strategies to try to affect the hearts and minds of the general public. In addition to issue framing and strategic communications (Solomon, 2014; Stone, 2012), advocates and academics have examined various strategies to change public opinion to be more favorable to SGD populations. This section reviews some of those strategies. At times, these strategies have been developed by advocacy organizations who recruit academics to determine through rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental designs whether their tactics are effective.

Using a canvassing strategy to have face-to-face conversations with people about LGBT rights (Lempinen, 2020), Broockman and Kalla (2016) found in a field experiment that having these conversations about transgender people and having people imagine themselves in the shoes of transgender people—a process known as perspective taking—can reduce transphobia and make people more resistant to arguments opposing the inclusion of gender identity in public accommodations policies. Kalla and Broockman (2020) further found that in-depth conversations between canvassers and individuals are effective when individuals are asked about their own narratives, but ineffective when the canvasser provides arguments for why the individual should support an issue.

In a survey experiment, Flores and colleagues (Flores, Hatzenbuehler, and Gates, 2018; Flores et al., 2018) found that introducing the concept of transgender to people and providing them faces of transgender people can reduce transphobia, thereby potentially increasing support for transgender rights. Harrison and Michelson (2017) showed through a series of experiments that priming a shared identity unrelated to sexual orientation or gender identity (e.g., a sports fan identity) and then emphasizing support for LGBT rights can persuade people to be more supportive of LGBT rights. Michelson and Harrison (2020) showed through a series of experiments that reminding people that they are moral individuals who want to do “the right thing” can increase their expressed support for transgender people and rights.

Experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational studies also found that the presence of LGBT characters in mass media can reduce prejudice toward LGBT people (Billard, 2019; Garretson, 2014, 2015, 2018; Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, 2005, 2006). These effects are generally explained by Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis, which states that interacting with members of social outgroups can result in prejudice reduction and notes the various ways contact can occur in a mediated fashion, such as through mass media (Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, 2005). Garretson (2018) showed that social movement activism rooted in ACT UP eventually led to mass media and entertainment media representing SGD populations. Such representation may be one key driver of the mass opinion change that shifted favorably toward lesbian women and gay men in the United States (Garretson, 2018). Thus, activism and social movement organizing played a role in mass opinion change.

Public Policy Adoption and Diffusion

The presence of SGD elected officials affects the adoption of public policies that advance SGD rights. Haider-Markel (2010) traced the difficulties and accomplishments of “out” gay and lesbian candidates and elected officials and found that gay and lesbian elected officials can translate their descriptive diversity into substantive policies. Reynolds (2013) showed that countries with more out LGBT legislators have more SGD-inclusive policies, and Reynolds (2018) emphasized the work done by openly LGBT legislators in building legislative coalitions to advance policies inclusive of SGD populations. This area of research is nascent, particularly because of the slowly growing number of self-identified SGD elected officials since Harvey Milk won elected office in San Francisco in 1977 and Barney Frank came out as the first out gay congressman in 1987. The first out transgender elected official in a U.S. state legislature, Danica Roem, was elected in 2017 in Virginia.

In 2020, 843 self-identified SGD people held elected office in the United States (Victory Institute, 2020), a noticeable but small minority of the 519,682 total elected officials in the country (Lawless, 2012). Of the 843 holding office, approximately 39 identified their gender as transgender, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, Two Spirit, or intersex; 458 as gay; 252 as lesbian; 52 as bisexual; 41 as queer; and 11 as pansexual (Victory Institute, 2020).¹ “Out” LGBTQ elected officials often engage in discussions and work on legislation to advance policies that are inclusive of SGD populations (Haider-Markel, 2010; Reynolds, 2018).

Racially and ethnically diverse elected officials have formed coalitions to further advance policies, with some of those policies favorable

¹Numeric totals converted from percentages.

to SGD communities. These elected officials perceive an intersectional linked fate in which several policy issues cross-cut numerous groups (Tyson, 2016). For example, homeless youth issues intersect with race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity, such that furthering policies to deal with homeless youth requires a diverse coalition of policy makers. In Congress, this coalition involves members of numerous identity-based caucuses (e.g., the LGBT Equality Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus). However, the identity politics framework of the LGBT advocacy coalition may make it more difficult to further policies that might benefit multiply marginalized SGD people (Strolovitch, 2007), which may limit policy innovation.

New policies tend to spread at both state and local levels, making it more likely that they are adopted in other locations (Berry and Berry, 2014). Such horizontal diffusion results in states and localities adopting policies similar to their neighbors, which occurred with such innovations as gender identity nondiscrimination protections (Sellers and Colvin, 2014). Innovations can be influenced by a number of factors, including the characteristics of local areas (Colvin, 2007; Taylor et al., 2014), policies in nearby states (Taylor et al., 2012), partisan control of lawmaking bodies (Lewis et al., 2014), and the capacity of local advocacy organizations (Taylor et al., 2018).

Model policies can also shape state or local law through vertical diffusion. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has influenced state laws regarding updating birth certificates for transgender people (Taylor, Tadlock, and Poggione, 2013) and policies relevant to HIV (Rugg et al., 1999). Another form of vertical diffusion and innovation is the use of state preemption (Movement Advancement Project, 2018). Although each state constitution differs, local governments have limited powers and are subject to state laws that can further preempt their legislative authority. As a result, as policies change locally, countermovement organizations have sought legislation that removes local authority in certain fields, including anti-discrimination laws (Gossett, 1999; Movement Advancement Project, 2018).

More inclusive laws and policies are perceived as a signal that society has changed to be less stigmatizing to SGD populations (Andersen, 2017; Valelly, 2012). Just as advocates seek to win over the hearts and minds of the general public in the pursuit of policy or legal change, once they achieve policy changes, the public may respond in different ways. A pro-rights policy change has the capacity to produce both backlash or further positive change for SGD populations (Egan, Persily, and Wallsten, 2008), though recent empirical research tends to show mass attitudes become more favorable of SGD populations following adoption of pro-rights laws (Flores and Barclay, 2016; Ofosu et al., 2018; Tankard and Paluck, 2017). Sometimes

legal inclusion produces opinion backlash. National public support for legalization of same-sex marriage and anti-sodomy laws dropped following *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003 (Egan, Persily, and Wallsten, 2008), which decriminalized consensual same-sex sexual acts. Ofosu and colleagues (2018) found that when marriage equality was introduced federally, residents of states that did not yet legally recognize marriages for same-sex couples had increases in implicit and explicit antigay bias, suggesting a backlash to federal policy change.

Backlash may follow adoption of inclusive policies that are new to the general public, but the public's response may be different when policies become more familiar. For example, Barclay and Flores (2017) found that increased public familiarity with debates over marriage equality increased support for legalization of same-sex marriage, even if the particular dispute resulted in an exclusionary law.

There are intricate connections among social movements, the public policy process, and changing public opinion. Public policy and public opinion represent structures that establish the overall context for SGD populations. Social movements and advocacy organizations represent the ongoing struggle of SGD people to change those structures to improve their well-being. However, those structures are resistant to change, greatly affecting the well-being of SGD populations.

STRUCTURAL STIGMA

As discussed in Chapter 2, stigma is conceptualized as a multilevel construct (Link and Phelan, 2001), ranging from individual (e.g., self-stigma) and interpersonal processes (e.g., discriminatory treatment) to structural factors (e.g., laws and policies, institutional practices). Until recently, the vast majority of research on stigma had been directed at the individual and interpersonal levels (Major and O'Brien, 2005), despite the acknowledgment by researchers that structural forms of stigma were prevalent and likely played a significant role in shaping the lives of the stigmatized (Corrigan, Markowitz, and Watson, 2004; Corrigan et al., 2005; Link and Phelan, 2001). In the past decade, researchers have begun to address this gap, and research as it specifically relates to SGD populations has proliferated since the Institute of Medicine (2011) report.

In this section we summarize the emerging literature on structural stigma and the well-being of SGD populations, organized around four issues: measurement approaches used to study structural stigma; an evaluation of the evidence on the consequences of structural stigma for the well-being of SGD populations; the challenge of establishing causal inferences regarding the effects of structural stigma on adverse outcomes among SGD populations; and future directions to advance this emerging literature.

Measurement Approaches

The measures used to study structural stigma have tended to follow one of three approaches: legal and policy analysis, aggregated measures of social attitudes, and composite indicators. In legal and policy analysis, the content of laws or policies (whether at the country, state, or municipal level) is coded to determine the presence of structural stigma in institutions (Corrigan et al., 2005). The main advantage of this approach is that it relies on objective data sources to code the policies; the primary limitation is that such analyses often do not capture the unwritten customs or procedures that undergird informal institutional practices (Livingston, 2013).

In the second approach, aggregated measures, researchers obtain data on individuals' attitudes toward members of stigmatized groups and aggregate them to the community level (defined at various geographic scales, such as counties), so that the level of stigma can be compared across communities. This approach has been used to study structural forms of stigma related to mental illness (Evans-Lacko et al., 2012), sexual orientation (Hatzenbuehler, Flores, and Gates, 2017), and HIV/AIDS (Miller et al., 2011). A methodological strength of this approach is that members of stigmatized groups are not asked about their perceptions of community attitudes; instead, the community attitudes are derived from residents' own attitudes.

This approach overcomes same-source bias, which can introduce spurious results when the independent and dependent variables are measured with the same method (Diez Roux, 2007). However, this approach can underestimate levels of structural stigma because self-reported attitudes toward stigmatized groups may be subject to social desirability biases (Livingston, 2013). To address this limitation, researchers have begun to use alternative approaches to capture attitudes that do not rely on self-reported measures. These alternative approaches include measures of implicit attitudes that are assessed with response latencies on computerized tasks, such as the Implicit Association Test (Leitner et al., 2016); aggregation of Google searches of racial epithets (Chae et al., 2015); and objective media market data on exposure to thousands of television campaign ads for and against a topic, such as same-sex marriage (Flores, Hatzenbuehler, and Gates, 2018).

These first two approaches measure a single aspect of structural stigma (i.e., laws, policies, or social attitudes), which may be appropriate for research questions that seek to evaluate which individual components of structural stigma are most robustly associated with the well-being of SGD populations. Under some circumstances, however, it is desirable to develop comprehensive measures of structural stigma that tap into shared variance in order to eliminate or minimize unique variance (e.g., unmeasured variables that reflect constructs other than structural stigma), especially given the high correlation among different components of structural stigma.

Some studies (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Hatzenbuehler and McLaughlin, 2014; Pachankis et al., 2015) have begun to develop these more comprehensive measures of structural stigma that capture its multiple components (e.g., laws, institutional practices, social norms). This approach reduces measurement error, thereby increasing both construct and statistical validity.

Review of Research

This section reviews and provides illustrative examples of studies of the effects of structural stigma on the well-being of SGD populations, organized by kind of study: cross-sectional, longitudinal, quasi-experimental, field, and laboratory. Table 6-1 summarizes these research examples.

Cross-Sectional Designs

Much of the work on structural stigma and SGD populations began with cross-sectional, observational designs in order to establish whether structural stigma was associated with health inequalities. In an early example of this work, Hatzenbuehler, Keyes, and Hasin (2009) coded all 50 states for the presence or absence of hate crime statutes and employment nondiscrimination policies that included sexual orientation as a protected class (the measure of structural stigma). They then linked this policy information to individual-level data on mental health and sexual orientation from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), a nationally representative health survey of U.S. adults. They found that sexual orientation disparities in psychiatric morbidity were more pronounced in states that measured high in structural stigma than in states that measured low in structural stigma. For instance, LGB adults who lived in states with no protective policies were nearly 2.5 times more likely to have dysthymia (a mood disorder) than were heterosexuals in those same states, controlling for established risk factors. In contrast, there were no disparities in dysthymia by sexual orientation in states with protective policies (Hatzenbuehler, Keyes, and Hasin, 2009).

SGD populations are not passive victims as they experience structural forms of stigma, but instead they engage in a variety of coping responses that buffer the negative effects of structural stigma and lead to positive psychosocial outcomes. Retrospective cross-sectional studies of LGB respondents have revealed sources of resiliency associated with campaign ballot initiatives, including an enhanced sense of personal and communal efficacy, experiences of personal growth (e.g., having a greater understanding of how prejudice affects their lives), and support from certain heterosexual allies; these factors helped to minimize feelings of isolation and powerlessness (Rostosky et al., 2010; Russell and Richards, 2003).

TABLE 6-1 Studies Examining Structural Stigma and Well-Being among SGD Populations

Design	Measure of Stigma
Cross-Sectional Studies	
	Composite variable of state laws and attitudes toward homosexuality
	Five legislative protections for LGB status at the country level: (1) recognition of same-sex relationships; (2) possibility of same-sex marriage; (3) possibility of same-sex adoption; (4) opportunity to serve openly as gay in the military; and (5) the presence of a legal framework to address all anti-gay discrimination
	Composite variable of two state laws: hate crimes and employment nondiscrimination acts
	Constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage
	Voter referendum on sexual orientation-based discrimination
	Voter referendum on same-sex marriage (Proposition 8)
	Prevalence of school districts whose anti-bullying policies include sexual orientation as an enumerated class
	Composite variable of four factors: (1) density of same-sex couples; (2) proportion of gay-straight alliances in public high schools; (3) five policies related to sexual orientation discrimination (e.g., same-sex marriage bans, employment nondiscrimination acts that included sexual orientation); and (4) public opinion toward LGB-related policies (e.g., same-sex adoption, public accommodations)
	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender assault hate crimes obtained from police records

Outcome	Sample Characteristics	Source
Cross-Sectional Studies		
Tobacco and alcohol use	Nonprobability sample of young adult sexual minority men (N = 119)	Pachankis, Hatzenbuehler, and Starks (2014)
Internalized homonegativity	Nonprobability sample of sexual minority men from 38 European countries in the European Men Who Have Sex with Men Internet Survey (N = 144,177)	Berg et al. (2013)
Psychiatric disorders	Nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (N = 577 LGB respondents)	Hatzenbuehler, Keyes, and Hasin (2009)
Psychological distress (negative affect, stress, depressive symptoms), minority stress experiences, political participation	Nonprobability sample of LGB adults (N = 1,552)	Rostosky et al. (2010)
Stressors and resilience factors	Nonprobability sample of LGB adults (N = 316)	Russell and Richards (2003)
Affect, social relationships, support and conflict	Nonprobability sample of LGB adults (N = 354)	Maisel and Fingerhut (2011)
Suicide attempts	Population-based sample of youth in 11th grade from the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey (N = 1,413 LGB respondents)	Hatzenbuehler and Keyes (2013)
Suicide attempts, tobacco use	Population-based sample of youth in 11th grade from the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey (N = 1,413 LGB respondents)	Hatzenbuehler, (2011); Hatzenbuehler, Wieringa, and Keyes, (2011)
Suicide ideation or attempts, illicit drug use, bullying	Population-based sample of public high school students from the Boston Youth Survey Geospatial Dataset (N = 102 sexual minority youth)	Duncan and Hatzenbuehler (2014); Duncan, Hatzenbuehler, and Johnson (2014); Hatzenbuehler, Duncan, and Johnson (2015)

continued

TABLE 6-1 Continued

Design	Measure of Stigma
	Composite indicator of five factors of school climate: (1) have a gay-straight alliance and safe space for LGBTQ youth; (2) provide curricula on health matters relevant to LGBTQ youths (e.g., HIV); (3) prohibit harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity; (4) encourage staff to attend trainings on creating supportive environments for LGBTQ youths; and (5) facilitate access to providers off school property that provide health and other services specifically targeted to LGBTQ youths (from School Health Profile Data of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
	Composite measure of country-level policies related to sexual orientation and aggregated social attitudes toward homosexuality held by the citizens of each country
	Composite measure of country-level policies related to sexual orientation and aggregated social attitudes toward homosexuality held by the citizens of each country
	Voter referendum on same-sex marriage
	Aggregate measure of community attitudes on same-sex marriage
	Sexual orientation enumeration in state anti-bullying statutes
	Religious Freedom Restoration Acts
Longitudinal Studies	
Longitudinal panel	Composite variable of (1) density of same-sex couples; (2) proportion of gay-straight alliances in public high schools; (3) five policies related to sexual orientation discrimination (e.g., same-sex marriage bans, employment nondiscrimination acts that included sexual orientation); and (4) public opinion toward LGB-related policies (e.g., same-sex adoption, public accommodations)

Outcome	Sample Characteristics	Source
Suicide ideation, plan, and attempts	Population-based sample of public high school students in 8 states and cities from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (N = 2,782 LGB youth)	Hatzenbuehler et al. (2014a)
Concealment	Nonprobability sample of sexual minority men from 38 European countries in the European Men Who Have Sex with Men Internet Survey (N = 174,209)	Pachankis et al. (2015)
Life satisfaction, concealment, discrimination, and victimization	Nonprobability sample of sexual minorities from 28 countries participating in the European Union Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender survey (N = 85,582)	Pachankis and Bränström (2018)
Life satisfaction, mental health, overall health, perceived social support	Probability-based sample of adults from the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (N = 554 LGB respondents)	Perales and Todd (2018)
Self-rated health, tobacco use	Population-based sample from the Gallup Daily Tracking survey (N = 11,949 LGBT respondents)	Hatzenbuehler, Flores, and Gates (2017)
Bullying, suicidal ideation and attempts in the past 12 months	Population-based sample of youth from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (N = 2,000 sexual minority youth)	Meyer et al. (2019)
Unhealthy days in the past 30 days	Probability sample of adults from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (N = 4,911 sexual minorities)	Blosnich et al. (2018)
Longitudinal Studies		
Cigarette smoking, illicit drug use	Nonprobability sample of youth from the Growing Up Today Study, a longitudinal cohort (N = 2,190 sexual minorities)	Hatzenbuehler et al., (2014b, 2015)

continued

TABLE 6-1 Continued

Design	Measure of Stigma
Repeated cross-sectional surveys linked prospectively to mortality data in the National Death Index	Aggregate measure of community attitudes on same-sex sexuality
Daily diary study	Voter referendum on same-sex marriage in 4 states
Repeated cross-section	Composite measure of laws and aggregated community attitudes in Sweden
Quasi-Experiments	
Longitudinal panel	Constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage
Longitudinal panel	Massachusetts Supreme Court decision on constitutionality of same-sex marriage
Longitudinal panel	Illinois law legalizing civil unions (Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act)
Interrupted time series	Voter referendum on same-sex marriage (“Proposition 8”)
Repeated cross-sectional samples with fixed effects	Same-sex marriage policies
Repeated cross-sectional samples with fixed effects	State laws permitting the denial of services to same-sex couples (“religious exemption laws”)

Outcome	Sample Characteristics	Source
All-cause mortality	Probability-based sample from the General Social Survey (N = 1,524 individuals reporting same-sex sexual partners)	Hatzenbuehler et al. (2019a)
Psychological and relational well-being	Nonprobability sample of 62 same-sex couples who completed a baseline survey and 10 daily diary reports during the month before the election	Frost and Fingerhut (2016)
Psychological distress	Population-based sample of Swedish adults from the Swedish National Public Health Survey (N = 565 LGB respondents)	Hatzenbuehler, Bränström, and Pachankis (2018)
Quasi-Experiments		
Psychiatric disorders in the past year	Nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized U.S. adults from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (N = 577 LGB respondents)	Hatzenbuehler et al. (2012)
Health care utilization and expenditures	Nonprobability data from a health clinic serving LGBT individuals (N = 1,211 sexual minority male patients)	Hatzenbuehler et al. (2012)
Hazardous drinking, depressive symptoms, perceived discrimination, stigma consciousness	Nonprobability sample from the Chicago Health and Life Experiences of Women Study (N = 517 sexual minority women)	Everett, Hatzenbuehler, and Hughes (2016)
Homophobic bullying in the past year	Nonprobability sample from the California Healthy Kids Survey (N = 4,977,557 children)	Hatzenbuehler et al. (2019b)
Suicide attempts in the past year	Population-based data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (N = 231,413)	Raifman et al. (2017)
Poor mental health in the past 30 days	Population-based data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (N = 4,656 LGB and “unsure” respondents)	Raifman et al. (2018)

continued

TABLE 6-1 Continued

Design	Measure of Stigma
Repeated cross-sectional samples with fixed effects	Three state policies: (1) same-sex partner recognition, (2) constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage, and (3) employment nondiscrimination and hate crime laws
Cross-sectional analysis, examining “spillover” into states where “treated” individuals were accidentally exposed to the campaign ads	Media market data of television ads during a voter referendum on same-sex marriage
Field Experiments	
Audit experiment	Legal protections related to employment discrimination
Laboratory Studies	
	Composite variable of (1) density of same-sex couples; (2) proportion of gay-straight alliances in public high schools; (3) five policies related to sexual orientation discrimination (e.g., same-sex marriage bans, employment non-discrimination acts that included sexual orientation); and (4) public opinion toward LGB-related policies (e.g., same-sex adoption, public accommodations)

*NOTE: Studies on presence of gay-straight alliances in schools are discussed in Chapter 10.

Outcome	Sample Characteristics	Source
Hate crimes based on sexual orientation	Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program on hate crimes related to sexual orientation	Levy and Levy (2017)
Psychological distress, negative affect	Probability-based sample of LGBT adults (N = 939)	Flores, Hatzenbuehler, and Gates (2018)
Field Experiments		
Employment discrimination (percentage of gay men who received a callback)	1,769 job postings in states; one resume in each pair was randomly assigned experience in a gay campus organization, and the other resume was assigned a control condition	Tilcsik (2011)
Laboratory Studies		
Physiological stress response, measured by cortisol	Nonprobability sample of LGB young adults (N = 74)	Hatzenbuehler and McLaughlin (2014)

Longitudinal Designs

Although cross-sectional studies provide important insights into associations, prospective designs improve the ability to establish temporal ordering of the relationship between structural stigma and the well-being of SGD populations. Longitudinal designs involve an assessment of the same respondents over time. A typical longitudinal design involves panel or cohort studies, in which the same respondents are repeatedly assessed. Below, we describe three types of longitudinal designs that have been used: respondents followed over time, daily diary studies, and repeated cross-sectional samples that examine trends over time.

Respondents Followed over Time Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2014b, 2015) constructed a composite measure of structural stigma surrounding LGB youth, which included four items at the state level: density of same-sex couples, proportion of gay-straight alliances in public high schools, policies related to sexual orientation, and public opinion toward homosexuality (using aggregated responses from national polls). The researchers linked this information on state-level structural stigma to individual-level data on tobacco and illicit drug use from the Growing Up Today Study, a prospective cohort study of youth. They found that sexual minority youth living in states with low structural stigma were less likely to smoke over time than sexual minority youth in states with high structural stigma states, controlling for individual- and state-level confounders (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014b).

Daily Diary Studies Experience sampling methods (also known as ecological momentary assessments and daily diary studies) offer a number of methodological strengths, including capturing reported events and psychological reactions longitudinally in their natural context, thereby permitting the examination of person-by-situation interactions; reducing recall bias (because the approach minimizes the amount of time that elapses between an experience and the reporting of the experience); improving the validity of modeling within-individual changes (because of the much larger number of assessments that are possible with this design); and affording researchers the opportunity to examine the temporal sequence of events and to control for third variables by using individuals as their own controls, thereby improving causal inferences (Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli, 2003).

Daily diary studies are increasingly being used to study structural stigma among SGD populations. For instance, Frost and Fingerhut (2016) used this design to obtain daily reports on health and stress exposure from 62 same-sex couples from four states in the month before state voting on same-sex marriage in voter referenda. Self-reported exposure to negative campaign messages was associated with increased negative affect, as well as with decreased positive affect and relationship satisfaction, controlling

for baseline measures of depression and daily fluctuations in general stress among both members of the couple. Thus, even though all four states voted in favor of same-sex marriage, the negative social environment created by public debates about the rights of SGD individuals affected the mental health of same-sex couples.

Repeated Cross-Sectional Samples Repeated cross-sectional samples are used to examine trends over time. In one example of this approach, researchers used a population-based dataset in Sweden that has assessed sexual orientation and mental health every 5 years since 2005 (2005, 2010, 2015). Over this 10-year period, there were marked declines in structural forms of stigma, including changes in laws and policies that provided protections to sexual minorities, as well as declines in prejudicial attitudes towards homosexuality. These declines in structural stigma were associated with a significant reduction in the magnitude of the sexual orientation disparity in mental health: in 2005, gay men and lesbian women were nearly three times more likely to meet criteria for elevated psychological distress than heterosexual men and women, but in 2015 the sexual orientation disparity was eliminated (Hatzenbuehler, Bränström, and Pachankis, 2018). This finding is important because it suggests that sexual orientation disparities in mental health are responsive to changes in the social context.

Quasi-Experimental Designs

Researchers have complemented observational designs through the use of several different methods, such as quasi-, or natural, experiments, which permit stronger inferences regarding the relationship between structural stigma and outcomes in well-being. Quasi-experiments are used in situations in which it is not possible or ethical to randomly assign individuals to a particular condition, as is the case in studying structural forms of stigma. Three types of quasi-experimental designs have been used: those that use longitudinal panel studies, those that use repeated cross-sectional samples, and those that use interrupted time-series designs.

Quasi-Experiments Using Longitudinal Panel Studies In this approach, researchers use quasi-experiments to examine changes in health following changes in structural stigma (usually through a change in a social policy) among the same set of respondents who have been assessed both before and after the policy change. In one example of this work, Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2010) took advantage of the fact that, leading up to and during the 2004 election, several states passed constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. These events occurred between two waves of data collection of NESARC. Respondents were first interviewed in 2001 and then reinterviewed in 2005, following the adoption of bans on same-sex marriage. LGB adults who lived in states that passed same-sex marriage bans

experienced a 37 percent increase in mood disorders, a 42 percent increase in alcohol use disorders, and a 248 percent increase in generalized anxiety disorder between the two waves (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2010). In contrast, LGB respondents in states that did not adopt such bans did not experience a significant increase in psychiatric disorders during the study period. The mental health of heterosexuals in states that adopted the bans was largely unchanged between the two waves.

Complementing this study, which suggests that implementing structural stigma through state laws may have negative mental health consequences for LGB populations, there is evidence that abolishing structural forms of stigma may improve their health. When Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage in 2003, researchers obtained data (from previously collected medical records) from a community-based health clinic in Massachusetts to examine the influence of the law on health care use and costs among sexual minority men. There was a 15 percent reduction in mental and medical health care utilization and costs among these men in the 12 months following the legalization of same-sex marriage, compared with the 12 months before (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2012).

Quasi-experimental designs cannot rule out the possibility that some other factor that occurred contemporaneously with the change in structural stigma affected the results. However, the plausibility of alternative factors can be evaluated by examining whether they occurred during the same time period and, if so, whether they could have contributed to the results. For example, in the aforementioned study by Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2012), the researchers examined data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to determine trends in health care costs during the study period, 2002–2004. These data revealed that health care costs in the general population of Massachusetts residents increased during the study period. This pattern was in the opposite direction of those observed in the study’s sample of sexual minority men, suggesting that external factors in the Massachusetts health care environment were unlikely to have influenced the results.

Quasi-Experiments Using Repeated Cross-Sectional Samples A second quasi-experimental approach uses repeated cross-sectional samples with state fixed effects to examine the consequences of structural stigma for SGD populations. In this approach, the same respondents are not followed, as in the studies reviewed above; instead, different “snapshots” of a population are followed over time to determine whether changes in structural stigma affect outcomes in well-being.

In one example of this work, Raifman and colleagues (2018) used a difference-in-difference-in-differences analysis² that compared changes in

²Difference-in-difference-in-differences is a statistical technique that studies the status of a “treatment” group and a “control group” before a treatment is administered, as well as studying the outcomes of each group after the treatment.

mental distress among LGB and heterosexual respondents in three states that implemented laws in 2015 denying public accommodations services to same-sex couples (treatment group) with changes in mental distress among LGB and heterosexual respondents in six geographically nearby states with similar demographics but without these laws (control group). Data on mental health and sexual orientation came from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The only group experiencing an increase in mental distress during this period was that of the sexual minorities living in states with the denial law. This increase was equivalent to a 46 percent relative increase in sexual minority adults experiencing mental distress in these states (Raifman et al., 2018). This study used state fixed effects, which controlled for baseline differences in rates of mental distress across states, and for time-invariant characteristics (e.g., political climate) that could have affected both the independent and dependent variables.

Levy and Levy (2017) used a similar quasi-experimental approach in a study looking at a different well-being outcome: hate crimes targeting LGBT populations. The authors used repeated cross-sectional data on hate crimes from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program, examining whether state laws (constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage, same-sex partner recognition, employment nondiscrimination, and hate crime laws) were associated with reduced incidence of hate crimes against LGBT individuals. Results indicated that the presence of hate crime and employment nondiscrimination laws that include sexual orientation as a protected class resulted in a small but statistically reliable reduction in the incidence of hate crimes against LGBT populations. For instance, states instituting a nondiscrimination law had one fewer reported hate crime per 900,000 people during the year the policy was adopted and an additional one fewer reported crime per 1.2 million people in the following year (Levy and Levy, 2017).

Quasi-Experiments Using Interrupted Time Series Another quasi-experimental approach is the use of interrupted time-series designs, a statistical tool used in nonexperimental data for assessing associations between policy or legislation and outcomes of interest. With a series of repeated observations, this approach compares the rates of a phenomenon before and after a policy or legislative change. Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2019b) used this approach to examine the associations between a voter referendum that restricted marriage to heterosexuals in California (Proposition 8, in 2008) and homophobic bullying among youth. They strategically combined data from nearly 5 million youth in more than 5,000 schools across 14 school years, linked to statewide data on school gay-straight alliances, to determine whether rates of homophobic bullying increased as a result of the referendum. The interrupted time-series analyses found that the 2008–2009 academic year, during which Proposition 8 was passed, served as a turning

point in homophobic bullying (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2019b). Specifically, the rate of homophobic bullying increased and accelerated in the period prior to Proposition 8 and then gradually declined in the years following the vote. Specificity analyses showed that these trends were not observed among students who reported that they were bullied because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, but not because of their sexual orientation. The analysis also showed that the presence of gay-straight alliances served as a protective factor specific to school contexts among LGBT youth; they were associated with a smaller increase in homophobic bullying during the pre-Proposition 8 period.

Field Experiments

One of the strengths of field experiments is that they retain the internal validity of a traditional randomized experiment but improve external validity by examining stigma processes in “real-world” settings. One particular type of field experiment is the audit experiment, which has been used in several studies on discrimination. An innovative example of this approach was conducted by Tilcsik (2011), who explored discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment outcomes among men. The researcher submitted a pair of fictitious, but ostensibly real, resumes to job postings of white-collar, entry-level jobs in seven states that were chosen on the basis of whether they had employment nondiscrimination laws that included sexual orientation as a protected class. The sexual orientation of the applicant was randomly assigned to each pair before the resumes were sent: the sexual orientation of the apparent applicant was signaled through the applicant’s membership in a campus organization during college. Although the resumes differed slightly to avoid raising suspicion, there was no systematic relationship between resume quality and sexual orientation; as such, any difference that was observed in call-back rates (the dependent variable of interest) could be attributed to the sexual orientation of the applicant.

Gay men were approximately 40 percent less likely to be offered a job interview than similarly qualified heterosexual men, an effect that is similar to previous audit studies on Black-white disparities in employment outcomes (Tilcsik, 2011). However, there was also substantial variation in the level of hiring discrimination across the seven states. Specifically, rates of employment discrimination against gay men were higher in states that did not have employment nondiscrimination policies that protected gay men. Thus, this study provided experimental evidence not only that both interpersonal and structural discrimination influence employment outcomes, but also that these forms of discrimination interact to produce adverse employment outcomes for gay men.

Laboratory Studies

The primary advantage of laboratory designs is that researchers can examine how structural stigma moderates responses to the same stimuli as measured in a controlled setting. In these studies, individuals are recruited on the basis of their prior exposure to structural stigma (high or low) and then are assigned to different conditions to examine how structural stigma influences their behavioral, psychosocial, and physiological responses.

In one example of this work, researchers recruited 74 LGB young adults who were raised in 24 different states as adolescents. The states differed widely in terms of structural stigma, which was coded on the basis of a composite measure that included, among other factors, state laws and attitudes (Hatzenbuehler and McLaughlin, 2014). All respondents were currently living in New York, a low structural stigma state. In order to examine how prior exposure to structural stigma during adolescence affected subsequent physiological stress responses during young adulthood, participants completed a validated laboratory stressor, the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST), and neuroendocrine measures were collected. LGB young adults who were raised in high structural stigma states as adolescents evidenced a blunted cortisol response following the TSST compared with LGB young adults raised in low structural stigma states. This blunted cortisol response has been similarly documented in other groups that have experienced chronic stressors, including children exposed to childhood maltreatment (Gunnar et al., 2009). Thus, these results suggest that the stress of growing up in high structural stigma environments may exert biological consequences that are similar to those from other chronic life stressors.

Establishing Causal Inferences

Researchers have used several different approaches to achieve the strongest inferences possible regarding the effects of structural stigma on the well-being of SGD populations. Below, we briefly discuss six of these strategies.

First, as shown in the studies above, researchers have used a multimeasure, multimethod, multi-outcome approach to examine the consequences of structural stigma for SGD populations. This is an established approach to assessing validity; when convergence is demonstrated, one can be relatively confident that the results are not spuriously confounded by particular methods, measures, or outcomes (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Relatedly, the findings of structural stigma have been documented across multiple research groups using different methods, samples, and measures, providing further support for the robustness of these findings.

Second, researchers have explored whether the effects of structural stigma are apparent among SGD populations and not among cisgender, heterosexual populations. When associations between structural stigma and well-being outcomes are observed only among members of the stigmatized group, it is likely that this result is due to structural stigma itself rather than to factors that may be associated with it (e.g., better economic conditions). Studies have generally documented this kind of specificity (e.g., Blosnich et al., 2018; Duncan and Hatzenbuehler, 2014; Hatzenbuehler and Keyes, 2013; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2010, 2014a; Raifman et al., 2018), or they have shown that the association between structural stigma and well-being outcomes is more pronounced for SGD populations than for non-SGD populations (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, Bränström, and Pachankis, 2018; Raifman et al., 2017); however, there are some studies that have shown that structural stigma is associated with health outcomes among both stigmatized and non-stigmatized groups (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Meyer et al., 2019).

A third approach for improving causal inferences comes through the direct assessment of plausible alternative explanations. One alternative explanation for the relationship between structural stigma and health is that people with better health move away from policy regimes and attitudinal contexts that disadvantage them, leaving unhealthy respondents behind. If this occurs, differential selection by health status could contribute to the observed association between structural stigma and health. Studies have begun to address this possibility and have thus far not found strong evidence for this selection hypothesis. For instance, using data from the General Social Survey (2008–2014), Hatzenbuehler, Flores, and Gates (2017) found that among participants who self-reported fair or poor health, sexual minorities were *more* likely to have moved out of state than heterosexuals (43 percent and 37 percent, respectively), the opposite of what the social selection hypothesis would predict. This finding indicates that differential selection by health status is unlikely to be responsible for the observed association between structural stigma and well-being outcomes among SGD populations.

Fourth, researchers have controlled for a variety of potential individual- and structural-level confounders to rule out spurious associations between structural stigma and well-being. By and large, results remain robust to the inclusion of these confounders. In addition, researchers have used fixed effects analyses (e.g., Levy and Levy, 2017; Raifman et al., 2017, 2018), which control for baseline differences across geographic units (e.g., states) in the analysis, as well as for time-invariant characteristics that could affect both structural stigma and health outcomes.

Fifth, researchers have conducted falsification tests that show structural stigma does not predict outcomes it theoretically should not influence,

such as fruit juice consumption (Raifman et al., 2017) or cancer diagnoses (Flores et al., 2018).

Finally, one potential methodological limitation that can affect internal validity (and therefore causal inferences) is expectancy effects, meaning that researchers' biases in obtaining support for their hypotheses about the effects of structural stigma may influence their coding behaviors of the independent (i.e., structural stigma) or dependent (e.g., health) variables. The studies discussed above have largely minimized the threat of expectancy effects because of the methodological approaches that were used. Specifically, researchers first obtained data on structural stigma, typically from external sources. Data on policies were either collected by outside groups that use legal and policy experts to independently code the policies or were obtained from publicly available data sources whose accuracy can be objectively verified by comparisons with legislative records (Krieger et al., 2013; Pachankis et al., 2015). In studies that used data on aggregated social attitudes as the indicator of structural stigma, researchers usually obtained these data from publicly available data sources (e.g., the General Social Survey) rather than collecting the data themselves, thereby reducing the likelihood of expectancy effects. Information on structural stigma was then linked to datasets in which the outcomes were previously collected by other researchers who were, by definition, blind to study hypotheses (because the data were not originally collected for the purposes of studying structural stigma). This approach further minimizes the threat of expectancy effects.

Advancing Research on Structural Stigma

Although research has advanced understanding of how structural stigma affects the well-being of SGD populations, several gaps remain. In this section we review these gaps, as well as needed data. In addition, we identify key barriers that have hindered work in this area and offer suggestions for addressing these data needs in order to advance the evidence base.

Research Needs

For research that is needed to advance the emerging field of structural stigma and SGD well-being, we focus on five areas: mediating pathways, expanding measurement of structural stigma, life course and developmental trajectories, structural stigma relevant to individuals with diverse genders and sexualities, and intersectionality.

Mediating Pathways Although most research to date has focused on main effect relations between structural stigma and well-being outcomes among SGD populations, research has begun to identify potential mechanisms explaining this association. This work has largely focused on two

primary pathways: stress mechanisms and psychosocial mechanisms. Evidence for a stress pathway comes from both direct tests—e.g., research indicating that structural stigma is associated with dysregulated physiological stress responses among LGB young adults (Hatzenbuehler and McLaughlin, 2014)—and from indirect tests (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2012).

The second potential pathway involves psychosocial mechanisms, such as social isolation and maladaptive forms of emotion regulation, which have been shown to mediate the health effects of individual and interpersonal forms of stigma (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, and Link, 2013). For example, LGB respondents who live in countries with higher levels of structural stigma report greater identity concealment, which in turn predicts lower life satisfaction (Pachankis and Bränström, 2018). In addition, in Australia, LGB respondents who lived in communities with higher levels of structural stigma (i.e., constituencies with higher proportions of residents voting against same-sex marriage) reported less social support, which in turn was associated with worse life satisfaction, as well as poorer mental health and overall health (Perales and Todd, 2018).

These initial findings have been important, but research is needed to identify additional mediating pathways—including material (e.g., income, educational attainment), psychosocial (e.g., emotion regulation), and biological (e.g., inflammation) pathways. This topic represents an important avenue for future inquiry and can inform potential targets for preventive interventions to reduce the negative consequences of structural stigma for SGD well-being.

Expanding Measurement of Structural Stigma As reviewed above, studies have measured structural stigma in a variety of ways. While this diversity of measurement represents a methodological strength, the work has thus far focused on a limited set of social institutions (largely, state laws and aggregated social norms). Research that expands the measurement of structural stigma to include social institutions that have thus far not received as much empirical attention in the literature is needed: those institutions include health care settings, policing, and the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. Research is also needed that more comprehensively examines the implementation of social policies relevant to SGD populations, as well as the social, economic, and political factors that affect variability in implementation and enforcement.

In addition, the advent of “big data” sources—such as Google searches, social media (e.g., Twitter feeds), and exposure to various media content (e.g., television ads)—offers new ways of measuring the presence and scope of structural stigma, as reflected in aggregated social norms and attitudes, that affect SGD populations. To date, studies are only beginning to use these big data sources to study structural stigma as it relates to diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (Flores et al., 2018), and compre-

hensive information on the psychometric properties of these data sources does not yet exist. This area represents an important avenue for future research on structural stigma.

Life Course and Developmental Trajectories Research on structural stigma and the well-being of SGD people has been conducted among adolescents (Duncan and Hatzenbuehler, 2014; Hatzenbuehler and Keyes, 2013; Raifman et al., 2017), young adults (Hatzenbuehler and McLaughlin, 2014; Pachankis, Hatzenbuehler, and Starks, 2014), and adults (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2010, 2012; Pachankis and Bränström, 2018; Perales and Todd, 2018; Raifman et al., 2018). However, most research examines exposure to structural stigma at a single point in development, and attention to developmental timing and chronicity of exposure to structural stigma has been relatively lacking. Thus, although it is clear that structural stigma matters for the health and well-being of SGD populations, how this develops over the life course is not well understood. Future research should therefore consider how structural stigma unfolds using life course and developmental trajectories in order to advance this line of work. Researchers could also study dose–response relationships between length of exposure to structural stigma over a person’s life course and adverse outcomes among SGD populations.

Structural Stigma Relevant to Individuals of Diverse Genders and Sexualities Most research has examined structural stigma related to sexual orientation, with a particular focus on same-sex sexuality. Comparatively fewer studies have been conducted about structural stigma related to other sexual orientations, such as bisexuality, as well as to individuals with intersex traits. In addition, there is a dearth of research on structural stigma related to gender identity (for an exception, see Perez-Brumer et al., 2015), despite acknowledgment that transgender populations confront several sources of structural stigma (Hughto, Reisner, and Pachankis, 2015).

There are at least two reasons for this relative dearth of research. One is the lack of data structures that include measures of diverse genders and sexualities and that sample respondents across multiple contexts that vary in the level of structural stigma against these groups. Another reason is the lack of measurement development regarding structural forms that may be unique to specific groups of SGD populations. For instance, prejudice related to bisexuality involves different stereotypic content than prejudice related to homosexuality (Dodge et al., 2016; Worthen, 2013), indicating the importance of developing new measures that capture the facets of structural stigma and prejudice that are distinct to bisexuality, as well as to other diverse sexualities and genders.

Intersectionality Research to date has largely explored structural forms of stigma that are shared by LGBT populations related to their sexual orientation. This work is important, but it has tended to obscure the fact that

LGBT individuals have other identities that are relevant to their well-being, including race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (for a notable exception, see Everett, Hatzenbuehler, and Hughes, 2016). Thus, how structural forms of stigma across multiple axes of social stratification interact to confer risk for, or protection against, adverse outcomes among SGD people with intersecting identities is not well understood. Recent research has begun to address this gap, using novel approaches to testing intersectionality (Pachankis et al., 2017), but more work is needed.

Data Needs

The most widely used approaches for studying structural stigma and well-being among SGD populations include multilevel or population-average models that provide an estimate of the effect of structural stigma on well-being outcomes, net of individual and contextual factors (Hatzenbuehler, 2017). In order to conduct these studies, researchers require datasets with the four variables (1) demographic measures of sexual orientation and gender identity (at the individual level); (2) covariates to control for potential confounders and plausible alternative explanations (measured at the individual and contextual levels); (3) dependent variables (e.g., health outcomes or other indicators of social and economic well-being, measured at the individual level); and (4) geographic information on respondents' residence (e.g., ZIP codes) that enables researchers to link structural stigma variables (i.e., the independent/predictor variable) to individual-level data.

This last point is particularly important, because without geographic measures of where respondents are located, it is not possible to examine the influence of structural stigma on SGD well-being. Currently, numerous datasets either do not provide this information on geographic residence or else release data at only one geographic level of analysis (e.g., state), which restricts researchers' ability to examine structural forms of stigma across multiple geographic levels simultaneously (e.g., state, county, city, and school). This lack of data on geographic residence across different spaces in which SGD individuals live, work, and play has created a significant barrier to advancing the literature on structural stigma.

Another data and methodological challenge in conducting research on structural stigma is the lack of a centralized mechanism by which government or private actors initiate and track surveillance of laws and policies relevant to SGD populations and their enforcement (Blake and Hatzenbuehler, 2019). This hinders the ability of researchers to longitudinally track how laws and policies, as well as their enforcement (or lack thereof), affect the well-being of SGD populations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There are numerous advocacy organizations devoted to the advancement of rights for SGD populations. The contemporary LGBT advocacy coalition has growing infrastructure and capacity, and hundreds of foundations and corporations have invested in issues addressing sexual and gender diversity. At the same time, however, there are organizations opposed to the advancement of rights for SGD populations that also try to control the policy agenda and reach the public through counter campaigns and social movements.

The way issues are communicated affects how people come to understand them. The strategic shift of a frame, as with marriage equality, for example—from an “egalitarian” movement to one that was centered on “love and commitment”—can cause a shift in support and have a profound effect on public policy. However, the pursuit of policies likely to garner public support may stigmatize or erase certain SGD groups, such as bisexual and transgender men and women.

CONCLUSION 6-1: The pursuit of public policies affecting sexual and gender diverse populations is constrained by the need to frame policies that are politically palatable and socially acceptable to voters. Sometimes legal inclusion in one policy area can produce opinion backlash on other policy areas affecting those populations.

Because SGD populations make up a small percentage of the U.S. population, they have had to depend on heterosexual and cisgender individuals to advance their interests in elections, which means that the attitudes of the general public both directly and indirectly affect public policies. Contextual factors, such as the geographic distribution of the population density of SGD people, can result in differences in levels of acceptance. Policy makers are more likely to vote for gay rights when their constituencies have a larger share of same-sex couples, though this may be conditioned by local attitudes.

The majority of U.S. adults support nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people in employment, public accommodations, and housing and support transgender people being able to serve openly in the military. The public is more divided on such issues as gender identity protections in public accommodations, such as public restrooms, and businesses’ right to deny services to LGBT people because of religious belief. Personalizing sexual and gender diverse people when placing them in context for poll respondents—i.e., highlighting a shared identity unrelated to sexual orientation or gender identity—can bolster support for LGBT rights.

The presence of sexual and gender diverse elected officials affects SGD public policy adoption. “Out” LGBT elected officials often work to advance policies that are inclusive of sexual and gender diverse populations, but they make up a small minority of all elected officials. Policies can diffuse horizontally, when states and localities adopt policies similar to neighboring legislations, or vertically, when national organizations effect changes to state laws or states do so to localities. More inclusive laws and policies are perceived as a signal that society has changed to be less stigmatizing of SGD populations.

CONCLUSION 6-2: Tracking shifts in policies and public opinion is important to illuminate the policy environments for sexual and gender diverse populations and to understand the processes and consequences of legal and policy changes.

The well-being of SGD populations is affected not only by legal and political institutions and public attitudes, but also by structural factors, including structural stigma. There is now a growing body of evidence that structural stigma affects the health and well-being of people of diverse sexualities and genders.

Research using multiple methods has documented associations between structural stigma and well-being. The multiple dimensions of well-being across which the effects of structural stigma can be found include mental health (e.g., psychiatric diagnoses, suicide attempts, psychological distress); physiological stress response (e.g., cortisol reactivity); victimization experiences (e.g., hate crimes, homophobic bullying); and employment (e.g., employment discrimination).

CONCLUSION 6-3: Structural stigma is an important mechanism that contributes to inequalities for sexual and gender diverse populations across numerous domains that are essential for living healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives, including socioeconomic well-being, physical and mental health, and physical safety.

In looking at the effects of structural stigma, studies have begun identifying mediating pathways, such as stress and psychosocial mechanisms, but work is needed to understand whether other pathways (e.g., material and biological) underlie the established associations between structural stigma and the well-being of SGD people. Research is also needed to expand beyond the study of large social institutions and federal and state policies to include less-studied institutions, such as health care settings and criminal justice systems.

Big data sources may also provide insight on the ways structural stigma affects diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Research has been

conducted among adolescents, young adults, and adults, but it has not been conducted on how structural stigma develops and evolves over the life course. Furthermore, most structural stigma research has focused on gay men and lesbian women and has not considered intersectional characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and socioeconomic status, that are relevant to well-being. Also needed are studies that focus on less-represented SGD subgroups and consider the role of intersectionality in structural stigma. For this research, there are a number of data needs, including developing systems and methods that identify geographic indicators for SGD respondents (e.g., state or city of residence) and remove barriers in access to or use of such indicators in datasets.

CONCLUSION 6-4: Research on structural stigma has been hampered by the lack of available geographic data for sexual and gender diverse respondents and the absence of a centralized mechanism for longitudinally tracking the status and enforcement of laws and policies relevant to sexual and gender populations.

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Community and Civic Engagement

Sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations are composed of multiple communities and groups of people with intersecting identities, experiences, and oppressions. The cultural and social contexts that define these groups ultimately shape possibilities for civic and political engagement—what we call sociopolitical involvement—of SGD people (Harris, Battle, and Pastrana, 2018). Communities are composed of and influenced by a variety of actors: the social-ecological context explains the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors that affect and shape the conditions in which those actors exist.

Beginning more than a half century ago, SGD community organizations emerged and began to provide spaces for people not only to name and recognize their identities but also to establish venues and strategies for collective action toward visibility and, ultimately, social recognition and legal rights. These spaces, whether physical, virtual, or institutional, have been instrumental in providing the resources and the physical ability to convene for SGD communities. This chapter considers what community is while examining the ways that SGD communities claim, integrate, and negotiate spaces. It also includes a discussion of the effects that community and mobilization have on the lives and histories of SGD populations and explores how space is used as a tool for community building and mobilization.

THE NATURE OF SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

For SGD populations, community has long been an important way to mobilize a range of people with disparate experiences around a set of issues

and problems. As discussed throughout this report, SGD people in the United States face forms of oppression, discrimination, and violence because aspects of their gender identities, sexual identities, and expression do not conform to societal conventions and sexualities (Rubin, 1993; Spade, 2011; Warner, 2000). They often struggle with racial, gender, and class divisions, hierarchies, and exclusions. Communities serve as a means through which SGD people survive, withstand, and, in some cases, overcome these conditions.

The word “community” has been used so pervasively to describe numerous groups and sectors of people throughout the country that some scholars believe the value of its meaning has eroded (Joseph, 2007). “Community” is often invoked to describe sociopolitical movements across spectrums of race and ethnic, social, cultural, gender, and sexual identities and experiences. Yet communities are diverse and are forged around a myriad of experiences and consensus issues, rather than solely shared identities (Cohen, 1997, 1999).

SGD communities are made up of people from a variety of racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, political, regional, age, and ability groups (Joseph, 2007). Some communities with cross-cutting concerns come together and forge strategic connections to meet particular needs and address certain problems. These communities can be active for the long or short term, and they can experience cohesion and conflict, inclusion and exclusion, and affirmation and degradation all at the same time. Defining and understanding the role of community for SGD populations is complex and multidimensional. As other chapters in this report discuss, many SGD people experience socioeconomic deprivation: homelessness and housing instability, under- and unemployment, and institutional violence and discrimination. In this context, community becomes an important means of emotional, social, moral, and political support. In general, the role of community can be examined as three interconnected points: a form of public culture, a site of internal and external contests, and a key source of social and political support. Thus, community is both a site and a source of struggle, hierarchy, and liberation for SGD populations. Community serves as a source of belonging, value, affirmation, and collectivity, all of which are values and feelings associated with well-being.

Community psychologists emphasize the importance that community has on individuals’ sense of well-being and their need for relationships and relationship building (Coulombe and Krzesni, 2019). In fact, well-being has been defined as “a positive state of affairs, brought about by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of diverse objectives and subjective needs of individuals, relationships, organizations, and communities” (Prilleltensky, Prilleltensky, and Voorhees, 2016, p. 1; Coulombe and Krzesni, 2019). Scholars emphasize that social needs are satisfied by feelings of community, thus contributing not just to well-being but also to happiness (Davidson

and Cotter, 1991). For marginalized groups, communities not only contribute to their overall well-being, but also serve as a way to resist and survive the daily forms of oppression they face and a way to withstand and overcome rejection from families and communities of origin.

Communities may form around social and cultural identities, particularly if these identities are marginalized and contested, as is the case with SGD populations. The oppression that they experience—including housing and job discrimination, lack of access to health and medical care, and homophobic and transphobic violence by police (Arredondo and Suárez, 2019)—encourage community formation and mobilization. And even as communities have been a site of refuge, affirmation, and safety, they have also been targets of violence throughout history, as well as targets for surveillance and violence from people who are hostile to sexual and gender diversity.

Often, community and culture overlap or, at least, have notable intersections for many SGD people. According to cultural theorist George Yudice (2007), culture can be a way of life for people, a group, or humanity in general. Many scholars have described SGD communities as subcultures and have referred to larger sexual and gender diverse communities as cultural formations (Bailey, 2013; D’Emilio, 1983). Culture also overlaps with community in the creation of spaces and occasions for political, intellectual, creative, and artistic activities (Yudice, 2007) that celebrate, affirm, and enhance the lives of sexual and gender diverse people. There is a long history of creative endeavors among sexual and gender diverse populations, such as the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis—mid-20th century organizations that promoted visibility and acceptance for gay men and lesbian women, respectively (D’Emilio, 1983). These organizations produced publications that highlighted cultural works within these communities (D’Emilio, 1983; Gutterman, 2012). Another example is the Combahee River Collective, a group of Black lesbian feminists who in 1970 crafted the celebrated Combahee River Collective Statement that helped to shape contemporary Black feminist and queer studies, activism, and politics (Combahee River Collective, 1983).

Central to community formations for SGD people is access to public space. Contemporary understandings of what “public” includes are increasingly expanding to include everything from physical spaces to community online engagement, as well as all spaces of social and cultural convening in a given location. Public cultural events are also opportunities for meeting people for romantic, intimate, and sexual relations. Thus, public culture for SGD populations can be understood as occasions, spaces, and domains that enable people to come together to socialize, connect, engage, and, in some cases, create, affirm, and promote, either implicitly or explicitly, shared social identities, experiences, and locations.

Two of the most notable and celebrated moments of public culture and catalysts for the contemporary lesbian and gay liberation movement were the Compton Cafeteria riots in the Tenderloin district in San Francisco in 1966 (Stryker and Silverman, 2005) and the Stonewall rebellion in 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village in New York City (D’Emilio, 1983; Jagose, 1996). Both of these events were led by Black and Latinx transgender women, although their efforts were overshadowed by the white, cisgender gay men who participated (Snorton, 2018). Two very prominent figures in the liberation movement sparked by the Stonewall Riots were transgender and drag queen militants Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, who cofounded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) (Johnson and Rivera-Servera, 2016). The two activists started this organization to help young homeless drag queens find housing and other services. Though the actual diversity of the contemporary lesbian and gay liberation movement—across racial, sexual orientation, and gender axes—is often excluded from the popular narrative, the Compton and Stonewall uprisings are but two of the many examples of the work of SGD communities in fighting against inequalities and oppression. It is important to note that these exclusions from SGD histories coincide with race, gender, and class hierarchies that still affect SGD communities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE TO SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

“We’re here. We’re queer. Get used to it” was often chanted at LGBTQ festivals, events, and rallies in the 1980s and 1990s, not only as a message to heterosexual and cisgender populations but also as a message to SGD individuals to reaffirm their rights to be themselves, form communities, and take up space. In this context, space can be described as the means through which marginalized communities, particularly SGD populations, reimagine and remap spatial landscapes, domains, and “spheres that are livable under often unlivable conditions” (Bailey and Shabazz, 2014, p. 450). Space can be created both physically—through the construction of brick and mortar buildings and designated areas—and socially, through the mechanisms of social production. Space is a site of engagement, community formation, and mobilization (Shabazz, 2014). An individual’s engagement in multiple communities not only contributes greatly to social change but also helps foster feelings of belonging and connectedness. Such feelings of belonging are particularly important for marginalized groups and, in particular, those facing multiple forms of marginalization (Harris, Battle, and Pastrana, 2018).

Twentieth century queer activists believed “sexuality was constitutional to one’s identity, and that subscribing members were a discriminated minor-

ity” group in need of resources and support (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017). This idea helped shift the focus from discussions of sex and sexuality to broader notions of identity. The Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society are good historical examples because these organizations provided support, resources, and a sense of community for sexual and gender diverse people who sought increased visibility and acceptance after WWII (D’Emilio, 1983). In addition, the Daughters of Bilitis also provided physical space for lesbian women and other women with same-sex attractions to meet outside of bars, which were then frequently raided by law enforcement officials. *Transvestia*, the nation’s first transgender-specific magazine, first published in 1960, provided educational resources while also pushing for both the recognition of transgender identity and the decriminalization of non-binary dress. In part influenced by the social movements of the 1950s and 1960s, these community movements were motivated by the need for SGD groups to take up space and be seen. In this context, pivotal moments in the effort to combat SGD oppression, like the Compton riot and the Stonewall uprising, can be seen as violent responses by authorities and others to prevent SGD people from convening and taking up space.

Activism and political mobilization in SGD communities continued throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, and it contributed to the rise in HIV/AIDS activism in LGBTQ+ communities. As the decades progressed, other struggles included the fight for equal employment opportunities and housing, the opportunity to serve openly in the military, the striking down of anti-sodomy laws, the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015, and the 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision that confirmed LGBT protections from employment discrimination in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Although landmark achievements have been made, groups continue to fight for explicit comprehensive nondiscrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. In addition, activism is a more directly intersectional approach to promoting social justice around issues of race, disability, social class, immigration, and aging.

Physical Space

Neighborhoods with large concentrations of SGD people, and businesses therein that cater to them as residents and consumers, are informally known as gayborhoods or gay villages—areas and communities that are considered to be safe spaces for SGD people (Hanhardt, 2013). Gayborhoods are often found in urban communities and are often the center of SGD communities and nightlife. Gay urban enclaves began to emerge shortly after WWII, when queer women and men were discharged from the armed services and sought out areas that were generally considered more

tolerant to SGD people (Ghaziani, 2014). Today, these neighborhoods tend to consist primarily of and cater to white gay males.¹

Gayborhoods provide an important space not only for those who live there but also for those who use them as a refuge from the homophobia they may experience in their daily lives and communities (Gray, 2009). Convening places for SGD populations, such as bookstores, coffee shops, restaurants, bars, clubs, and bathhouses, have been a defining feature of gayborhoods. Each of these spaces has been especially popular during particular historical moments. For example, gay bathhouses were popular in the 1970s but declined in popularity when they were banned due to fears of HIV in the 1980s. Gay clubs also declined in popularity in the early 1980s, only to regain popularity in the 1990s and to again decrease in popularity in the late-2000s due, in large part, to the rise in social media and online dating. Spaces for public convening and culture for social and sexual activities for SGD people, such as lesbian and gay clubs, have continued to diminish (Oswin, 2008). Even queer-friendly vacation spaces, or “gaycation” communities, have seen a decline (Nash, 2005, 2006; Oswin, 2008). Nonetheless, these gayborhoods have provided space for queer communities—at home and even on vacation—where they have not only had a sense of safety and protection but also a real sense of community. As a result of COVID-19, there is a further decline in gay spaces, especially clubs and restaurants, many of which may never reopen (Barreira, 2020). In fact, the pandemic forced queer spaces to again reinvent themselves in an era of social distancing, moving online and even having virtual clubs and DJed Zoom sessions (Kornhaber, 2020).

In addition to bars, clubs, restaurants, and bookshops, an important feature of gayborhoods, many of which face high rental costs and operating expenses, are LGBTQ+ community centers. Such centers have been a staple in SGD communities for decades, originally serving as a space for social gathering and to provide welcome space for people of all ages. Most major cities and urban and many suburban areas have LGBTQ+ community centers (Conradson, 2003), which typically provide a variety of resources that include health services and HIV testing; workshops on the home buying process; and support groups and programs geared toward small communities and different stages of the life course. In addition to community centers, SGD groups also hold gatherings in spaces that are not necessarily LGBTQ+ focused, such as churches and schools.

¹Examples include the Castro in San Francisco; West Hollywood in Los Angeles; Chelsea in New York City; Boystown in Chicago; Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C.; the Short North in Columbus, Ohio; Midtown in Atlanta; and the Melrose District in Phoenix. There are comparatively fewer lesbian districts in urban centers, such as Park Slope in Brooklyn and Jamaica Plain in Boston.

The diminishment of public spaces for SGD people noted above is partly the result of restructuring and gentrification of neighborhoods in many cities (McGlotton, 2013). As urban communities have become increasingly gentrified, rental and ownership costs and taxes have increased, as have the costs of living in and operating businesses in them. This has forced out many LGBTQ+-owned businesses and individuals (Nero, 2005). Issues of race, class, and gender have prevented many SGD people from accessing the political, social, and economic resources and spaces in gayborhoods (Giesecking, 2013). This has especially been the case for lesbian and queer women, who have seen a sharp decline in public spaces for meeting and convening, such as bookshops, cafes, bars, and clubs (Podmore, 2006).

These changes have had an especially negative impact on queer bars and clubs. Sociologist Greggor Mattson found that between 1997 and 2017, 33 percent of gay bars closed.² In addition, there has been an increase in the heterosexual appropriation of queer spaces, such as heterosexual women who hold their bridal and bachelorette parties in what are generally gay male spaces (Casey, 2004).³

Although research on gayborhoods and on queer spaces has primarily focused on gay men, studies have documented the complicated history that lesbian women and women in general have had in claiming space in urban areas (Giesecking, 2013). In many instances, women who identified as lesbian and queer did not have access to the political, economic, and social capital enjoyed by their gay male counterparts (Adler and Brenner, 1992; Rothenberg, 1995). Throughout history, there are examples of lesbian women responding to that lack of political control by seeking out separate living environments, often in rural settings such as communes.⁴ Though the number of these communities is diminishing as their residents age, these spaces have been important in providing opportunity for networking, political mobilization, and socializing (Valentine, 1993). In more urban and suburban communities, particularly among women of color, now that the lesbian and feminist bookstores and other more traditional forms of convening have closed (Liddle, 2005) there has been an increase in these women attending private parties and social gatherings at people's homes and in rented spaces (Moore, 2011).

There are arguments for the continued need and relevancy of the gayborhood (Ghaziani, 2014), but others suggest that, with increased acceptance of homosexuality, these gay-specific communities are no longer

²See <https://greggormattson.com/2017/06/13/who-needs-gay-bars-summer-2017-tour/>.

³See <https://www.out.com/lifestyle/2016/4/11/bridal-party-problems-how-bachelorettes-are-ruining-gay-nightlife>.

⁴See <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/24/style/womyns-land-movement-lesbian-communities.html>.

necessary (Doan and Higgins, 2011). Gayborhoods have been criticized for being exclusionary and even for being heteronormative. Some of the controversies about gayborhoods are complicated by tense racial histories, as many of these neighborhoods were once communities of color that have since been gentrified by white LGBTQ+ people (Rosenberg, 2016). Most gayborhoods are white and predominately gay male spaces that have not historically been welcoming to homeless people, poor women, people of color, transgender people, or gender-nonconforming people who come to these neighborhoods seeking services, support, and a sense of community (Rosenberg, 2016). Rosenberg notes: “In some gay villages, those who challenge and diminish politics of respectable normativity have often been openly and deliberately targeted for expulsion” through the community policing of queer spaces (2016, p. 137). In many of these spaces, such as Christopher Street in the West Village of New York City, the mere congregating of queer and transgender youth of color has been heavily policed by white SGD adults in the community (Daniel-McCarter, 2012; Namaste, 2000).

Many spaces of gay consumption and convening are spaces of bounded exclusions based on race and gender, catering to mostly white gay men with socioeconomic privilege and maintaining prejudices against other sexual minorities (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Phelan, 2001). Because access to space to participate in public culture is influenced by the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and social class, working class and poor SGD people of color have been disproportionately affected by this shift in the spatial politics of cities. And because public spaces for SGD populations are often situated in segregated neighborhoods, SGD communities of color suffer “spatial marginalization” (Sibley, 1995; Wilkins, 2000). Spatial marginalization is a term that describes how SGD people of color are denied access to public spaces due to their race, gender, or sexual identities or the socially transgressive practices in which they engage (Bailey and Shabazz, 2014; Nero, 2005). And as noted above, many SGD communities of color experience race and gender exclusion within the larger SGD community.

Social Space

Festivals and group celebrations are an important part of LGBTQ+ culture (Morris, 2005). Lesbian and feminist festivals date back to the mid-1970s and include large annual gatherings, such as the Michigan Womyn’s Festival, also known as MichFest (1976–2015); Lilith Fair, a traveling musical festival featuring all women-identified performers (1997–1999); and Dinah Shore, the Palm Springs, California, party surrounding a tennis tournament of the same name that started in 1991 and continues to attract lesbian women from around the nation and around the world.

The most well-known annual LGBTQ+ celebrations that take place in most large cities are LGBTQ+ pride events; see Box 7-1. In looking at these celebrations, however, it is important to note that most of the cultural, political, and scholarly emphasis on SGD populations has been about upper- and middle-class white SGD people living in urban centers. As one of the most conspicuous sites of SGD expression, affirmation, and advocacy, LGBTQ+ pride celebrations in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago are widely known and well attended (McFarland Bruce, 2016), but there are now LGBTQ+ pride events in every major city throughout the United States, and they usually draw thousands of people to parades and multiday events throughout the year.

Although there is notably less research on the topic, discrimination and self-segregation are common within queer spaces, as many of these spaces explicitly and implicitly exclude transgender and gender diverse populations, people of color, immigrants (Epstein and Carillo, 2014), and those at their intersections. For example, although they reject the notion that they are transphobic, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was the object of intense backlash and a boycott from activists and community members after it actively excluded transgender women. The festival founder, Lisa Vogel, argued for a "womyn-born womyn" space, stating, "I believe in the integrity of autonomous space used to gather and celebrate for any group, whether that autonomous space is defined by age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, gender, class, or any other identity."⁵

Similarly, many LGBTQ+ pride events are racially self-segregated. White SGD people garner far more popular attention, sociopolitical influence, and financial resources (i.e., corporate sponsorship) than other groups (Battle et al., 2002; McFarland Bruce, 2016). In many ways, the social privilege afforded to white SGD people in various domains is brought to bear at majority white LGBTQ+ pride celebrations. In some cases, LGBTQ+ pride event leadership and planning committees struggle to be racial and ethnically inclusive, and SGD people of color have challenged these planning committees to include people of color. Some SGD people stage protests at LGBTQ+ pride events to underscore the exclusion. At the 2017 Phoenix, Arizona, LGBTQ+ pride celebration, Trans Queer Pueblo, a community-based migrant and LGBTQ+ organization, carried a banner that prominently displayed the words "No Justice, No Pride" (Cashman, 2019).

There are several LGBTQ+ pride events in most major U.S. cities for other SGD subgroups, including youth, Latinx, Asian, and Native American and Indigenous groups. These and other unique LGBTQ+ events provide space to convene for many SGD people who have been excluded from or

⁵Excerpted from https://web.archive.org/web/20150330195141/http://michfest.com/letter-to-the-community-4_11_13/.

BOX 7-1
Black Pride Celebrations

According to Dwayne Jenkins, coordinator of Nashville Black Pride, “pride events are an opportunity for us to celebrate the life and culture of Black LGBT people.”* Since the very first Black pride celebration in 1990 in Washington, D.C., Black pride events have served as a means through which some Black LGBT people come together and affirm their identities and experiences and create community. Black LGBTQ+ community formations require a kind of work, or what cultural historian Robin D. G. Kelley (2008) calls cultural labor, which sustains Black LGBT communities in the face of simultaneous forms of racial, socioeconomic, gender, and sexual marginalization and exclusion. Black pride celebrations have been one of a very few ways that Black LGBT people can collectively contend with and challenge their current conditions and contemplate ways to alter them.

There are more than twenty-five Black pride celebrations held annually, for Black LGBT people not only to celebrate and affirm their non-normative gender and sexual identities, but to contemplate issues that disproportionately affect them.* These issues include, but are not limited to, HIV/AIDS and other health disparities, education, employment, poverty, and social justice. For instance, the Hotter than July Black Pride celebration in Detroit has been referred to by event co-organizer Curtis Lipscomb as a social justice rally.** Unlike white LGBT pride celebrations that always include a parade, Black pride events typically do not include a parade, which may be reflective of the notion that Black SGD people do not come out and publicly proclaim queer gender and sexual identities at the same rate or in the same manner as do white SGD people. Rather, the celebrations, which include both old and young people, consist of such activities as candlelight vigils to commemorate people who have died, conferences, boat rides, dances, cookouts, brunches, church services, and ball events.

Black SGD people are often excluded from discourses on and political advocacy for rights and social equity for both LGBT people on the one hand and Black people on the other. Notably, simultaneous forms of oppression and exclusion contribute to Black gay men and transgender women’s disproportionate representation in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as their experiences with substance abuse, homelessness, and gender and sexual violence. In many ways, as a public cultural practice, Black pride celebrations mitigate feelings of isolation and low self-worth that some Black LGBTQ+ people experience.

*From an interview with Jasmyne Cannick, “Celebrating Black Gay Prides,” on National Public Radio, June 9, 2005.

**See <http://www.uixdetroit.com/people/curtislipscomb.aspx>.

marginalized within mainstream SGD communities. Phoenix is said to hold the largest Latinx LGBTQ+ pride event in the country, and there are also events in Dallas and other cities with large Latinx SGD populations.

Another SGD cultural phenomenon is the ballroom culture. Sometimes referred to as the house/ball community, contemporary ballroom culture

involves Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ people, as well as straight people (Arnold and Bailey, 2009; Bailey, 2011, 2013). Three inextricable dimensions constitute the social world of ballroom culture: the gender system, houses, and balls. Although these are three separate facets of the ballroom culture, they are strongly interconnected; there are no houses without balls and no balls without houses.

First popularized by Jennie Livingstone's documentary film *Paris is Burning* (1990), ballroom culture has expanded throughout the globe in both presence and popularity. Although dimensions of ballroom culture date back to the early 20th century, the contemporary ballroom scene started in the 1960s in Harlem, New York. One of the first houses was the legendary House of LeBeija in Harlem, founded in 1970. The award-winning FX Network TV television series "Pose" is based on the ballroom community.

The gender system is a collection of six gender and sexual identities that include butch queens (gay men), femme queens (transgender women), butches (transgender men), butch queens up in drag (gay men who perform as women), and cisgender men and women. The gender system organizes the gender and sexual relations in houses and the familial (kinship) structures (Bailey, 2011). Houses consist of mothers, fathers, children, and, in many cases, an entire lineage of members who are socially connected with the ballroom community. In ballroom culture, parent-child relationships are not based on chronological age or actual blood relationships; rather, members become (or are appointed) parents of houses based on their success at walking balls (winning trophies and cash prizes) and their experience and prestige in the ballroom scene. Parents of ballroom houses provide social support, guidance, and nurturing for their house members, as well as others in the larger ballroom community. It is well known in ballroom culture that, with few exceptions, there are no houses without balls and no balls without houses. Another important role that parents play is that they train their house members (children) to compete successfully at balls.

Balls are the ritualized events that houses produce, and they draw participants from throughout North America. Although the number and kinds of categories of competition abound, most categories are based on performative gender and sexual categories, vogue and theatrical performance, and the effective presentation of fashion and physical attributes (Bailey, 2011, 2013). People participate and compete on behalf of their house or as free agents known as "007s."

For the most part, the ballroom culture has been a community consisting of working class and poor SGD people of color who have been ostracized from or marginalized within their families and communities of origin because of their non-normative genders and sexualities. For SGD populations of color, ballroom culture has been a space and practice of

social support, service, love, and critique (Bailey, 2013). In other places throughout the world in which ballroom practices have been adopted, it has been by people and communities who are marginalized in their societies. It is important to note that ballroom is a separate autonomous community formation that is highly stigmatized in the larger Black LGBT community; this situation highlights the complexity and multidimensionality of Black LGBT communities.

Virtual Space

The issues that are significant in the physical world can also be relevant in virtual worlds. Online communities can provide safe spaces for people to explore their identities and express themselves authentically, often with others who share their experiences. This type of safe space can be especially important for people who feel alienated or alone in their local communities or do not have access to in-person resources because of geographic barriers, such as those living in rural communities (Hardy, 2019). SGD youth report using online communities primarily to find peer support, and they are more likely than their non-LGBT peers to be friends with people they initially met online (Ybarra et al., 2015). SGD adults use online communities primarily to find sexual and romantic partners (Baams et al., 2011). Lesbian women and gay men are more likely to meet their partners online than are their heterosexual counterparts (Rosenfeld and Thomas, 2012).

Online communities sometimes emerge out of needs for information, connection, and support among less-visible and marginalized SGD groups. The Asexual Visibility and Education Network⁶ provides information on and support around asexuality (Robbins, Low, and Query, 2016), and the InterACT website maintains a list of intersex community and advocacy organization sites in multiple countries.⁷ There are also online communities for supporting LGBTQ+ people's interactions with medical professionals, including for family planning, HIV, and cancer support (Holland, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Peterson, 2009). In addition, many SGD people create their own online communities so they can participate safely in activities that have traditionally excluded minority populations, such as Black SGD women creating communities on the online video gaming platform Xbox One (Gray, 2018).

Intersex people have relied on the internet to connect with each other for both support and social change since the 1990s. Although the practice of nondisclosure of medical information about intersex traits was intended to protect children from stigma and gender uncertainty, a consequence was

⁶See www.asexuality.org.

⁷See <https://interactadvocates.org/resources/intersex-organizations/>.

to isolate people with intersex traits from each other. When people were informed about their medical history, they were typically told “that their anatomical differences were extremely rare and that they were unlikely to ever meet another person with a similar anatomical trait” (Davis and Preves, 2017, p. 27).

When Bo Laurent, then writing under the name of Cheryl Chase, founded the Intersex Society of North America,⁸ the organization became the first important hub for intersex communities, providing sociohistorical and health resources to advance the cause of changing medical practice. Around the same time, organizations like the Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome Support Group (now InterConnect) and Bodies Like Ours coalesced with the help of the internet to provide support to people with intersex traits. Through chat rooms, email circles, and message boards, intersex people found an antidote to secrecy and isolation, sharing stories with each other and finding validation and community. Some of these groups, like InterConnect, hosted and continue to host annual in-person meetings, in addition to maintaining online connection throughout the year. The second generation of online communities sprang up with the advent of social media, especially Facebook, where virtually every intersex advocacy and support organization has a presence (Davis and Preves, 2017). Social media has also been a crucial means of raising intersex visibility, with platforms like Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram bringing millions of views to videos like “What it Means to Be Intersex” (Valentine, Spade, and Trautner, 2020).⁹

While SGD populations derive many benefits from online communities, negative interactions like online bullying, harassment, and discrimination also occur. Despite an overall sense of greater social safety in online communities than in real-world interactions, almost one-half of LGBTQ+ youth report being bullied online (Kosciw et al., 2017). Occasionally, SGD groups discriminate against one another by spreading exclusionary and racist rhetoric about less-prominent SGD populations (Crowley, 2010). The accessibility of the internet has also caused alarm over privacy concerns. Gay and bisexual men are more likely than heterosexual women and men to be victims of revenge porn (i.e., the nonconsensual sharing of nude or seminude photographs) (Waldman, 2019). Additionally, there have been numerous reports of violent predators using social media dating to lure SGD individuals into unsafe or potentially fatal situations.¹⁰

⁸See <https://isna.org/faq/history/>.

⁹See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAUDKEI4QKI>.

¹⁰See <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/michigan-man-charged-grindr-slaying-n1109596> and <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/dallas-men-charged-hate-crimes-kidnapping-and-conspiracy-after-targeting-gay-men-violent>.

SGD populations can also be stigmatized online because of the design of certain websites. For instance, recent reports show that YouTube has been demonetizing videos from some SGD users because of an algorithm that appears to flag words like “gay” or “transgender” as adult content, thereby decreasing advertisement opportunities.¹¹ There are also reports of advertisements from anti-LGBTQ groups being added to videos with LGBTQ content.¹² Tumblr, a popular website previously known for its openness and inclusivity, banned all adult content in 2018, which disproportionately affected LGBTQ people, especially transgender and non-binary people. The site’s efforts to flag and remove adult content removed blogs maintained by transgender and non-binary individuals who documented their transitions and other personal, social, and medical experiences meant to be informative to their peers (Haimson et al., 2019).

Understanding the interactions between online and real-world communities can help to maximize the benefits that SGD populations can gain from online communities while minimizing the negative outcomes. There is also a need for the technology industry to understand the needs of SGD populations in order to avoid creating technology that can lead to discrimination, harassment, and violence. Thus, although online communities are frequently charged with helping to destroy the bars, bookstores, clubs, and other spaces that have been a mainstay of SGD communities, these online communities have helped to redefine the meaning and the uses of space for SGD people. They provide a safe space in which SGD people are able to increase their social networks and access information and resources relevant to their issues, concerns, and identities.

Space in Institutions

Social institutions and systems present particular challenges for SGD populations, whose identities and presentations may clash with dominant codes and mores. In this section, we consider the role of community in efforts to make space within or to transform institutions to serve the needs of SGD individuals in religious, health care, educational, and political institutions.

Religious Institutions

The role that churches play among communities of SGD people is multifaceted and complex. In many ways, the relationship can be a mixture of

¹¹ See <https://www.forbes.com/sites/meganhills1/2018/06/04/youtube-anti-lgbt-ads/#5b85ff74f734>.

¹² See <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2018/07/02/youtube-apologizes-lgbtq-creators-restrictions-demonetization/751712002>.

affirmation, antagonism, and indifference. This section focuses primarily on Christian religious institutions as the dominant religion in the United States, though a considerable number of SGD people belong to other religions and engage in other spiritual practices.

The central role that religious institutions play in the lives of SGD populations is widely recognized, as is the fact that many of those people have antagonistic experiences in non-affirming religious institutions (Bailey and Richardson, 2019; Wilcox, 2003). Queer-antagonistic and non-open-and-affirming religious institutions often police the boundaries of gender and sexuality within communities (Bailey and Richardson, 2019). Gibbs and Goldbach's (2015) qualitative study of religious and sexual identity conflict, internalized homophobia, and suicidality among LGBT young adults aged 18–24 found that many of them reported experiencing discrimination and internalized homophobia in non-affirming religious contexts. Despite this, many SGD people belong to queer-antagonistic churches (Talvacchia, Pettinger, and Larrimore, 2015). Some of them maintain an ambivalent relationship to religious institutions while continuing to rely on them for spiritual, theological, social, and emotional support. Some SGD people challenge antagonistic and exclusionary religious groups to be open and affirming; others have separated from these religious institutions, or they have started their own SGD-accepting religious institutions.

There are several kinds of mostly Christian churches that are open to or welcome SGD populations. Scheitle, Merino, and Moore (2010) define open and affirming churches as religious denominations, institutions, or programs in which member congregations signal their acceptance of all gender identities and sexual orientations (Scheitle, Merino, and Moore, 2010; Wilcox, 2003). There are churches that have had an official designation and others that function as open on an informal basis. Open and affirming churches allow for SGD people to participate in a radically inclusive theology and, in this way, to obtain social support from clergy and fellow congregants. These churches also allow congregants to reconcile conflicts they may have felt between their theology and their sexual and gender identities and experiences (Campbell, Skovdal, and Gibbs, 2011; McQueeny, 2009).

The United Church of Christ (UCC) was one of the first denominations to openly welcome LGBTQ+ people. In 1985, the general synod of the UCC called on the congregation to adopt a nondiscrimination policy and a covenant of openness and affirmation of people who are LGBTQ+ (Scheitle, Merino, and Moore, 2010; United Church of Christ Coalition for LGBT Concerns, 2005; Wilcox, 2003). Thus, the UCC churches are known as open and affirming churches. Other denominations are referred to as gay- and lesbian-friendly congregations (Scheitle, Merino, and Moore, 2010; Wilcox, 2003).

SGD people have also created LGBTQ+-designated religious spaces. These churches are preferred by some SGD people because they draw from a theology that emphasizes the lived experiences of SGD people and situates these experiences in their religious and spiritual teachings (Talvacchia, Pettinger, and Larrimore, 2015). The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) is a denomination whose mission is to minister to SGD people (Wilcox, 2003). Troy Perry, the founder of the first UFMCC congregation in Los Angeles in 1968, believed that this church should serve “those seeking and celebrating the integration of their spirituality and sexuality” (Wilcox, 2003, p. 18). In 1982, Carl Bean, a former Motown and gospel singer, met with worshipers at his Los Angeles home and later founded Unity Fellowship Church, the first Black LGBTQ denomination.¹³ Unity, with churches throughout the country, is not only the first and only Black gay denomination; it also identifies as a social movement working to respond to both the spiritual and emotional needs of congregants and their physical needs (Harris, 2014).

Much of the discussion about SGD people and religion has focused on Christianity, which has led to presumptions that other religions are not as inclusive. At a seminar entitled “Amplifying Visibility and Increasing Capacity for Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations,”¹⁴ Khadija Kahn (Muslim Youth Leadership Council at Advocates for Youth) noted that the stereotype that Islam is inherently anti-LGBTQ and anti-woman is dangerous and untrue. LGBT Muslims are often viewed as victims trapped in a religious institution that is antagonistic toward SGD people. However, there is a growing community of LGBT people who are Muslims and who resist the stereotype that LGBT Muslims are oppressed, while also challenging the oppression and exclusion of LGBT people in Islam (al-Haqq Kugle, 2014).

There are several supportive groups in the country that provide safe spaces for SGD Muslims, such as Queer Muslims of Boston, a Facebook group for the Muslim Alliance for Gender and Sexual Diversity, and Arabian Nights, a queer Middle Eastern group in Michigan (Opalewski, 2017). Because LGBT Muslims are “a minority within a minority within a minority,” they need to build bridges across gender, sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious and secular differences (al-Haqq Kugle, 2014, p. 156). While working to create inclusion within Islam, LGBT Muslims are also working with other minority communities to provide supportive and safe spaces outside of conventional spaces of Islamic practices.

Since SGD people are coming out at younger ages, they are being exposed to a variety of challenges at earlier ages. Kahn noted at the seminar

¹³See <https://ufcmlife.org/>.

¹⁴The seminar was held at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine in August 2019; see Appendix B for the full agenda.

that young LGBTQ+ Muslims face a range of challenges related to homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, relationship violence, immigration, the “Muslim ban,” stigma around HIV, and many other issues. She said that LGBTQ+ Muslims between the ages 14 and 24 are pivotal to the Islamic activist movement.

Institutionalized religion is not the only means through which SGD people engage in spirituality. Many of them create religious and spiritual spaces that are more in alignment with their cultural identities and are not institutionalized. Some of these practices allow members to atone for the harm that institutionalized religions have done to their ancestors (e.g., the church’s role in slavery) while also creating a space to affirm SGD identities.

There are a number of Indigenous, Native American, and other cultural spiritual practices that are not formally associated with institutions or traditional denominations in the United States. For example, as discussed in Chapter 1, among some Native American tribes the term “Two Spirit” refers to a gender and sexual identity that emphasizes spirituality and downplays the homosexual persona (Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, 1997). Within such a cultural context, the spiritual is not only viewed as inseparable from gender and sexuality; it also expands the gender and sexual possibilities that members can take up (Lane, 1997). Thus, Two Spirit identity is viewed as consistent with Native American spirituality, not outside of it. This is a departure from dominant notions of LGBT identity.

Several groups of SGD worshipers throughout the United States draw from and mix traditional African religious practices, such as Candomblé, Santería, and Vodou, shaping the practices to fit their context and conditions (Matory, 2009; Strongman, 2019). These practices recognize that the binarisms that underpin sex, gender, and sexuality categories of identities are a result of settler colonialism and do not reflect traditional African spiritual systems (Jolivet, 2016; Strongman, 2019). These African diasporic religious practices, like Native American spiritual practices, include “the commingling of the human and the divine” to produce identities and experiences in which gender is not dictated by assigned sex at birth (Strongman, 2019, p. 2). This view also speaks to sexual fluidity, wherein heterosexuality is neither the only sexuality nor is it mandatory.

Health Care Institutions

This section examines the role of community in raising awareness around key health issues for SGD populations, such as HIV/AIDS (access to health care is discussed in Chapter 12). Community connectedness has been shown to help SGD people address health disparities by connecting them to important resources. For example, Hussen and colleagues (2018) found that community organizations foster shared understanding and build

social capital among Black gay and bisexual men living with HIV, which can facilitate more positive outcomes at the individual, social, and community levels.

A major impediment to the struggle for health and access to health care for LGBT people, people with intersex traits, and other SGD populations has been the social construction, medicalization, and pathologization of sexual and gender diversity (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017). Ironically, it was the early medicalization and pathologization of same-sex sexual behavior and gender nonconformity that caused health organizations and agencies to overlook the unique health issues and disparities facing SGD communities, especially those who are among the most marginalized in those communities—people of color, transgender individuals, undocumented immigrants, and those living in poverty—for whom intersecting structural oppressions exacerbate many of the health concerns they face.

Social constructionism (see Chapter 2) argues that societies and cultures inform how people perceive and understand their social world (Lupton, 2000). Just as sexuality, race, and gender identity are socially constructed, so too are understandings of health, illness, and death (Brown, 1995). Medical professionals and institutions shape the ways in which health, illness, and the body are defined, and they also helped define and medicalize same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria as health issues in need of medical intervention.

In the early 1970s, activists focused their efforts on encouraging health care professionals to declassify “homosexuality” as a mental illness. They succeeded in these efforts in 1973; however, Martos, Wilson, and Meyer (2017) describe the split that occurred between LGB and transgender organizations and groups when the diagnosis of “gender identity disorder” appeared in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1980. The 1970s also saw an increase in the number of organizations dedicated to providing support, resources, and community to LGBT people, with more than 1,000 LGBT organizations emerging during that time (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017).

Organizations also began to consider the unique issues facing SGD communities with the publication of a chapter on lesbian health in the second edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in 1973. Soon, organizations providing resources and support for SGD groups also began to offer alternative access to health information resources, and this later included medical care. With more people coming out and seeking community, LGBT urban enclaves grew, and some health care organizations responded to a shift in local demographics by beginning to offer support for SGD patient populations. For example, Fenway Health, the nation’s oldest LGBT-focused health center, was founded in 1971 in Boston not as an LGBT clinic but as a sexual health clinic that, due to demographic shifts, gained expertise in providing

health care services and treatment to LGBT patients. Like Fenway Health, other urban health centers began to cater more toward SGD patient populations, providing such services as mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and sexual health care in safe and LGBT-affirming environments. By the mid-1980s, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force estimated that there were “over 100 clinics and medical service programs and over 300 counseling and mental health programs, with services ranging from testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infection to counseling and care of substance users, that were openly LGBT friendly and accepting” (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017).

The increasing number of HIV infections and the high rate of HIV-related deaths among gay and bisexual men and transgender women changed the nature of LGBT community mobilization and activism. Access to health care education, resources, and services became an issue of life or death throughout the 1980s, as LGBT and AIDS activists pressured government, religious, and health care leaders for support and services. These activists and organizations “leveraged the health implications of HIV/AIDS to raise awareness about such issues as domestic partnerships, access to the sick and dying, inheritance, and housing” (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017). As rates of HIV began to increase, more LGBT community centers and groups began to focus on policies, funding, and programs to provide HIV testing, prevention, and treatment, and this also bolstered efforts to connect LGBT communities with a wide range of health care services. Founded in 1999 by Black gay AIDS activist Phill Wilson, the Black AIDS Institute in Los Angeles is an example of a community-based organization created to address a health crisis that disproportionately impacted Black people (particularly Black gay men at that time) in a time of inadequate responses by government health agencies (Wilson, 2020).

However, just as transgender and gender-nonconforming people were excluded from much of the LGB activism taking place during the 1980s, cisgender women similarly faced sexism and misogyny among AIDS activists and the larger LGBT movement. For example, some scholars argue that sexism played a decisive role in the eventual decline of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) Movement in the 1990s (Gould, 2009).

The first LGBT community health center to be recognized as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) by the Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Primary Health Care was Baltimore’s Chase Brexton in 2002, and several more have since been recognized, including Fenway Health, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, New York City’s Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, Philadelphia’s Mazzoni Center, and Washington, D.C.’s Whitman-Walker Health. The FQHC designation ensures federal funding and reimbursement for health services provided by these health centers (Martos, Wilson, and Meyer, 2017).

Although these health centers and many more organizations across the country are addressing health and wellness among SGD populations, many LGBTQ people still experience homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in health care settings. And too many LGBTQ people of color continue to experience health disparities and a disproportionate representation in the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Bailey and Bost, 2020). As a result, these communities often seek out support from LGBTQ-specific health care organizations or from support groups in religious organizations, such as HIV/AIDS support groups in some Black churches; breast cancer support groups for LGB women; transgender support groups; and other in-person and online communities dedicated to issues such as domestic violence and mental health. More recently, some studies have noted increased levels of acceptance for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in health care settings (Macapagal, Bhatia, and Green, 2016). Nonetheless, differences in health care access, use, and experiences among LGBTQ populations, particularly LGBTQ people of color, continue to affect patients' experiences with health care and feelings of acceptance in medical settings (Macapagal, Bhatia, and Green, 2016).

Educational Institutions

As a direct result of the activism of LGBTQ+ faculty, students, staff, and their allies, colleges and universities have increased services for SGD populations in recent years. Many have developed LGTBQ+ resource centers that offer community for SGD people on campus and provide space for gay-straight alliances to meet. For some SGD students these centers provide emotional, social, and academic support, shaping and improving the quality of their experiences in colleges and universities (see Chapter 9). However, many students, faculty, and staff may have limited access to these opportunities (Duran, Blockett, and Nicolasso, 2020).

Traditional campus social groups and organizations can be cis-normative and heteronormative, and in some cases, like sororities and fraternities, they can exclude SGD people because of explicit and implicit expectations of adherences to traditional gender and sexual norms. In some places, SGD students have responded to these forms of exclusion by creating their own societies, fraternities, and sororities to provide the opportunity for SGD students to experience social support throughout their education and beyond. More broadly, many SGD student populations create “counterspaces” (Blockett, 2017), in which they can come together to create alternatives for themselves when their college or university is either unable or unwilling to create spaces and resources that are inclusive, affirming, and safe for them.

Not all SGD groups feel welcomed and affirmed at LGBTQ+ resource centers. While the stated aims of these centers center around inclusion, they also produce what is experienced as “colorblind” politics for some groups

(Bailey and Richardson, 2019; Blockett, 2017). The centers may not challenge the host institution's views around racism, homophobia, and transphobia; rather, they do the intellectual and political labor of respectability and normativity at the university by creating an inclusive environment within the larger, less-inclusive environment. As these LGBTQ+ organizations become institutionalized, they often make tradeoffs to be sustained in historically conservative host institutions and so have difficulty creating and sustaining fully inclusive environments and spaces for a diverse range of SGD students and others on campus.

Although most SGD students struggle to find inclusive and safe spaces in colleges and universities, SGD populations of color face greater challenges because of the interconnected oppressions of race, gender, and sexuality. SGD students have to navigate a range of social issues at colleges and universities, and many of them find it difficult to form community around gender and sexuality alone, to the exclusion of their racial and cultural identities (Blockett, 2017). At the same time, many SGD students of color do not feel fully included in their racial and cultural communities of origin. Institutions of higher education have often failed to create and facilitate the conditions under which SGD students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds can feel supported, affirmed, and included in the classroom and, more broadly, in campus life.

CIVIC AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Understanding the sociopolitical engagement of SGD populations is important to understanding patterns of resilience among historically stigmatized populations (Bruce, Harper, and Bauermeister, 2015). Engaging in political affairs is one source of resilience for SGD communities. This section considers how SGD groups engage in political and civic affairs, how they create their own space when not invited, and how they transform political spaces.

Under previous presidential administrations, LGBTQ+ rights and protections at the federal level had gained strong support in the public sector, with few exceptions. While progress continues to be made in sectors such as employment, legal rights and protections for SGD people in other domains have been rapidly rolled back. While a more detailed discussion on the legal and political challenges confronting SGD populations is taken up elsewhere in this report, this chapter considers how SGD communities help to mitigate some of the harm they experience from legal setbacks through creation and participation in public culture and their sociopolitical involvement.

There are many ways people may engage in formal political institutions, including donating money to campaigns, electioneering for candidates or issues, and attending rallies or protests. The civic and political

engagement of SGD people is multidimensional and multifaceted, and studies show that lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults tend to be more civically and politically engaged than heterosexual adults (Egan, Edelman, and Sherrill, 2008; Flores, 2019). They have higher rates of discussing politics online, contacting government officials, donating to campaigns, attending protests and rallies, and volunteering on campaigns than non-LGBT people (Flores, 2019). Studies suggest SGD people are slightly more certain that they are registered to vote than cisgender, heterosexual people (Bowers and Whitley, 2020; James et al., 2016; Pew Research Center, 2013).

Data from the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey suggest that 76 percent of transgender people are registered to vote, compared with 65 percent of the adult population (James et al., 2016). From probability-based surveys, the Pew Research Center (2013) found that 77 percent of LGBT people are registered to vote, and Mallory (2019) found that about 79 percent of LGBT people are registered to vote; both numbers are less than the 88 percent of the general population that is registered to vote (Goldmacher, 2016). However, information is limited regarding registration rates from nationally representative studies of SGD populations that overcome potential biases of self-reported measures. There are potential barriers for some SGD populations to register to vote. Transgender adults face increased barriers in states that have policies requiring the presentation of identity documents with a photo in order to register (Herman, 2012; Herman and Brown, 2018; O'Neill and Herman, 2020; also see Chapter 12). The problem is encountered both for registration and voting.

Since the early 1990s, the National Election Pool (NEP) has been documenting both sexual orientation and gender identity in its exit poll questionnaire. Over the years, the results of the NEP tend to show that the percentage of voters who identify as LGBT is about 5 percent (Flores, 2019). The LGBT vote may now be a larger portion of the electorate, as Schaffner (2019) shows that about 11 percent of the electorate identified as LGBT in the 2018 midterm election.

In a study of a representative sample of college students, Swank and Fahs (2017) found that sexual minorities participate in political marches at higher rates than heterosexual persons; the primary explanation is their embeddedness and activism in political groups (see also Swank and Fahs, 2019). A field experiment suggested that social esteem—recognizing SGD people who participated in pride rallies by publishing their names and photographs on social media—can be a key driver leading them to participate in politics (McClendon, 2014). Activism, however, can be emotionally stressful and taxing: in one study, 84 percent of a purposive sample of LGBTQ+ activists reported being emotionally taxed by LGBTQ+ activism (Pepin-Neff and Wynter, 2020). Pepin-Neff and Wynter (2020) found that activists described constant pressure to participate in LGBTQ+ pride

marches and other rallies as emotionally taxing, especially for people at the intersections of race, age, and gender identity.

At the 2019 public seminar on amplifying visibility and increasing capacity for SGD populations, Todd Snovel (Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs)¹⁵ discussed the broad nature of civic engagement and sociopolitical involvement in what he termed queer communities. He explained that some people equate civic engagement with political engagement, which complicates the concept—especially when political engagement often gets further reduced to partisan engagement. He added: “Any time that someone sees social inequalities or sees areas that could be bettered within a community and raises voice, raises energy, raises resources around improving models for that in a community basis, we would consider all of that under civic engagement.” Mary Anne Adams (Zami NOBLA) added to Snovel’s points at the seminar, saying that many people are involved in some form of civic engagement, even if they do not define or call it that. She said social media is a prime example of a platform informally used as a way to improve communities and the common good, as well as a voice of resistance and social justice for marginalized communities. Her points reinforce the role of online forums as a platform for sociopolitical involvement and activism as a way to build stronger positive identities among SGD populations (Ceglarek and Ward, 2016). In examining motivators for sociopolitical involvement and civic engagement among SGD populations of color, research reveals that individual connectedness to other SGD people (not necessarily people of color) is a strong predictor of sociopolitical involvement (Harris, Battle, and Pastrana, 2018). Early organizing sought to build community and raise awareness of the social, economic, and political problems that lesbian women and gay men encountered (Armstrong, 2002). This focus continued into the 1970s with service organizations, such as Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), led by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, and activist organizations such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance (Ghaziani, Taylor, and Stone, 2016; Shepard, 2013). Community organization and activism played a pivotal role in the 1980 and 1990s during the HIV/AIDS crises (Cohen, 1999), and community and activist organizations remain central to the well-being of SGD people (see Chapter 6).

Historically, some organizations rarely included SGD people of color and were known to be comprised primarily of middle-class white gay men and lesbian women (Armstrong, 2002; Cohen, 1999). As a result, community organizations with an intersectional mindset have emerged in various communities seeking to advance the well-being of SGD people

¹⁵ Snovel is now Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives at the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design.

(Stone, 2012). However, mainstream political organizations tend to prioritize policy and legal changes on topics that may not address the needs of the most vulnerable subgroups (Stone, 2012), though this has also been changing to be more inclusive in recent years. This inclusiveness advances policy and broadens services to further the well-being of SGD people, and it provides agency and political power to them.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SGD communities represent a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural identities and experiences and both shared and disparate interests and concerns, but they all need access to resources and safe spaces. Over the past several years, spaces for public convening and engagement in social, cultural, and personal activities have diminished substantially for SGD people. Because access to space is linked to participation in public culture, which is also influenced by the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and social class, working class and poor SGD people of color do not always have access to the same spaces as do SGD people of other races and classes.

CONCLUSION 7-1: Space is an essential aspect of building community, which is an important source of resilience for sexual and gender diverse populations. However, not all sexual and gender diverse people have access to affirming and safe physical, virtual, and social spaces.

Festivals and group celebrations are an important part of LGBTQ+ culture. LGBTQ+ pride celebrations in major cities attract thousands of attendees, but many remain self-segregated, leaving ethnically diverse SGD groups to respond by protest or creating their own pride events. Online communities provide and transform spaces in which SGD people can explore their identities and express themselves openly. Online communities are sometimes created out of the need for information, connection, and support among less visible and marginalized SGD groups.

SGD people have sought to carve out niches in religious and educational institutions, as well as in the realm of civic and political engagement. The past several years have seen the resurgence of LGBTQ+-affirming churches and denominations and noninstitutional and Indigenous spiritual practices, as well as gay-straight alliances on college and university campuses. Community connectedness has also been shown to help SGD people address health disparities by connecting them to important resources.

CONCLUSION 7-2: For sexual and gender diverse populations, access to affirming space enables community engagement, which influences

feelings of recognition, inclusion, connectedness, and safety that are often otherwise denied to them.

In civic affairs, lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults tend to be more civically and politically engaged than heterosexual adults: they engage government officials, donate to and volunteer in campaigns, and attend protests and rallies at higher rates than non-LGBT people. In addition, transgender people are registered to vote at higher rates than the cisgender population. Connectedness to other SGD people is a strong predictor of sociopolitical involvement. While political involvement is often conflated with civic engagement, experts note that the two are different, and civic engagement can manifest itself through participation in both in-person and virtual activism (i.e., social media and online forums).

CONCLUSION 7-3: Community mobilization and sociopolitical involvement have been key to the struggle for equality, inclusion, and social justice for sexual and gender diverse populations.

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Families and Social Relationships

Decades of study reveal that individuals who are relatively more socially connected are in better health and live longer than those who are relatively more socially isolated (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton, 2010). Close relationships and social connections, such as those found in families, are fundamentally important to health and well-being throughout life (Umberson and Karas Montez, 2010; Umberson and Thomeer, 2020). Supportive and stable relationships foster health and well-being, and relationships early in life have implications for the quality and stability of social ties in adolescence and adulthood. Throughout adulthood, people who are more socially connected have better mental and physical health and lower mortality than those who are more socially isolated (Yang et al., 2016).

Sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations have not been a focus of this research to date, even though minority stress and discrimination experienced by SGD populations contribute to patterns of social engagement and patterns of isolation. Beginning in childhood, SGD populations face unique sources of stigma and discrimination due to SGD status that may introduce strain in relationships with others, inhibit family formation, and contribute to social isolation (Patterson, 2019; Riskind and Patterson, 2010; Russell and Fish, 2016). Close social ties can help individuals cope with sexual minority stress and offer sources of connection, resilience, and support that foster health and well-being (Umberson and Thomeer, 2020).

This chapter presents an overview of research findings relevant to social relationships and family lives across the life course. The discussion focuses on research about relationships in childhood and adolescence, on parenting

and parent-child relationships, and on social ties in adulthood. In assessing the evidence, attention is devoted to contexts of relationships (such as stigma and discrimination), diversity in social ties as a function of diverse identities (such as sex and gender, social and economic status, and race and ethnicity), and on factors related to risk and resilience.

SOCIAL AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Research over recent years has found that SGD youth show high rates of behavioral, mental, and physical health risks (Institute of Medicine, 2011; Russell and Fish, 2016). These vulnerabilities are one of the earliest and most consistent areas of scientific evidence regarding the lives of SGD people (Russell and Fish, 2016). In recent years, scholars have begun to trace many such risks to experiences of stigma and discrimination, whether at home, in the form of family rejection (Parker et al., 2018), or at school, in the form of bullying by peers (Moyano and del Mar Sánchez-Fuentes, 2020).

Most of the scientific research in this area has relied on measures of sexual identity (mostly on gay and lesbian identities); there is much less empirical research on gender identity or expression and even less on the health and well-being of intersex children and adolescents. However, newer studies on transgender youth and youth who question their sexual or gender identities show results generally consistent with the pattern found for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth: experiences of stigma or discrimination undermine health and well-being (Connolly et al., 2016; Russell and Fish, 2016). To the extent that youth might experience stigma or discrimination due to differences of sex development (DSD) or intersex traits, one might expect similar patterns, but research on this population is lacking.

While SGD people in earlier generations most often came out—that is, disclosed their identities as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)—in young adulthood, many SGD people now come out in adolescence (Floyd and Bakeman, 2006; Martos, Nezhad, and Meyer, 2015). A study that examined sexual identity developmental milestones across groups defined by gender or race and ethnicity found that developmental milestones are generally earlier for gay men than for lesbian women, but it found no significant differences across racial and ethnic groups (Martos, Nezhad, and Meyer, 2015). An earlier study, however, suggested that disclosure of SGD identity in early adolescence may be more likely among white than among Black or Latinx youth (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004). Finally, in a recent national probability sample of sexual minority people in the United States, gay males and SGD people from more recent generations generally reported earlier milestones than those from older

generations and those with other sexual minority identities, and white participants reported later ages of some milestones than Black and Latinx participants (Bishop et al., 2020).

The shift over time in the age of coming out is especially relevant for adolescent social relationships: it means that contemporary youth come out in the context of legal, social, and financial dependence on their parents or caregivers, and during a period of life when extra-familial social relationships revolve primarily around school, a setting with few options and for which attendance is mandatory. While the potential for bullying or other forms of social rejection is greater for youth who come out (Russell et al., 2014), coming out also opens the door for positive social relationships, such as SGD-affirming friendships and romantic relationships (Russell, Watson, and Muraco, 2011; Whitton et al., 2018). Thus, over the recent past, youth have encountered experiences in families, schools, and peer groups that had not previously been encountered by SGD youth.

Family Relationships

Early studies of gay and lesbian youth described their fears of coming out at home (D’Augelli, Hershberger, and Pilkington, 1998). For many youth, coming out to parents or family members was very difficult if not impossible, and those who did come out reported experiences of family rejection ranging from guilt and shame to physical violence and being driven out of the home (Rosario et al., 2001). In an early study of LGB youth, D’Augelli and colleagues (1998) found that, when compared with youth who did not come out at home, those who did come out to family members reported more verbal and physical harassment and more suicidal thoughts and behavior. Since then, studies have assessed multiple dimensions or behaviors related to family rejection: they found strong associations between rejecting behaviors by parents and a range of emotional and behavioral health problems among LGBT youth (Puckett et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2009). For example, LGBT youth who reported high levels of family rejection also reported more depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior than did their peers (Ryan et al., 2009). A study of transgender adolescents (Johnson et al., 2020) and a retrospective survey of transgender adults identified similar correlates of family rejection in adolescence and adult well-being (Klein and Golub, 2016).

The dynamics of coming out and family relationships are distinctly gendered. Youth are more likely to come out to mothers than fathers or to come out to mothers before fathers (Floyd and Bakeman, 2006; Rothman et al., 2012; Savin-Williams, 2001), and reactions of fathers are usually feared more than reactions from mothers (Heatherington and Lavner, 2008). Like the gendered pattern of relations with parents, SGD youth report that their

sisters are more likely to be confidants for disclosure of SGD identities than are their brothers (Toomey and Richardson, 2009).

Negative family experiences among SGD youth are often concentrated around the time of coming out (D’Augelli, Hershberger, and Pilkington, 1998). The conflict related to a youth’s asserted SGD identity can set off relationship tension or disruption in families. In previous generations and in the context of profound stigma related to sexual and gender diversity and development, parents were often unable to understand a child’s same-sex sexuality or transgender identity (Herdt and Koff, 2000). Today, in a social context of greater awareness, positive images of SGD people in the media, and increased visibility of SGD populations, many parents are able to be more accepting of their sexual and gender variant children (Russell and Fish, 2019).

In recent years, increased public understanding of transgender identities has also made possible the growing numbers of young children who assert gender identities that are not aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth (Johnson et al., 2020; Olson, Key, and Eaton, 2015). For intersex youth, coming out to immediate families may be less relevant, since their differences of sex development are often known by parents from birth or early childhood, and they are understood as physiological sexual differences rather than differences based in personal identity and expression (Gough et al., 2008). However, routine disclosure of intersex status by physicians to patients and families is a relatively recent practice. At the same time, many intersex youth and their families still struggle over whether and how to disclose to other people (Hollenbach, Eckstrand, and Dreger, 2014). Thus, coming out experiences among SGD youth are diverse and may vary as a function of gender, race and ethnicity, and other characteristics, as well as sexual and gender identities (Grov et al., 2006; Martos, Nezhad, and Meyer, 2015; Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004).

Supportive family relationships are a foundation for child and adolescent well-being. For LGB and transgender children and adolescents, accepting behaviors by parents are associated with both multiple indicators of positive youth adjustment (e.g., higher self-esteem, reported social support, and general health) and lower levels of mental and behavioral health risk (e.g., fewer depressive symptoms, less suicidality, and less substance use) (Durwood, McLaughlin, and Olson, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020; Olson et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2010). Recent studies provide evidence of the primary role of parental support (relative to support from friends or teachers) for the mental health of youth (Shilo and Savaya, 2011; Snapp et al., 2015; Watson, Grossman, and Russell, 2019). Research on parents of intersex children has focused largely on parents’ understanding of differences of sex development and decision making regarding medical approaches to treatment (Ernst et al., 2018; Gough et al., 2008).

Relationships with Teachers and Other Adults

Teachers are among the most important nonfamily adults in the lives of youth. Having a supportive teacher has been identified as a protective factor for sexual and gender diverse students (Russell, Seif, and Truong, 2001). (This topic is treated in detail in Chapter 10.) Studies have also documented the role of other important nonfamily adults in the lives of SGD youth. For example, in a qualitative study of how they coped with school victimization, LGBT students reported the need for adult mentors as well as supportive teachers (Grossman et al., 2009).

Peers and Friendships

Studies of SGD youth and their peers have been dominated by studies of victimization or bullying (Horn and Romeo, 2010). Research documents the persistence of negative peer interactions, such as patterns of bullying, for both previous and recent cohorts of SGD students (Earnshaw et al., 2016; NASEM, 2019; Toomey and Russell, 2016). Beyond bullying, early studies documented the pain of losing of close friends when a young person comes out (D’Augelli, 2003; Diamond and Lucas, 2004) and that some SGD youth lack friends and feel lonely (Grossman and Kerner, 1998).

More recent studies have examined the potential positive social influence of peers and the positive role of friendships for SGD youth (Snapp et al., 2015; Watson, Grossman, and Russell, 2019). As they do for other youth, friendships support positive adjustment for SGD youth (Rosario, Scrimshaw, and Hunter, 2009; Shilo and Savaya, 2011). Maintaining friendships following coming out is protective: lesbian and bisexual adolescent girls reported better psychosocial adjustment when they did not lose friends after coming out (D’Augelli, 2003). Support from friends is a common and important form of social support for SGD youth (Watson, Grossman, and Russell, 2019). Importantly, studies have documented the distinctive salience of SGD friendships for SGD youth: in comparison with social support from family and heterosexual friends, LGB youth reported more social support from LGB friends, and LGB friend support was associated with fewer psychological symptoms (Doty et al., 2010).

Romantic Partners

Romantic relationships emerge in the adolescent years; most youth experience their first romantic attractions and relationships as adolescents and begin to develop relationship skills that they will carry forward into adulthood. The development of romantic relationships is normative and expected for heterosexual youth, but in some cultural or historical con-

texts, same-sex romantic relationship experiences may not have been or be possible (D’Augelli, Hersherberger, and Pilkington, 1998; Savin-Williams, 1994). In some environments, youth may have been (or may still be) unable to carry on romantic relationships with partners of the same sex. In order to conform to expectations among family and peers or because they deny same-sex attractions, some avoid same-sex romantic relationships (Diamond, in press; Diamond, Savin-Williams, and Dubé, 1999). A study based on a national sample of youth who were adolescents in the mid-1990s showed that youth with same-sex romantic attractions were not less likely to date, but the majority dated different-sex partners (Russell and Consolacion, 2003). Much has changed since then, although little is known about national patterns today. Intersex youth with diverse external genitalia may experience fear of rejection by romantic partners due to anatomical differences or concerns about future fertility (Slowikowska-Hilczek et al., 2017), but there is less research in this area.

There has been significant attention to experiences of peer victimization and bullying among LGBT youth, but less attention to victimization in the context of romantic relationships. Research shows that LGBT youth are at higher risk for dating violence compared with heterosexual youth (Reuter, Sharp, and Temple, 2015). Furthermore, rates of dating violence are higher for female than male youth and for transgender than for cisgender youth (Dank et al., 2014), as well as for Black youth compared with white youth (Reuter et al., 2017). LGBT youth who report intimate partner violence reported more sexual risk-taking and compromised mental health (Reuter et al., 2017). Finally, there may be not only higher rates of victimization but also more dating violence perpetration among LGBT youth (Dank et al., 2014): one recent study documented associations between minority stressors (e.g., internalized homonegativity, concealment) and partner violence among LGBTQ college students (Edwards and Sylaska, 2013).

The advent of the internet has made a significant difference in the social lives of SGD youth. With its growth and influence, otherwise isolated SGD youth were able to find SGD peers for the first time online (Russell, 2002). The internet has allowed SGD youth to meet others like them and to build friendships and romantic relationships (DeHaan et al., 2013). LGBTQ youth may be more likely than non-LGBTQ youth to meet romantic partners online (Korchmaros, Ybarra, and Mitchell, 2015), yet LGBTQ youth remain less likely overall than their heterosexual peers to be involved in romantic relationships. Despite barriers, there is evidence from a small number of recent studies that SGD youth who develop same-sex romantic relationships in adolescence report better adjustment than those who do not develop such relationships (Bauermeister et al., 2010; Glover, Galliher, and Lamere, 2009; Whitton et al., 2018). These findings are consistent with research on the normative and positive role that romantic relationships play

in adolescent development (Russell, Watson, and Muraco, 2011). The role of positive social relationships with family members, as well as with those outside the family, is important in helping youth develop in positive ways. Intersex youth and adults tend to report fewer sexual partners, with some evidence that intersex individuals report later initiation of sexual activity (Kreukels et al., 2019).

PARENTING AND OTHER FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

This section presents information based on research on family formation, parenting, children, and other family ties, ending with a discussion of the concept of “chosen family.”

Family Formation

Parenthood is one of the most universal and highly valued of human experiences (Bornstein, 2019). LGBTQ people are, however, less likely than heterosexual individuals to want or intend to have children or to become parents (Goldberg, 2010; Patterson, 2019; Reczek, 2020). Studies of nationally representative datasets have shown that adult lesbian women and gay men are less likely than their heterosexual peers to express desire for parenthood. Indeed, sexual minority women may be more likely than heterosexual women to have pregnancies that were not planned (Everett, McCabe, and Hughes, 2017). In addition, gay men who desire parenthood are less likely than their heterosexual peers to expect that they will attain it (Riskind and Patterson, 2010). Researchers have explored reasons for these disparities, and they have identified relevant contextual as well as individual-level variables (Tate and Patterson, 2019a). In contrast, desires for parenthood among bisexual men and women seem to be more similar to those among heterosexual individuals (Riskind and Tornello, 2017; Simon et al., 2018). The study of parenting desires and intentions among intersex and transgender people is only beginning (Tornello and Bos, 2017). Some intersex traits are associated with infertility, but some are not, and fertility has gained increased attention in clinical care and research (Slowikowska-Hilczer et al., 2017). Many intersex people desire and achieve parenthood through assisted or unassisted conception, adoption, and surrogacy, though little research has explored these pathways to parenthood.

There is some recent evidence that lower desire and expectation for parenthood in SGD populations may be related to lower expectations (but not desires) over a broad range of life goals (Tate and Patterson, 2019c). In a convenience sample of 368 lesbian, gay, and heterosexual young adults, participants were asked about their desires and expectations with respect

to life goals in a number of areas, such as marriage, parenthood, friendship, and career. With the exception of desire for parenthood, which was lower among sexual minority respondents, lesbian and gay young adults reported desires that were very similar to those of heterosexual peers, but they described expectations that were consistently lower for most other aims. Thus, lesbian and gay young adults reported life aims that were similar to those of heterosexual peers, but they did not believe that they would achieve them (Tate and Patterson, 2019c). These results suggest that lower parenting desires among SGD adults may be part of a larger pattern and may reflect social and cultural constraints.

Despite divergent overall rates of desires and expectations, many SGD people become parents, and they do so through many pathways. However, the numbers of SGD parents in the United States are difficult to estimate. Using 2014–2016 data from the American Community Survey (ACS), Goldberg and Conron (2018) estimated that there are currently just over 700,000 households headed by same-sex couples, of which approximately half are headed by male couples and half by female couples (Goldberg and Conron, 2018). In this sample, 39 percent of male-female couples, 8 percent of male couples, and 24 percent of female couples described themselves as parents of children 18 years of age or younger (Goldberg and Conron, 2018). Census and ACS data do not include information on sexual or gender identity, so those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer cannot be identified from these data. Similarly, census and ACS data cannot identify nonresidential parents or households headed by single SGD parents. As a consequence, estimates of parenthood among SGD population based on census and ACS data are likely to provide an undercount of these families.

Some SGD people become parents in the context of heterosexual relationships (Patterson, 2013). For example, a gay man or lesbian woman could have married a partner of a different sex and had children; the couple could have subsequently divorced when one of them came out as non-heterosexual. Some findings suggest that this pathway to parenthood is more common among older people and less common among younger individuals (Tornello and Patterson, 2015), but it remains an important pathway to parenthood among LGBT people in the United States (Goldberg and Conron, 2018).

Another pathway to parenthood among LGBTQ+ people involves the use of assisted reproductive technology, such as sperm donation, egg donation, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, and related procedures (Blake et al., 2017; Golombok, 2015, 2019). People who cannot produce sperm may pursue sperm donation and artificial insemination; people who cannot produce eggs or do not have uteruses may pursue egg donation and gestational surrogacy (Golombok, 2015). The costs of such techniques can be

high, so access to these options is limited to those with substantial financial resources.

Legal or policy issues vary across states and may also provide obstacles for some LGBTQ+ people who wish to become parents (Farr, Vazquez, and Patterson, 2020). For example, in addition to its high economic costs, surrogacy is legally banned in some jurisdictions and highly regulated in others (Green et al., 2019). Thus, access to reproductive technology among SGD individuals and couples may be greater for those with substantial economic resources and for those who live in states or local jurisdictions that legally permit the technology (see Chapter 5).

Adoption and foster care are also pathways to parenthood that are pursued by many LGBTQ+ people (Farr, Vazquez, and Patterson, 2020). Recent estimates based on data from the 2014–2016 ACS suggest that same-sex couples are far more likely than male-female couples to be foster or adoptive parents: 21 percent of same-sex couples were adoptive parents, compared with only 3 percent of male-female couples, and 3 percent of same-sex couples were foster parents, compared with only 0.4 percent of male-female couples (Goldberg and Conron, 2018). In addition to the issues that may be encountered by heterosexual people who hope to foster or adopt children, additional obstacles may be encountered by prospective lesbian, gay, and transgender foster and adoptive parents (Farr, Vazquez, and Patterson, 2020). Many uncertainties surround adoption as a pathway to parenthood for transgender individuals; only a handful of states prohibit discrimination against prospective parents who identify as transgender. Thus, transgender prospective adoptive parents may face added scrutiny.

Sexual and Gender Diverse Parenting and Children

The many studies that have examined parenting processes among SGD parents have found these family relationships to be generally warm and positive (Biblarz and Stacey, 2010; Goldberg, 2010; Golombok et al., 2014; Patterson, 1992, 2000, 2017). Both children and adolescents generally enjoy supportive relationships with lesbian and gay parents (Farr, Forssell, and Patterson, 2010a; Golombok et al., 2014; Wainright, Russell, and Patterson, 2004). Overall, and with some exceptions, both lesbian and gay couples seem to share child care and household labor more evenly than do heterosexual couples (Farr and Patterson, 2013; Patterson, Sutfin, and Fulcher, 2004). In contrast, research on small samples of the cisgender female partners of transgender men has shown that cisgender women report doing more household labor than their transgender male partners (Pfeffer, 2010); studies of child care in these couples have not been reported. Likewise, little information is available about parenting among those who identify as bisexual or intersex (Stotzer, Herman, and Hasenbush, 2014).

Many studies have focused on the development of children reared by lesbian and gay parents. Much of the research is focused on children with lesbian mothers (Goldberg, 2010; Golombok, 2015; Patterson, 1992, 2000, 2017), although some studies have also included children of gay fathers (Farr, Forssell, and Patterson, 2010a; Golombok et al., 2014, 2018; Tornello and Patterson, 2015). The research has focused on sexual and gender identity of children with LGBT parents, on peer relationships and other aspects of social development, academic performance, and overall adjustment (Farr, Forssell, and Patterson, 2010a; Farr et al., 2018; Farr and Patterson, 2013; Fedewa, Black, and Ahn, 2015; Golombok et al., 2014, 2018; Potter, 2012; Potter and Potter, 2016; Wainright and Patterson, 2008; Wainright, Russell, and Patterson, 2004). In general, across all characteristics, children of lesbian and gay parents have shown typical development (Manning, Fetto, and Lamidi, 2014; Patterson, 2017). At the same time, there is evidence that, when compared with children in heterosexual-parent families, children with lesbian parents report less pressure to conform to gender expectations and have more egalitarian attitudes regarding gender (Bos and Sandfort, 2010). Similarly, adult children of lesbian and gay parents report that they were raised with less rigid gender stereotypes than others (Goldberg, 2007). Regardless of their own sexual orientation, adult offspring of lesbian and gay parents report greater well-being when they live in social climates that are supportive for SGD people (Lick et al., 2012). Little information is available about children with bisexual, transgender, or intersex parents, but researchers have not identified special behavior problems of any kind among these children (Goldberg, 2010; Golombok, 2015; Patterson, 2000, 2017).

Much of the existing research has been based on relatively small convenience samples of participating families, leaving open questions about possible sample bias; this is especially true of early work (Patterson, 1992). Increasingly, however, research has been conducted using data from larger samples that are representative of the populations from which they were drawn, and this work has yielded findings that are similar to those from the earlier studies (Patterson, 2017). For example, data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) study (Wainright and Patterson, 2006, 2008; Wainright, Russell, and Patterson, 2004) and from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 study (Potter, 2012; Potter and Potter, 2016) have produced findings that are consistent with those from earlier work. These studies drew on data from representative samples, so they do not reflect sample biases that are likely to be present in purposive and convenience samples.

Thus, after conducting a careful review of the research, in a resolution the American Psychological Association (2005) concluded:

[T]here is no scientific evidence that parenting effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation; lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children . . . [and] research has shown that the adjustment, development, and psychological well-being of children are unrelated to parental sexual orientation and that the children of lesbian and gay parents are as likely as those of heterosexual parents to flourish.

Similarly, in its review of the literature, the American Sociological Association concluded that the clear and consistent social science consensus is that children reared by same-sex parents fare just as well as children reared by different-sex parents (American Sociological Association, 2015, p. 5).

Without question, however, multiple stressors, such as harassment and bullying, are often encountered by SGD parents and their children. The evidence clearly shows that children who are bullied by peers are more likely than other children to show behavior problems (Goldberg, 2010; Patterson, 2017). Some SGD-parent families also experience more economic stress, unemployment, and lack of health insurance relative to families headed by heterosexual parents (Patterson and Goldberg, 2016). Moreover, the experiences of offspring of SGD parents are influenced by the social climate in which they grow up (Golombok et al., 2018; Lick et al., 2012). The findings in this area suggest possible roles for law and policy in improving the lives of SGD parents and their children (see Chapter 5).

Other Family Ties

In addition to their roles as parents, SGD adults have other family ties, such as those with their own parents, siblings, and extended family. Of these, the relationships that have been studied most often are those between adult lesbian and gay people and their own parents. Overall, most researchers have reported that, on average, lesbian and gay adults have more distant, less positive relationships with their parents than do their heterosexual peers (Needham and Austin, 2010; Reczek, 2014; Tate and Patterson, 2019b; Ueno, 2005) and that this is a source of stress for many lesbian and gay adults. Research-based information about the relationships of bisexual and transgender adults and their parents and other members of families of origin is still scarce and often based on small, nonrepresentative samples (Brumbaugh-Johnson and Hull, 2018; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2016; Norwood, 2013). In two studies using data from representative samples, however, indications of such stress have included depressive symptoms, substance use, and sleep problems (Patterson et al., 2018; Rothman et al., 2012).

A small number of studies have been conducted to assess variations across racial and ethnic minority groups with regard to relationships of SGD adults and members of their families of origin. For instance, Pastrana (2015) studied large samples of Black and Latinx SGM adults and found that disclosure of SGD identities (“outness”) was associated with support from members of the family of origin. In both Black and Latinx groups, those who had disclosed sexual and gender minority identities were more likely to feel supported (Pastrana, 2015); similar findings have been reported by Swendener and Woodell (2017). Among cisgender SGD Latinas, Acosta (2013) found that those who embodied conventional femininity were more likely to feel accepted by members of their families of origin. While these findings are important, they are not based on representative samples, and they do not allow comparisons across racial or ethnic groups. Additional research in this area would be valuable.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN ADULthood

The most salient close relationships in adulthood are those with romantic partners, other family members (e.g., aging parents), and close friends. Close friends are sometimes referred to as one’s “chosen family” in SGD communities, in part due to weaker or more strained ties to one’s family of origin (Reczek, 2020). In this section we focus primarily on intimate and romantic relationships, which have been the focus of a great deal of research, and then highlight recent evidence concerning relationships with close friends and family.

Intimate and Romantic Relationships

Demographics and Relationship Status

Recent data from the Gallup Daily Tracking Survey indicates (Jones, 2017, cited in Goldberg and Romero, 2019, p. 3):

[O]f the more than 10.7 million LGBT-identified adults in the United States as of June 2017 (Romero, 2017): 17% were married to or living with a same-sex partner; 17% were married to or living with a different-sex partner, and 10% were divorced, separated, or widowed.

About 10.2 percent of the Gallup sample identified as being married to a same-sex spouse, and the number of married same-sex couples in the United States is growing—from 390,000 in 2015 to 547,000 in 2017 (Romero, 2017). Notably, over half of LGBT-identified people in the Gallup Tracking Survey are classified as single (see below, “Chosen Families”).

The legalization of same-sex marriage and more favorable societal attitudes towards same-sex coresidential relationships have likely contributed to the increased number of reported same-sex relationships (Gates and Brown, 2015). Same-sex couples are more likely than different-sex couples to be interracial and well educated (Gates, 2014) and to participate in the labor force (Gates, 2013). Women are also more likely than men to enter into same-sex relationships (Gates, 2014). Same-sex couples are more likely than different-sex couples to reside in urban areas (Gates, 2006) and in more LGBT tolerant regions of the United States, such as those where same-sex marriage was first legalized (Gates, 2009, 2014).

Romantic Partnerships and Health

There has been significant research on intimate partnerships of lesbian and gay populations, with most of the early research in this area focused on cohabiting relationships, civil unions, and domestic partnerships. This area of research expanded significantly to include attention to married same-sex couples when (as discussed above) the United States extended constitutional protection for marriage equality in 2015. In part, proponents of marriage equality argued that same-sex marriage recognition could improve the health of sexual minority adults and their children and that restriction from marriage was discriminatory and negatively affected health. A great deal of research has addressed the link between relationship status and health, and many of the findings rely on nationally representative and publicly available datasets.

Theoretical work on minority stress and gender-as-relational perspectives undergirds much of the influential research in this area. *Minority stress theory* points to the unique stressors and stigma associated with sexual minority status (LeBlanc, Frost, and Bowen, 2018), and *gender-as-relational* perspectives emphasize the different patterns of men's and women's partner interactions, depending on whether they are in a same- or different-sex union (Thomeer, Umberson, and Reczek, 2020). Higher levels of stress for sexual minority populations may mean that same-sex spouses encounter more stress in their daily lives in ways that strain their relationships and undermine their health. At the same time, marriage may be especially important in helping sexual minority populations to cope with stress and to protect their health and well-being.

Several studies on romantic partnerships and health of same-sex couples have relied on nationally representative data (e.g., data from the National Health Interview Study [NHIS]) and conclude that same-sex cohabiting couples' health is worse than that of different-sex married couples but better than that of unpartnered adults (not differentiated by heterosexual/ LGB status) (Denney, Gorman, and Barrera, 2013; Liu, Reczek, and Brown,

2013). Research suggests that greater legal recognition (i.e., marriages, civil unions, and registered domestic partnerships versus no legal status) is associated with better health and that same- and different-sex couples receive similar health benefits from marriage (LeBlanc, Frost, and Bowen, 2018).

There is much less research on bisexual, transgender, and intersex people in romantic partnerships. Growing evidence indicates that bisexual populations are in poorer health (on multiple measures, including mental health and functional limitations) than people who identify as gay, lesbian, or heterosexual (Bostwick et al., 2010; Conron et al., 2010; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2010; Gorman et al., 2015; Hsieh and Ruther, 2016). One recent study, based on data from the NHIS, found that married persons who identify as bisexual report poorer health than their unmarried counterparts after adjusting for socioeconomic status and health behaviors (both of which are disadvantaged for bisexual respondents) (Hsieh and Liu, 2019). This study found a health advantage for married heterosexual partners and, to a lesser extent, men and women in same-sex partnerships, in comparison with their unmarried peers.

Hsieh and Liu (2019) also report that men and women who identify as bisexual in different-sex marriages are less healthy than those in same-sex marriages. The authors suggest that, although marriage may benefit the health of self-identified gay, lesbian, and heterosexual people, marriage may not benefit the health of those who identify as bisexual, perhaps due to higher levels of stigma and partner conflict associated with bisexuality. It is likely that individuals who identify as bisexual encounter unique sources of stress and stigma in their relationships (Feinstein and Dyar, 2017)—an important topic for future research. These findings also point to the importance of considering variation in romantic partnerships and health across diverse groups.

Current research on relationship status and health for couples in which at least one partner is transgender or gender-nonconforming is limited. With a few exceptions, the available evidence is descriptive and based on qualitative data drawn from small samples. This research has focused primarily on individuals who transition while in an existing relationship, and it addresses their specific challenges and supports. Emerging evidence suggests that an intimate partner relationship is a source of social and emotional support that can reduce perceived levels of discrimination for transgender people (Liu and Wilkinson, 2017; Pfeffer, 2016), suggesting potential health benefits. Liu and Wilkinson (2017) analyzed data from the National Transgender Discrimination study and found that married transgender women reported less discrimination than cohabiting and previously married transgender women (but not less than never-married transgender women). These patterns were partly explained by greater economic resources for married people. However, these patterns were not found for

transgender men. Taken together, these findings point to the importance of addressing variations as a function of gender identity and socioeconomic status, as well as race and ethnicity, in research.

Research on heterosexual populations shows that marriage becomes even more important to health with advancing age, as individuals develop health conditions, cognitive decline, or functional limitations. This finding may also emerge among aging sexual minority populations, but relevant research is not yet available. In a study of SGD adults over 50 years old, those who had a same-sex partner, regardless of marital status, reported better health and fewer depressive symptoms than those who were single (Williams and Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2014). Further study on aging and later-life SGD couples is needed, particularly longitudinal studies that allow researchers to follow couples as they grow older.

Relationship Dissolution

Longitudinal research on heterosexual populations clearly documents that marital dissolution through divorce or widowhood undermines health and well-being and increases mortality risk and that this effect is stronger for men than for women (Rendall et al., 2011). Much less is known about the effects of marital dissolution in SGD populations. The first book on this subject, published in 2019, represents a multidisciplinary effort to compile the current evidence (Goldberg and Romero, 2019), but study in this area is still quite new.

Divorce and Separation of Partners Numerous studies have considered rates of relationship dissolution among same-sex couples. Manning and Joyner (2019) reviewed these studies and concluded that, across same-sex and different-sex couples, dissolution rates for married and cohabiting couples are fairly similar; cohabiting couples show higher rates than do married couples. Moreover, cohabiting same-sex female couples have higher probabilities of relationship dissolution than same-sex male couples (Manning and Joyner, 2019). Both for same- and different-sex couples, legally recognized relationships are characterized by greater stability.

Several factors have been associated with higher rates of relationship dissolution among SGD populations, especially among female same-sex couples. Joyner and colleagues (2017) analyzed Add Health data and found that, for young adults, racial minority status and lower socioeconomic status increase marital instability for same-sex couples, much as it does for different-sex couples. Transgender people may also be at greater risk for marital instability, particularly for those who married prior to transition. Meier and colleagues (2013) report that, among transgender men who were partnered prior to transition, half of the relationships were dissolved during or after transition. Again, relatively few data are available in this area.

Widowhood (Death) of a Partner Very little is known about the bereavement experiences of sexual minority populations following the death of a partner. Notably, the landmark case leading to marriage equality, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, was based on the inability of a bereaved spouse to be listed on the death certificate of his partner (thus, disallowing spousal benefits granted to different-sex spouses). Many of the existing studies of partner bereavement in sexual minority populations (primarily gay men) are focused on death of partners due to HIV-related causes; these studies have found increased social isolation, risky sexual behavior, and mental health problems during the bereavement process (Hatzenbuehler, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Erikson, 2008; Rosengard and Folkman, 1997; Satterfield, Folkman, and Acree, 2002). Additional work on bereavement following loss of a partner is needed, including the possibility of unique bereavement experiences of SGD populations (compared with different-sex couples) due to differences in marital dynamics, the presence or absence of children, family support, and sexual or gender minority stressors (Donnelly, Reczek, and Umberson, 2018). Indeed, results of available studies of bereavement in sexual minority populations due to non-HIV-related causes suggest that sexual minority populations face bereavement experiences that are shaped by the quality of interactions with health care providers prior to a partner's death and also by more complex legal and financial issues than those experienced by different-sex couples (Bristowe, Marshall, and Harding, 2016).

Relationship Dynamics, Health, and Well-Being

The accumulation of daily experiences and partner interactions in couples influences health and well-being over time. Partners may help each other to cope with stress, yet partners can also be a source of stress. There is a large research literature on relationship dynamics of different-sex couples: findings from this literature describe how cohabiting, marital, and other committed partnerships contribute to or detract from health and well-being. Information is, however, much more limited for SGD populations; the available evidence suggests certain types of variation in relationship dynamics and health for men and women in same-sex relationships in comparison with different-sex relationships (Umberson and Thomeer, 2020). The rest of this section highlights some of the key relationship dynamics known to be important for couples: overall relationship quality, sexual minority stress, division of labor, the dynamics of sexual and emotional intimacy, intimate partner violence, partners' influences on health behaviors, and caregiving dynamics when a partner is ill.

Overall Relationship Quality Much of the research on SGD couples has focused on partner interactions and relationship quality. The preponderance of evidence suggests that same-sex and different-sex couples are

similar in overall relationship quality, such as closeness and emotional support (Farr, Forssell, and Patterson, 2010b; Kurdek, 2005).

Sexual Minority Stress Although it is well established that sexual minority stress adversely affects the health of individuals (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2012), a growing research literature has also explored the ways in which sexual minority stress affects couples (Frost et al., 2017; LeBlanc, Frost, and Wight, 2015). This approach emphasizes that individuals in SGD couples may be vulnerable to couple-level minority stressors that cannot be understood in individual terms (Neilands et al., 2019). These stressors may include lack of integration with families of origin, management of stereotypes about their relationships, and couple-level experiences of discrimination (Neilands et al., 2019). Spouses or partners can also play an important role in helping each other cope with minority stress. In fact, relationships can help to buffer individuals from adverse effects of minority stress (Cao et al., 2017; Donnelly, Robinson, and Umberson, 2019). Members of the couple's families of origin may also affect romantic relationships. When parents are critical of a partner or of a relationship, it can impose strain on couple relationships; however, the joint efforts of couples to cope with this kind of stress can also promote resilience (Frost, 2011; Graham and Barnow, 2013; Macapagal et al., 2015; Reczek, 2016).

Division of Labor Considerable research has been conducted on the division of household and child care labor in same-sex partnerships. The preponderance of evidence has shown that same-sex couples are more egalitarian in their division of household and child care than are different-sex couples (Patterson, Sutfin, and Fulcher, 2004). However, much of this research focuses on small, nonrepresentative samples of predominantly white lesbian and gay couples. There may be important variations across racial and ethnic and socioeconomic statuses, and these may covary with family structure (Moore, 2011), so it is difficult to draw clear general conclusions at this time (Patterson, Sutfin, and Fulcher, 2004). Qualitative research on families of transgender people (Pfeffer, 2016; Ward, 2010) suggests that cisgender women coupled with transgender men do comparatively more housework in an effort to clarify and assert gender order.

Dynamics of Sexual and Emotional Intimacy Studies based on national samples indicate that overall satisfaction with sex is similar for those in gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples (Holmberg and Blair, 2009; Kurdek, 1991; Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007). Gay couples report less sexual exclusivity (Joyner, Manning, and Prince, 2019) and more frequent sexual encounters of shorter duration than do lesbian couples, but no differences in sexual satisfaction (Blair and Pukall, 2014; Farr, Forssell, and Patterson, 2010b). Qualitative data suggest that same-sex partners (both male and female) are more concordant than different-sex partners in their levels of sexual desire and views of intimacy. Lesbian women are more concerned

with and do more work to promote sex in their relationships than do gay men, possibly because they are more likely to see sex as indicative of intimacy, closeness, and relationship quality (Umberson et al., 2015).

Intimate Partner Violence The available evidence, limited by the few studies that rely on representative data, indicates that the incidence of intimate partner violence in LGB couples is similar to or greater than that in heterosexual couples (Edwards, Sylaska, and Neal, 2015; Rollè et al., 2018). Notably, intimate partner violence is more likely in cohabiting couples than in marital relationships, and it is especially prevalent among bisexual individuals (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010). The risk factors for intimate partner violence are also similar for heterosexual and LGB partners and include lower socioeconomic status, being younger, substance use disorders, and exposure to family violence as a child (Edwards, Sylaska, and Neal, 2015). In addition, unique risk factors have been observed for LGB populations, including sexual minority stress, internalized homonegativity, and the failure of community and health care systems to identify and treat intimate partner violence in SGD populations (Edwards, Sylaska, and Neal, 2015; Rollè et al., 2018). (See Chapter 11 for additional studies of LGBTQ victimization.)

Partners' Influences on Health Behaviors Spousal influence on health behaviors is often identified as one reason for the better health status of married different-sex couples compared to their unmarried counterparts (Rendall et al., 2011). Only recently have researchers had access to data that clearly identified the union status of SGD individuals. Although patterns of health behavior in different-sex marriages often differ for men and women (e.g., men are more likely than women to drink heavily), health behaviors in same-sex marriages seem to be characterized by more similarity between spouses. A recent study of more than 400 couples using dyadic data shows that same-sex spouses are more similar to one another than are different-sex spouses in their smoking, drinking, and exercise habits (Holway, Umberson, and Donnelly, 2018); results of this study showed greater concordance for lesbian than for gay spouses. Exactly how same-sex spouses influence one another's health and well-being, and how that influence may evolve over the life course, is a topic for future study.

Caregiving Dynamics When a Partner Is Ill Spouses are typically the front line of defense when an adult becomes ill, and spouses who provide informal care or facilitate formal health care for their partners may promote the partner's health and well-being—even while caregiving may impose stress on the caregiver. One study of interview data from 90 spouses (45 couples) considered how spouses co-construct illness experiences in ways that shape relationship dynamics (Umberson et al., 2016). In both same- and different-sex marriages, men tend to downplay illness

and thus perform less care work when their spouse is ill; women tend to construct illness as involving intensive care work (Umberson et al., 2016). Same-sex spouses described similar constructions of illness more often than different-sex couples and, as such, same-sex spouses described less illness-related disagreement and stress around caregiving (Umberson et al., 2016).

These qualitative findings are supported by dyadic survey data from more than 800 respondents who reported on couples' behavior during serious illness events (Umberson et al., 2017). Women tended to provide and receive more instrumental care than men; women who were married to women provided and received the most instrumental care. Men and women in same-sex marriages reported providing more emotional support for their sick spouse than did men and women in different-sex marriages. However, during their own health event, women—whether they were married to a man or a woman—provided more emotional support to their spouse than did men. These findings point to the many similarities in caregiving across union types and suggest that differences across union types reflect the intersection of gender and sexuality.

There may be a greater need for caregiving in SGD than in heterosexual communities due to higher levels of certain chronic conditions, poorer overall health, and higher risk of cognitive impairment (Baumle, 2014; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2018). Because SGD people are less likely than others to have a spouse or partner and less likely to have children, those who need care may also face unique challenges in getting that care. Members of families of origin who do not accept SGD identities may create additional strains in this regard. Both SGD caregivers and SGD care recipients may face challenges in obtaining needed services and medical care, in that the legacy of stigma and discrimination in institutional settings contributes to underutilization of medical and social services for older LGBT adults (SAGE, 2014).

Very little is known about end-of-life experiences for SGD couples and families (Marsack and Stephenson, 2018; Reczek, 2020). One small-scale qualitative study found that lesbian and gay couples were more likely than heterosexual couples to plan for their end of life (e.g., by having wills and related documents), in part because same-sex couples were more concerned about possible interference from members of their families of origin due to their sexual minority status (Thomeer et al., 2017). Now that marriage equality is the law, this situation may shift, but little is yet known about this possibility.

Overall, and apart from studies of caregiving within intimate relationships, little is known about illness and caregiving among adult or aging SGD populations (Reczek and Umberson, 2016), and there are even fewer studies of end-of-life issues among SGD people. A few studies suggest dif-

ferences in caregiving needs and experiences of SGD people in comparison with other older people, but little is yet known about this topic. These are areas of research in need of further study.

Chosen Families

Marital and romantic partnerships are clearly important to the health and well-being of SGD as well as heterosexual populations, but more than half of LGBT-identified people were classified as single in recent Gallup tracking surveys (Romero, 2017). Moreover, SGD adults report less frequent contact and more strain in their family-of-origin relationships than do heterosexual adults (Reczek, 2020). Several types of evidence suggest that, compared with their heterosexual counterparts, SGD people rely more on support from “chosen families”—selected friend and social network ties.

Recent evidence on the function and composition of support networks reveals considerable complexity. Using data from a community study of 524 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual adults living in New York City, Frost and colleagues (2016) reported that, although heterosexual and LGB individuals relied more on friends than families of origin for routine support (e.g., talking about problems), gay and bisexual men relied more on friends than did lesbian and bisexual women. For major support (such as borrowing money), heterosexual people and lesbian and bisexual women relied mostly on members of their families of origin, whereas gay and bisexual men relied more on friends. Frost and colleagues (2016) found additional variation based on race and ethnicity—with racial and ethnic minority SGD individuals reporting less overall support than others. These findings, like those concerning romantic and marital relationships, point to the need for future research to consider the intersection of gender and sexuality, as well as race and ethnicity, in understanding the relationship dynamics that influence health and well-being in potentially different ways across SGD groups.

Chosen families may also play an important role in caregiving in SGD communities. In one study, for example, in contrast to the 6 percent of heterosexual older adults who reported providing care to a friend, 21 percent of older LGBT adults reported having provided care to friends (MetLife Mature Market Institute and American Society on Aging, 2010). Another survey of American adults (Robbins et al., 2017) found that LGBTQ adults were more likely than others to have taken time off from work to care for someone in their chosen family. Although friends who provide care may experience caregiving stress and psychological distress associated with that caregiving (Shiu, Muraco, and Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016), this care is valuable in supporting the independence, health, and well-being of the SGD recipients of that care.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Close, supportive, and stable relationships foster health and well-being, and relationships early in life have implications for the quality and stability of social ties in adolescence and adulthood. Many SGD and intersex people are coming out at younger ages than in previous years, and this affects their social relationships. SGD youth are at higher risk of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and suicidality than other youth. In addition, many SGD youth encounter harassment and hostility at home or at school, which can have negative effects on their mental and physical health.

Supportive family relationships are a foundation for child and adolescent well-being for SGD as for other people. Parental acceptance of their SGD youth is associated with positive youth adjustment; conversely, parental rejection is associated with a range of emotional and behavioral health problems. Supportive teachers are among the most important nonfamily adults in the lives of contemporary SGD youth. Maintaining friendships throughout and following the coming out process supports positive adjustment for SGD youth. Romantic relationships in youth are also supportive in many cases, although the risk of intimate partner violence is higher for SGD youth than for other youth.

CONCLUSION 8-1: Relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and romantic partners are important in shaping development and well-being among children and adolescents; these relationships can be strained for sexual and gender diverse youth.

Further research is needed on developmental processes among SGD youth as well as on the effects of intersectional identities, stigma, and discrimination on developmental processes. Study is especially needed on bisexual, transgender, and intersex youth.

The number of married same-sex couples has nearly doubled since 2015. There is much more evidence on union status and health of gay and lesbian couples than on that of other SGD populations. Higher levels of stress for sexual minority populations may mean that same-sex spouses encounter more stress in their daily lives in ways that strain their relationships and undermine their health. At the same time, marriage may be especially important in helping sexual minority populations to cope with stress and to protect their health and well-being. The legal status of romantic unions is associated with other markers of advantage and disadvantage, particularly socioeconomic status. Those of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to marry, and marriage itself may also provide economic benefits. As with different-sex couples, legally recognized same-sex relationships are less likely than others to dissolve over time.

CONCLUSION 8-2: The legal status of romantic unions is associated with better health outcomes. It is also associated with other markers of advantage and disadvantage, such as income and education.

The existing evidence is characterized by sample and research design limitations. To clarify links between union status and health, longitudinal data with well-validated measures of sexual and gender identity are needed.

Lesbian, gay, and intersex individuals are less likely than heterosexual individuals to become parents. Less is known about the prevalence of parenthood among bisexual and transgender people. Some SGD people become parents in the context of prior heterosexual relationships—a pathway that is more common for older people than younger people. Another pathway to parenthood among LGBTQ+ people involves the use of assisted reproductive technology; however, the costs of such techniques can be high, so access to these options is limited to those with substantial financial resources. Some SGD adults also become foster or adoptive parents. Both children and adolescents have been found to enjoy supportive relationships with lesbian and gay parents, and children of lesbian and gay parents have shown typical development.

CONCLUSION 8-3: Sexual orientation is not a significant determinant of parenting ability or child development. Children with lesbian and gay parents have generally been found to develop in typical ways. Family processes and family stability are more important determinants of development among children and youth in these families than parental sexual orientation.

In contrast to the evidence about lesbian and gay parents, less is known about parenting by bisexual or transgender people, but existing research suggests that they are as competent in parenting roles as other parents. Additional research is needed on relationship development in adolescence, adult family formation among SGD (especially bisexual, transgender, and intersex) people, as well as family processes and couple dynamics among older SGD individuals and families.

Throughout adulthood, people who are more socially connected have better mental and physical health and lower mortality than those who are more socially isolated. Evidence suggests that SGD adults rely more on support from friends and “chosen families” than do their heterosexual counterparts. In comparison with heterosexual peers, SGD adults report less frequent contact and more strain in their family-of-origin relationships. Overall, lesbian and gay adults report more strained relationships with their own parents than do heterosexual adults, and these strained relationships are associated with stress, psychological distress, and unhealthy behaviors.

Friends and members of chosen families may also play an important role in SGD communities. For example, many more LGBT than heterosexual older adults reported providing care to a friend. This care is invaluable in supporting the independence, health, and well-being of SGD care recipients.

Research is needed on the effects of relationships on SGD well-being that uses reliable assessment tools, samples that are based on nationally representative data, and longitudinal designs. Research on SGD families and couples that devotes attention to diversity and intersectionality, with a particular focus on multiple, intersecting forms of inequality, is also needed.

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Educational Environments

This chapter considers the body of research in the last decade on the school experiences of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) students (Russell and Horn, 2016; Wimberly, 2015). Most research in this area has focused on school experiences in middle schools and high schools, but we note examples where research has extended to elementary schools and higher education. Much of the research has focused on experiences of bullying and victimization (NASEM, 2016), yet there is a growing body of research that identifies educational policies and practices that are associated with positive experiences for SGD students, whether through reducing bullying and victimization or improving school climates. As discussed in Chapter 8, SGD youth are coming out at younger ages and are therefore encountering unique experiences in schools with peer groups based on their sexual orientation and gender identity at earlier stages.

Experiences that SGD students have in school are important because school has historically been a primary institution that has socialized cisnormativity and heteronormativity in the lives of children and youth (McNeill, 2013; Pascoe, 2011). Furthermore, negative experiences in school not only undermine personal well-being but also affect educational attainment and, ultimately, occupational attainment and socioeconomic status. In addition, SGD issues in education extend beyond the experiences of individual students. Research on lesbian and gay parents and their children has illuminated the issues that parents navigate in their children's schools, as well as the experiences of their children as students.

Before considering the research findings, it is important to describe the range of methodological approaches that researchers have used in the study of SGD issues in education. The earliest studies were based on community (often called “convenience”) samples of self-identified gay and lesbian students. These studies, both qualitative (e.g., interviews and ethnographies) and quantitative (e.g., survey questionnaires), were not intended to be representative but rather to highlight the unique experiences of SGD students in schools. Other studies documented the culture and climate of schools. For example, Pascoe’s (2011) ethnographic study of a U.S. high school illuminated ways that rigid rules of masculinity undergird school climates characterized by heteronormativity and homophobia.

In the past 20 years, surveys have become central to understanding the experiences of SGD students as new ways to reach SGD youth populations were identified, and SGD measures began to be included on youth surveys. In 1999 the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (now known as GLSEN) introduced its biennial National School Climate Survey. The survey was created to capture the experiences of SGD students and thus included multiple measures relevant to their experiences (e.g., whether they are “out” at school) that would otherwise not be feasible to include in general population school surveys. Although not a population-based or representative sample, the survey has provided a valuable source of information about SGD students and their experiences in schools.

Also in the 1990s, several states included questions about sexual identity or same-sex sexual behavior in their Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS). These studies were the first to provide population-based estimates of health-related risk behaviors for gay and lesbian youth, as well as youth with a history of same-sex sexual behavior. Most of the early focus was on health and risk behaviors, rather than school experiences. Also over the past two decades, measures of same-sex sexual behavior, sexual identity, and gender identity have been included in multiple local, state, and federal education and health monitoring systems, making population-based estimates possible. Although most of these studies exclude questions specific to the experiences of SGD students in schools, several include questions about SGD discrimination, such as being bullied “because you are gay or lesbian or someone thought you were” (Russell et al., 2012, p. 144).

Most research attention has been on the experiences of sexual minority students (students who report LGB identities) or has combined sexual and gender minority youth into global measures of SGD students. Recently, however, 10 states and 9 urban school districts that participated in the 2017 YRBS included a measure of transgender identity. Results from the YRBS are reported at various points in this chapter.

DISCRIMINATORY EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

Bullying, Victimization, and Well-Being

Early research identified victimization and bullying as significant issues in the lives of what was then termed gay youth (Hunter and Schaecher, 1987; Rofes, 1993), a theme that has continued to this day. Findings from the 2015 YRBS showed that 34 percent of LGB students reported being bullied on school property, compared with 19 percent of heterosexual students (Kann et al., 2016). In 2017, the YRBS included a measure of transgender identity in some states and localities; results showed that 35 percent of transgender students reported being bullied at school (Johns et al., 2019b). A recent consensus study by the National Academies (2016) highlighted bullying as a significant social problem in schools and identified both that LGBTQ students are a population at higher risk for being bullied and that discriminatory bullying often takes the form of homophobic or transphobic bullying. Although most research has focused on secondary schools, similar patterns of discriminatory behavior have been documented for sexual minority and transgender students in higher education (Beemyn, 2012; Rankin, 2005). Several recent studies have examined school restroom and locker room access for transgender and other gender diverse students, showing in one case that transgender students who were restricted from using restroom and locker rooms that matched their gender identity were at higher risk for assault (Murchison et al., 2019). Another study found that transgender and gender-nonconforming students who felt unsafe in bathrooms reported lower quality of life and more anxiety (Weinhardt et al., 2017).

Not surprisingly, bullying and lack of safety at school have been consistently linked to the compromised mental, behavioral, and academic well-being of SGD students. Population-based studies have documented the association between bullying at school and mental health problems (e.g., depressive symptoms and suicidality) and risk behaviors (e.g., substance use) for sexual minority students (Russell et al., 2012), and recent studies document similar patterns for transgender students (Day et al., 2017; Perez-Brumer et al., 2017). For LGBT college students, perceived discrimination is associated with both adjustment at college and indecision regarding vocation (Schmidt, Miles, and Welsh, 2011). In one of the few studies of the school experiences of adults with intersex traits, an online survey of more than 200 Australians, many respondents reported school bullying, and many dropped out of school before receiving a high school certification (Jones, 2016).

The association of bullying with mental health and risk behaviors is strong and consistent across studies. Some studies have found a similar pat-

tern in the link between bullying and poor academic achievement (Poteat, Scheer, and Mereish, 2014), but the evidence is less consistent. Other studies have found a bimodal distribution in attainment: some SGD youth reported higher attainment than their non-SGD peers, and others reported lower attainment (Watson and Russell, 2016). Since many LGBT students reported negative peer experiences, such as victimization and associated mental health challenges, as well as higher rates of suspension or expulsion (Poteat, Scheer, and Chong, 2016), those experiences may undermine academic focus and achievement or prompt disengagement at school. Yet the higher educational attainment reported by some SGD students may be due to their focus on academic achievement (Pachankis and Hatzenbuehler, 2013). Negative experiences at school might induce some students to align their interests with academics and the adult achievement values of their schools while withdrawing from peer settings where they are at risk for victimization (Watson and Russell, 2016).

Differential Treatment in Schools

SGD students interact extensively with school personnel, and there is evidence that LGBTQ students may be treated differently than other students. One study that used data from a school survey of nearly 900 LGBQ students matched with comparison heterosexual youth found that the LGBQ students reported more school suspensions and more juvenile justice system involvement and that the differences were not explained by different rates of punishable behavior at school (Poteat, Scheer, and Chong, 2016). These results parallel well-documented racial disparities in exclusionary discipline that have shown that Black and Latinx youth are much more likely to be suspended or expelled from schools than white youth (Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera, 2010). Recent studies have also documented the intersections of race with sexual and gender diversity, such as the ways that LGBTQ youth of color are overrepresented in exclusionary discipline in schools (Chmielewski et al., 2016). Qualitative studies have documented the ways that gender, race, and sexuality intersect to disadvantage youth who are gender nonconforming: for example, Latinx girls whose gender expression is masculine may be perceived by teachers as threatening, while Black boys whose gender expression is feminine may be disciplined for their dress, behavior, or expression (Snapp et al., 2015a).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Economic opportunities are considered in the next chapter, yet education shapes the economic opportunities available to LGBT people, and education itself reflects a measure of socioeconomic status. The research on

attainment provides support for different hypotheses. Due to experiences of discrimination or victimization at school, SGD students may skip school, drop out, not plan to attend college, and have lower academic achievement. Lack of family support might hinder enrollment in higher education enrollment. In contrast, however, sexual and gender minorities might invest more in education to compensate for the psychological and economic effects of stigma (Pachankis and Hatzenbuehler, 2013). Moreover, individuals expecting to partner with someone of the same sex might make different educational investments because of variation in expectations of having children or the need to contribute earnings to their families (Carpenter, 2009).

The research on educational attainment supports both hypotheses: most national samples of LGB people find higher-than-average levels of education, but lower levels for transgender people, while surveys of younger cohorts of people in the United States suggest that educational attainment is lower for LGBT people. It appears that, since SGD people from younger cohorts have been coming out earlier, they have greater likelihoods of exposure to risk factors for poor educational attainment, such as victimization in schools or loss of parental support. In national surveys that cut across age cohorts for adults, most (but not all) found higher average levels of education for self-identified LGB people or for people in same-sex couples (Black, Sanders, and Taylor, 2007; Gates, 2014).

Transgender people's relative education level also varies across surveys. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found higher levels of educational attainment among transgender and gender-nonconforming adults in comparison with the general population of adults in the United States (James et al., 2016). However, transgender people in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reported significantly lower average levels of education than cisgender people (Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020).

The range of experiences in the population—and the different times they went through the education system—makes it difficult to know why average education levels might be higher for LGB people, and few analyses of educational outcomes have drawn on these broad datasets. An important perspective comes from several studies that compared educational attainment of relatively recent cohorts of young people in longitudinal studies. Those studies found evidence of lower educational attainment for LGBT young people. One recent study using data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (Sansone, 2019) found that LGB people were almost 2 percent less likely to graduate from high school and 3 percent less likely to attend college than heterosexual people 7 years later, after holding constant demographic, family, school, and state characteristics. Transgender people had similar differences that were not statistically significant. A set of studies analyzing data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health also found lower levels of education among young sexual

minority women, who were less likely to graduate from high school or to enroll in and complete college than heterosexual women (Pearson and Wilkinson, 2017; Ueno, Roach, and Peña-Talamantes, 2013). In contrast, most men with same-sex attraction, identity, or behavior had similar educational levels as heterosexual men in their age group. However, the “late bloomers”—those who first reported same-sex attractions or behavior in adulthood—were more likely than heterosexual men to finish high school and college. Both women and men who identified as bisexual in adulthood were less likely to complete high school or to enroll in college than non-bisexual people, although the difference was only statistically significant for bisexual women (Mollborn and Everett, 2015).

Little is known about whether sexual orientation and gender identity influence students’ choice of college majors. An analysis of data from the 1993 National Survey of College Graduates found that women in same-sex couples were more likely than other women to report college majors that had higher percentages of men (Black, Sanders, and Taylor, 2007). Conversely, men in same-sex couples were more likely to have majors with higher proportions of women. A recent study replicates this finding for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors: sexual minority men who entered college wanting to be a STEM major are less likely than heterosexual men to actually end up with a STEM major four years later, while sexual minority women who entered with STEM interests are more likely than similar heterosexual women to be in a STEM major (Hughes, 2018).

EDUCATION LAWS AND SCHOOL POLICIES

There is now clear evidence that state and local K–12 education policies that are inclusive of SGD students—that enumerate status characteristics—provide a context for positive school climate and student well-being and success. Enumerated policies list status characteristics that may be the basis of bullying or discrimination and typically mandate protection for them; in some cases, policies identify strategies to promote school safety and reduce bullying.

There is no federal law pertaining to nondiscrimination in education based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or intersex characteristics. In the absence of federal law or policy, many states and school districts have responded by outlining such protections. As of the writing of this report, every state had an anti-bullying law or policy (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018), but only 21 states, 1 territory, and the District of Columbia had laws that prohibit bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; 24 states and 1 territory had no laws protecting SGD students; 5 states and 1 territory had no laws but had

school regulations or teacher codes that prohibit bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Movement Advancement Project, 2020).

Federal and state agencies provide guidance for interpretation of applicable laws and policies. Although there had not been explicit protection for transgender students in federal law, in 2016 the White House issued guidance to schools to allow students to use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identities, citing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which protects students from sex discrimination. However, in early 2017, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice reversed that guidance, pointing to the role of states to establish educational policy, effectively removing protection for transgender students under Title IX. A 2019 report revealed that, although transgender students were overrepresented in Title IX complaints and that harassment was the most frequent form of Title IX complaint, dramatically fewer LGBTQ-related complaints resulted in corrective action following the 2017 reversal (Mirza and Bewkes, 2019).

Research from several countries, U.S. states, and multiple local communities has found that the existence of nondiscrimination policies is associated with positive school climate and with more positive experiences for SGD and, indeed, all students (Black, Fedewa, and Gonzalez, 2012; Russell et al., 2010; Kull et al., 2016). As noted above, research to date on inclusive and enumerated policies has focused primarily on secondary education (middle and high schools). In schools that have nondiscrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, students not only reported feeling safer, but they also reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks and seeing less bullying (Kosciw et al., 2016; Kull et al., 2016); better school attendance (Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen, 2013); higher self-esteem (Kosciw et al., 2013), fewer mental health problems (Goodenow, Szalacha, and Westheimer, 2006; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014), including lower risk for suicidal behaviors (Meyer et al., 2019); and lower substance use (Konishi et al., 2013). Moreover, in schools with such policies, teachers are seen as being more supportive of LGBT students (Swanson and Gettinger, 2016) and are more likely to intervene in bullying (Kosciw et al., 2016), and students are less likely to report homophobic attitudes toward LGBT peers (Horn and Szalacha, 2009).

SCHOOL CLIMATE

In the past decade there has been a dramatic advance in research on school practices and programs that are associated with safe and supportive school climates for all students and with positive adjustment and well-being for SGD students (NASEM, 2019). These strategies include education or training for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; school clubs that support students' needs and interests; and explicit inclusion of

SGD topics in school curricula or in other school resources (e.g., libraries, posters or visual images, and designated safe spaces) (Day, Ioverno, and Russell, 2019; Gower et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2019a). Although a number of studies have documented prejudice and harassment of SGD students on college campuses (Rankin and Garvey, 2015; Rankin and Reason, 2006), most of the research has been focused on secondary schooling.

Professional Education and Training

Teachers play a defining role in the lives of all students, and support from teachers has been identified as a critical factor in the well-being of SGD students (Russell, Seif, and Truong, 2001). When SGD students view school personnel as supportive, they feel safer, have better attendance, and show better school performance (Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen, 2013; Kosciw et al., 2016; Seelman et al., 2012). Teacher support may come in the form of proactive, SGD-affirming relationships between students and their teachers or may be as basic as intervention in bullying and harassment when it takes place. In one study based in a large U.S. urban area, students said that teachers were less likely to intervene when they heard homophobic remarks than racist or sexist remarks (Kosciw et al., 2016). In fact, some students have reported that school personnel use homophobic language: in a national survey of LGBT students, 56 percent reported hearing homophobic remarks from school personnel (Kosciw et al., 2016). Thus, preventing bullying—especially bullying motivated by prejudice or bias—is a vexing challenge (NASEM, 2016). Many teachers and other school personnel are not professionally prepared to intervene in bullying or victimization or to promote school safety for SGD students.

Of course, there are many SGD teachers who themselves navigate school climate that may be hostile to SGD people. One of the few wide-scale surveys of LGBT teachers found that, although the majority reported feeling comfortable being out at school, the majority also reported hearing homophobic remarks at school with little intervention by their peers; furthermore, one-third reported hearing homophobic marks in the presence of administrators, the majority of which went unchecked (Wright and Smith, 2015). In addition, state laws and school district policies vary in nondiscrimination protections for students as well as teachers: some school communities do not support teachers to be assertive about promoting the well-being of SGD students, and many teachers lack employment protection based on their SGD status (Graves, 2018; see also Chapters 5 and 6).

Given these findings, professional education for teachers, administrators, and other personnel (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria workers) has been identified as a key strategy to improve school experiences and promote

positive school climates for all students. According to the nationwide 2018 School Health Profiles, a national survey of principals and school health teachers, 55.6–95.7 percent of schools reported that staff were “encouraged to attend professional development on safe and supportive school environments for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity” (CDC, 2019, p. 40). Several studies have documented the efficacy of training school personnel to understand and support SGD students (Gower et al., 2018; Greytak et al., 2016; Swanson and Gettinger, 2016). For example, in a national sample of secondary school teachers (Greytak et al., 2016), teachers who had professional development regarding LGBT issues were more likely to intervene when they heard homophobic remarks; however, general professional development on bullying was not associated with intervention in homophobic remarks.

School Clubs

Gay-straight alliances (GSAs, sometimes known as gender-sexuality alliances) are student-led clubs that aim to create a safe, welcoming school climate for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The percentage of U.S. schools with GSAs had grown from less than 25 percent of schools in 2008 to nearly 40 percent of schools in 2018 (CDC, 2019). However, there is significant variability in access to GSAs across the nation. In 2018, the percentage of high schools with GSAs ranged from 14.5 percent in Mississippi to 71.9 percent in Rhode Island (median, 36.8 percent) (CDC, 2019). Participating in a GSA has been linked to academic performance (i.e., higher grade point average) (Walls, Kane, and Wisneski, 2010), school belonging (Toomey, McGuire, and Russell, 2012), school safety (Ioverno et al., 2016), and a number of indicators of civic involvement or participation (Poteat et al., 2019, 2020).

Several early studies described the “whiteness” of GSAs (Herdt et al., 2006; McCready, 2004), and several recent studies have investigated differences in participation in and support from GSAs for students, showing differences by race and ethnicity as well as by sexual and gender identity. In one study, racial and ethnic minority GSA members reported less frequent GSA attendance and receiving less peer support (Poteat et al., 2015) and less engagement in their GSA than white youth (Poteat et al., 2015). At the same time, transgender and genderqueer students reported greater involvement in their GSAs, and sexual minority students reported more support and engagement in GSAs than other students (Poteat et al., 2016).

The benefits of GSAs are not limited to participants. Several studies have found that the presence of a GSA at a school (regardless of a student’s membership) is linked to positive outcomes for both LGBT students

(Chesir-Teran and Hughes, 2009; Goodenow, Szalacha, and Westheimer, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2016; Lee, 2002; O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004; Szalacha, 2003; Walls, Kane, and Wisneski, 2010) and heterosexual students (Poteat et al., 2013; Saewyc et al., 2014; Szalacha, 2003). Students who attended schools with GSAs reported hearing less homophobic language, seeing less bullying, and feeling more belonging (Kosciw et al., 2016).

In addition, having a GSA has been linked to better health and health behaviors for LGBT students, including lower risk behaviors (Heck et al., 2014; Poteat et al., 2013) and better mental health (Goodenow, Szalacha, and Westheimer, 2006; McCormick, Schmidt, and Clifton, 2015; Saewyc et al., 2014; Toomey et al., 2011; Walls, Freedenthal, and Wisneski, 2008; Walls, Wisneski, and Kane, 2013). A recent meta-analysis showed that, across studies, LGBT students with GSAs in their schools were less likely to be victimized and more likely to feel safe than LGBT students in schools without GSAs (Marx and Kettrey, 2016). In one longitudinal study, having a GSA was linked with less bullying and more safety the following school year (Ioverno et al., 2016). Another recent study showed that having a well-functioning GSA was associated with less homophobic bullying, especially in schools with a negative climate overall, and especially for transgender students (Ioverno and Russell, 2020).

School Resources and Inclusive Curricula

A growing body of research has identified the ways that resources and inclusive curricula in schools contribute to positive school climates and SGD student well-being (Black, Fedewa, and Gonzalez, 2012; Russell et al., 2010). In a national study of LGBTQ students (Kosciw et al., 2016), those who had access to supportive information felt safer at school. Another study showed that students with access to LGBTQ-related resources were more likely to believe that adults cared about them and that teachers were fair (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004). “Safe spaces” or “safe zones,” designated school personnel, classrooms, and student organizations where SGD students can receive support, have emerged in K–12 schools in recent years. Across states, data from the School Health Profiles indicate that safe spaces are now present in between 44.2 and 95.2 percent of schools (CDC, 2019). There is as yet little empirical evaluation of the efficacy of safe spaces for SGD students in K–12 education, but several studies show that the presence of safe zones contributes to feelings of safety and greater connectedness for SGD students in college (Evans, 2002; Katz et al., 2016).

There is strong evidence that curricula that are inclusive of sexual and gender diversity contribute to school safety for all students (Burdge et al.,

2013; Snapp et al., 2015b). Although many studies have documented the affirming role of inclusive curricula, there are few examples of standard curriculum modules that are publicly available: see Box 9-1 for a model example. Some states have laws that require nonpejorative descriptions of SGD people in curricula, yet laws that prohibit the discussion or positive portrayal of homosexuality in instruction, often specifically related to HIV education (and sometimes called “no promo homo laws”), remain in place in six U.S. states. Thus, for SGD youth, there are important geographic differences in the degree to which sexual and gender diversity is included in school curricula.

Multiple studies have found that students who learn about SGD issues at school report less bullying (Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen, 2013; Russell et al., 2006; Snapp et al., 2015a), more safety (Szalacha, 2003; Toomey, McGuire, and Russell, 2012), and better attendance (Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen, 2013; Kosciw et al., 2016). A study of over 1,200 students from 154 middle schools and high schools in California found that SGD curricular materials were most common in sexuality education or health education classes (40%), followed by English and social studies classes (27%); mathematics, science, music, art, drama, and physical education were the least likely subjects to include inclusive lessons (Snapp et al., 2015b). The pattern of findings in that study, which compared student-level as well as school-level differences, showed that students who reported using inclusive curricular materials were more likely than students in the same school who did not use inclusive materials to report being bullied; however, at the school level, inclusive curricula were associated with greater feelings of safety. The results suggest that students who may be targets of homophobic bullying may seek out classes that have inclusive curricula, or they may be more attuned to perceive and report bullying.

Finally, there has been growing attention to the inclusion of SGD issues in sexuality education in schools (Meadows, 2018). Inclusive and accurate school-based sexuality education can provide access to information that may not be available to SGD youth in other community settings (Elia et al., 2015). Yet sexuality education programs have historically excluded information about SGD attraction, identities, relationships, or healthy sexual expression (Kubicek et al., 2010; McNeill, 2013; Meadows, 2018), and this silence has directly or indirectly communicated messages of fear, shame, and prejudice to SGD people (Bishop et al., 2020). In the absence of school-based inclusive sexuality education, there are encouraging new models for sexuality education to reach SGD youth; the evaluation of an online sexual health promotion program for LGBT youth found gains across multiple outcomes, including self-acceptance, relationship skills, and safer sex knowledge (Mustanski et al., 2015).

BOX 9-1
A Model of Inclusive Curricula:
“Defending Democracy at Home”

Many studies have documented the affirming role of inclusive curricula, but there are few publicly available standard curriculum modules. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education offers a model curriculum unit, “Defending Democracy at Home: Advancing Constitutional Rights, *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) Same-Sex Marriage,” as part of English language arts/literacy and humanities resources. The unit, also designated as appropriate for history and social science, is designed for grades 11 and 12. It examines “the role of state courts, individuals, and advocacy organizations in working to advocate for the expansion of constitutional rights in advance of *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the Supreme Court Case that led to the protection of same-sex marriage as a fundamental right under the Constitution.”

SOURCE: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/mcu/ela-hssg11-12-defending-democracy.docx>.

**SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS
AND THEIR CHILDREN**

In adulthood, many SGD people have significant interaction with schools in their roles as parents. Several factors have prompted scholarly interest in these experiences, given the recognized importance of strong relationships between K–12 schools and parents. Several studies, though based on small samples of same-sex couple families, have shown that parents may experience homophobia expressed by teachers (Gartrell et al., 2005) and that teachers may exclude those parents from activities or events (Goldberg, 2014). In addition to these explicit forms of exclusion, heteronormative practices in schools (such as parent forms that have spaces only for mother and father) implicitly exclude many SGD parents (Goldberg, 2014; Leland, 2019).

There has been interest in whether and how SGD parents “come out” in the context of their children’s schools. In a nationwide study of more than 500 LGBT parents, two-thirds had self-identified to their children’s teachers (Kosciw and Diaz, 2008). In contrast, a study of 50 transgender parents’ experiences with their children’s school found that disclosure was much less common (Haines, Ajayi, and Boyd, 2014). For some SGD parents, disclosure may be part of the process of school selection; some parents reported disclosing their identities to ensure that they chose a safe and inclusive school for their children (Goldberg, 2014; Leland, 2019). There is emerging research on the degree to which parents explicitly disclose or

conceal their sexual or gender identities at their children's schools and whether those decisions change over the course of child development: parents' diversity status appears more salient as children get older (Goldberg et al., 2017b).

The experiences that SGD parents have navigating their children's schools have implications for their involvement. Studies of parental involvement in schooling clearly show gendered patterns, with mothers being more involved in schools than fathers. In contrast, recent studies of same-sex couples or lesbian and gay parents have shown greater involvement in early education classrooms by gay male fathers than by heterosexual fathers (Goldberg et al., 2017a). Other studies of lesbian and gay parents' school involvement have reported that involvement is more common among parents who perceive their communities as more homophobic but who also perceive less exclusion from other parents (Goldberg and Smith, 2014). Overall, SGD parents may feel the need to be more active if they perceive a potentially hostile context for their children, yet they are understandably more involved when they feel included with networks of other parents. However, these findings are based on small samples, and further research is needed.

A few studies have investigated the academic or school adjustment of students with SGD parents, focusing on secondary school samples. In a large, geographically diverse sample that included LGBT as well as non-LGBT students, adolescents who identified as LGBT reported that their schools were less safe for students with LGBT parents (Russell et al., 2008). Among all students, those who reported that they had learned about LGBT issues in the school curriculum or who had teachers who intervened in homophobic harassment reported that their schools were safer for students with LGBT parents (Russell et al., 2008). A survey of more than 3,700 Canadian students found that students with an LGBT parent were more likely to report victimization at school and to have skipped school in the past year because they felt unsafe (Peter, Taylor, and Edkins, 2016).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Much of the existing research on sexual and gender diversity in education has focused on experiences of bullying and victimization; however, there is a growing body of research that identifies educational policies and practices associated with positive experiences for SGD students, whether through reducing bullying and victimization or improving school climates. Experiences that SGD students have in school are important not only because negative experiences undermine personal well-being but also because school experiences set the groundwork for educational attainment, future occupational achievement, and socioeconomic status. Because SGD youth are coming out at younger ages, research on school experiences that extends

to elementary schools and continues through higher education could help researchers gain a clearer understanding of the way these experiences affect students over their life course.

LGBTQ students are at risk for being victimized by homophobic bullying or by experiencing a hostile campus climate. Although most research has focused on secondary schools, similar patterns of discriminatory behavior have been documented for sexual minority and transgender students in higher education. The majority of LGBT students who experience bullying report negative peer experiences such as victimization, as well as higher rates of suspension or expulsion, which can undermine academic focus and achievement or lead to disengagement at school.

CONCLUSION 9-1: Many sexual and gender diverse students experience discrimination or victimization—most commonly, bullying—in educational environments from K–12 through higher education. These experiences are strongly linked to vulnerabilities with respect to mental health, behavioral health, and academic achievement.

Although no federal law explicitly prohibits discrimination in education based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or intersex characteristics, federal courts and agencies have found that such discrimination may be covered under the federal ban on sex discrimination. State and local K–12 education policies that are inclusive of SGD students and that clearly enumerate characteristics of students who have historically been targets of bullying in the language regarding protection from bullying and discrimination (including sexual orientation and gender identity) are associated with positive school climates and with students' well-being and success. In schools with such policies, teachers are also seen as being more supportive of LGBT students and are more likely to intervene in bullying.

CONCLUSION 9-2: The adoption of inclusive and enumerated non-discrimination and anti-bullying laws and policies is associated with positive school environments for sexual and gender diverse students, as well as students in other marginalized groups. Those laws and policies are also associated with positive student adjustment and achievement.

When SGD students view school personnel as supportive, they feel safer, have better attendance, and show better school performance. Many teachers and other school personnel are not professionally prepared to intervene in bullying or victimization or to promote school safety for SGD students; furthermore, many teachers work in communities where laws or policies may not support them being assertive about promoting the well-being of SGD students. Schools can use such strategies as professional edu-

cation and training for teachers, administrators, and other personnel (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria workers) to improve school experiences and promote a positive school climate for all students.

The presence of a gay-straight alliance at school (regardless of a student's membership) is linked to positive outcomes for LGBT students, and students with access to LGBTQ-related resources are more likely to believe that adults care about them and that teachers are fair.

CONCLUSION 9-3: Strategies such as teacher education and training to understand and support sexual and gender diverse students—incorporating resources and curricula to support sexual and gender diverse students and providing opportunities for student engagement in creating positive spaces at their schools—are associated with more positive experiences and outcomes for sexual and gender diverse students.

Research on lesbian and gay parents and their children has illuminated the issues that parents encounter in their children's schools, as well as the experiences of their children as students. Several small studies of same-sex couple families have shown that they may experience homophobia expressed by teachers and that teachers may exclude those parents from activities or events.

CONCLUSION 9-4: In comparison with other parents, sexual and gender diverse parents are equally or more engaged in their children's education. However, many sexual and gender diverse parents experience barriers to engagement in the form of direct or indirect discriminatory experiences.

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Economic Well-Being

The health, well-being, and quality of life of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations are significantly affected by the economic systems in which they live, develop, and work. Socioeconomic status and educational, employment, and housing opportunities are important measures of well-being. They are also connected to family, health, community, and other aspects of well-being addressed elsewhere in this report. This chapter explores what is known and not known about the economic well-being of SGD populations, and it identifies essential economics research needs. It examines how specific SGD populations fare with respect to economic well-being, focusing on individuals' and families' economic security and access to necessary resources that sustain and enhance life. In the United States, most of those resources or goods and services come from the marketplace, requiring purchases using income acquired through earnings from employment, benefits from a public assistance program, or income derived from sources of wealth. Accordingly, this chapter addresses what is known about income, wealth, and poverty, looking at differences based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The chapter also discusses several factors that are likely to affect income and wealth. As a complement to the discussion of education in Chapter 9 and the discussion of health in Chapter 11—two areas that contribute to the skills and knowledge that an individual has to offer in the labor market, known as human capital (Goldin, 2016)—this chapter adds a discussion of individual occupational attainment. It considers the dynamics of SGD families and households (one or more adults with or without children living together), the attainment of an adequate or equal standard of living

for SGD people in comparison with heterosexual and cisgender people, and barriers to that attainment, such as discrimination.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Overall, studies that measure socioeconomic status as earnings, household income, poverty, and occupational attainment reveal a complex picture of the economic well-being of SGD populations. The research primarily compares people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual with those who identify as heterosexual, or it compares transgender people with those who are cisgender. Much evidence suggests that bisexual and transgender people have lower incomes and higher poverty than lesbian, gay, and cisgender heterosexual people (Badgett, 2018; Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019; Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020). Lesbian women and gay men may have mitigated some of the effects of discrimination on earnings and household income through adaptive strategies in education, occupations, and family decisions, but they still face discrimination in the labor force (Valfort, 2017).

Individual Income from Earnings

Research on individual earnings suggests that, after controlling for differences in income-related characteristics, gay and bisexual men earn less than heterosexual men and that lesbian and bisexual women earn less than heterosexual men but more than heterosexual women (Klawitter, 2015; Valfort, 2017). Recent research suggests that the lower earnings of bisexual men might be driving those general patterns for men, but the research is not conclusive on this point (Carpenter, 2005; Mize, 2016; Sabia, 2014). Some evidence suggests that the wage gap for men might be diminishing over time, but these observations are preliminary and have not been confirmed.

These general findings have been made possible by the growing availability of datasets that have measures of income along with measures of sexual orientation or gender identity, thus improving researchers' ability to analyze income differences. Some datasets have behavioral measures of sexual orientation (the sex of one's sexual partners), and others have measures of self-identity (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender). Many datasets that lack sexual orientation questions do contain household rosters that allow the identification of people with same-sex partners, as in the U.S. census, the American Community Survey (ACS), and the Current Population Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Those datasets expand researchers' ability to compare economic outcomes between people in same-sex couples and people with different-sex partners, but they do not include single people. Other significant data gaps remain. Some samples of older SGD populations are too small for analysis or for detailed comparisons by race or ethnicity.

In addition, no probability-based surveys with individual income measures include questions on transgender status or people with intersex traits, so less is known about the economic status of those groups.

Making comparisons of income among sexual orientation and gender identity categories is a complex task. For example, a recent study of incomes in the 2013–2015 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) reported average annual earnings; they were \$39,903 for heterosexual women but \$38,803 for bisexual women and \$47,026 for lesbian women. Earnings were \$57,033 for heterosexual men, \$49,766 for bisexual men, and \$59,618 for gay men (Carpenter and Eppink, 2017). However, such simple comparisons of average earnings may be misleading, as differences in the characteristics of groups, such as a higher average education level or different ages, confound observed earnings differences across groups. Accordingly, the rest of this section reviews research from economics and sociology that accounts for other influences on earnings, such as race, sex, age, education, and experience.

Earnings differences by sexual orientation were examined in a recent meta-analysis of 31 studies conducted through 2012, of which 69 percent were from the United States (Klawitter, 2015). After adjusting for key factors that influence earnings, these studies found that, on average, gay and bisexual men earn 11 percent less than comparable heterosexual men, with ranges of 11–16 percent lower wages in the United States and 0–30 percent lower for all countries. The biggest gaps were seen in studies using data on same-sex couples. Earnings for lesbian and bisexual women were nine percent higher than those for heterosexual women on average (the “lesbian premium”). The range of estimates for women was wider than for men, partly because the studies analyzed only full-time workers: differences in earnings between lesbian and bisexual women and heterosexual women ranged from 5 to 15 percent higher earnings for lesbian and bisexual women in the United States and from 25 percent lower earnings to 43 percent higher earnings in studies from all countries.

In general, recent studies continue to find negative earnings gaps for gay and bisexual men (Burn, 2019; Valfort, 2017). However, one U.S. study found a different earnings pattern for gay men in comparison with heterosexual men. An analysis of data from the 2013–2015 NHIS, including more than 1,300 self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (Carpenter and Eppink, 2017), found that, after controlling for race, age, education, partnership, children, region, and job characteristics, both lesbian women and gay men earned more than their heterosexual counterparts. One possible reason for the unusual finding for men is that the NHIS data did not include a variable for living in an urban area. That variable is important, since urban areas have higher wages and more gay men (Denier and Waite, 2019). More recent studies on earnings differences for lesbian and bisexual

women show mixed results: some studies report higher earnings for them than for heterosexual women (Burn, 2019; Valfort, 2017); other studies report lower earnings (Curley, 2018; Martell, 2019; Martell and Hansen, 2017). For example, one study using data from the ACS found that women under 45 who have female partners have lower earnings than women with male partners, while women over 45 with female partners have the lesbian “earnings premium” (Martell, 2019).

While most studies reviewed by Klawitter (2015) and Valfort (2017) combined gay or lesbian people with bisexual people and compared the combined group to heterosexual men or women, some studies have been able to estimate separate effects for being bisexual and lesbian or gay people. Two such studies found that bisexual men and women (but not gay men or lesbian women) appear to earn less than heterosexuals and less than gay or lesbian people (Carpenter, 2005; Mize, 2016). In contrast, two other studies found either small or insignificant earnings differences for bisexual men and women compared with heterosexuals (Carpenter and Eppink, 2017; Sabia, 2014).

Some researchers have considered specifically whether the sexual orientation effects on income have fallen over time in the United States. Findings from these studies are inconclusive due to design weaknesses, including confounding, small sample sizes, and failure to report the statistical significance of reported differences (Clarke and Sevak, 2013; Cushing-Daniels and Yeung, 2009; Elmslie and Tebaldi, 2014; Klawitter, 2015; Martell and Hansen, 2017).

Interpretations of Earnings Data

The interpretation of reported wage differences by sexual orientation or gender identity is challenging for several reasons: LGBT people are a heterogeneous population, and the effects may be subgroup specific; studies have used different data sources; time periods vary; and the study designs limit extrapolations.

One possible interpretation is that discrimination accounts for some of the observed wage gaps for gay and bisexual men (Badgett, 1995; Blandford, 2003). A recent study found that the wage gap is larger for men in same-sex couples who live in states with more people who are prejudiced against homosexuals (Burn, 2019). Another study argued that discrimination was an unlikely explanation for the observed pay gap among some bisexual people because they are unlikely to be known as bisexual, such as bisexual men with female partners (Sabia, 2014). Finally, a few studies have estimated the effect of statewide employment nondiscrimination laws on wage gaps, finding some evidence that states with those laws have lower earnings gaps for gay men (Burn, 2018; Klawitter, 2011).

A second potential interpretation of earnings differences relates to the household division of labor, or how families, particularly couples, divide up paid work and household work responsibilities. Those decisions directly affect how much time an individual devotes to hours worked in the paid labor market and to earnings, as well as how much individuals invest in building the human capital that may increase earnings over time (Becker, 1991). People who are partnered with or expect to partner with a person of the same sex might make different decisions about education, training, experience, and careers than those who plan to partner with a different-sex partner (Antecol and Steinberger, 2013; Badgett, 1995; Black, Sanders, and Taylor, 2007).

Some analysts have argued that gay men will not expect to support a partner and children, so they will invest less in labor market-specific human capital than heterosexual men, reducing gay men's earnings (Black et al., 2003). However, as noted in Chapter 9, measures of actual investment in education do not support this argument.

The thesis about the household division of labor may better fit the common, although not universal, pattern of higher earnings for lesbian and bisexual women. Lesbian and bisexual women might expect not to have a higher earning (male) partner who might be expected to provide for them. This expectation might result in greater investment in their own education, training, and experience, thereby raising their wages above those of heterosexual women (Badgett, 2001; Black et al., 2003). However, although studies that report a lesbian premium did control for education, they did not directly measure labor market experience, requiring researchers to use a proxy (age minus years of education minus five). It is possible that researchers might be underestimating the gap in actual experience between lesbian and heterosexual women, which would make lesbian women look like they have higher earnings. The lack of inclusion of measures of sexual and gender diversity in longitudinal surveys has prevented more detailed comparisons of earnings at different stages of life for SGD people, as well as better insight into measuring labor market experience.

Given the gaps and weaknesses in the available data, studies use novel strategies to approximate the sexual orientation difference in labor market experience and explore whether the lesbian premium is related to greater commitment to and experience in the paid labor market. Two studies showed that the return on one year of potential experience is higher for lesbian women than for heterosexual women (Daneshvary, Waddoups, and Wimmer, 2008; Jepsen, 2007), supporting the idea that lesbian women have more unmeasured human capital than heterosexual women. Also, the wage premium is largest for lesbian women who do not have a bachelor's degree, and it disappears for those with higher levels of education, perhaps because heterosexual women with higher levels of education are also more

committed to the labor market (Daneshvary, Waddoups, and Wimmer, 2008). Notably, the premium is higher for women in same-sex couples who were never married to men (Daneshvary, Waddoups, and Wimmer, 2009). Overall, it appears plausible that lesbian women have higher earnings because of a greater commitment to the paid labor force, an adaptation that might also counteract a potential negative effect of discrimination on lesbian women's wages.

Overall, making generalizations about the individual earnings of LGBT people is very difficult, and future research is warranted to understand the causes of earnings differences. While the first generation of wage gap studies found a consistent penalty in the United States (and other countries) for gay and bisexual men, more recent studies are less consistent and occasionally find that only bisexual men earn significantly less than heterosexual men. Studies for lesbian and bisexual women have always found a wide range of values, with most U.S. studies showing higher earnings than heterosexual women but lower earnings than gay, bisexual, and heterosexual men, demonstrating the complexity of interpreting wages in the context of a highly gendered labor market.

Intersectionality

The wage effects of sexual orientation and gender identity may not be uniform across gender, race, and ethnicity, immigration status, or disability status given the intersecting effects of those personal characteristics, although there has been little research on intersectionality in economic outcomes. Three studies provide direct evidence that cisgender women and SGD people of color are worse off in terms of income than are their male or white counterparts. Two of these three studies used data on same-sex and different-sex couples from the ACS, which has the largest sample sizes of people presumed to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a; Douglas and Steinberger, 2015). Other sources of data have samples too small to support detailed comparisons by race and ethnicity.

Four perspectives demonstrate the variation in the effects of sexual orientation by gender, race, and ethnicity. First, one study showed that white LGB people earned more than Black, Hispanic, and Asian LGB people with the same characteristics, except for Asian lesbian women and Hispanic gay men (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a; Douglas and Steinberger, 2015). Second, lesbian and bisexual women of all races earn less than their same-race male counterparts (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a). Third, all lesbian women earn more than their same-race heterosexual female counterparts, but studies vary in findings about which group of lesbian women has the largest wage premium (Carpenter and Eppink, 2017; del Río and

Alonso-Villar, 2019a; Douglas and Steinberger, 2015). Fourth, a sexual orientation penalty consistently exists for white, Hispanic, and Asian gay men compared with same-race heterosexual men, but the relative earnings of Black gay men vary by study (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a; Douglas and Steinberger, 2015). Relative to white heterosexual men, Black gay men have the largest earnings gap, followed by Hispanic, Asian, and then white gay men (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a).

Household Income

Because members of households or families are likely to share income, it is useful to know how household income compares across sexual orientation or gender identity. However, there are only a few studies of LGBT household income that control for other predictors of income, which is important for making appropriate comparisons.

Studies of same-sex couples suggest that the gender composition of couples matters greatly. Married different-sex couples and male same-sex couples have the highest household incomes, while female same-sex couples and unmarried different-sex couples have the lowest (Black, Sanders, and Taylor, 2007; Klawitter, 2011). One recent study found that bisexual men had lower household incomes than heterosexual men (Chai and Maroto, 2019). Among couples in which one or both partners were 65 or older, female same-sex couples had significantly lower levels of income than either older male same-sex couples or older married different-sex couples (Goldberg, 2009).

Only one study assessed household income differences by gender identity (Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020). After taking into account differences in the number of adults in the household, health, education, age, race, and other characteristics, transgender women's household income was 17 percent lower and transgender men's income 9 percent lower than cisgender people's household income. However, the income difference was only statistically significant for the transgender women.

Poverty and Economic Insecurity

In the United States, people are classified as poor if their household income falls below the official poverty line for their family size and age configuration (Semega et al., 2019). A growing body of research suggests that at least some groups in the LGBT population—notably, transgender people and bisexual people—have a higher risk of poverty than heterosexual cisgender people. On average, lesbian women and gay men appear to be equally likely to be poor as heterosexuals, although some groups show a higher risk of poverty. In addition to these and similar measures of

poverty, this section also addresses food insecurity and other markers of having insufficient income to provide for human needs that suggest a higher level of economic insecurity for LGBT people.

The findings on relative poverty differ somewhat between studies using data on couples and those using data on self-identity among individuals. First, couple comparison studies have mostly found higher poverty rates for female same-sex couples than for women in married different-sex couples, but lower poverty rates for male same-sex couples than for men in married different-sex couples (Albelda et al., 2009; Badgett, 2018; Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum, 2013; Prokos and Keene, 2010; Schneebaum and Badgett, 2019). However, studies using ACS or census data also found that, after controlling for other predictors of being poor, such as education, employment, region, residence in a rural area, and race, both male and female same-sex couples are at greater risk of being poor than married different-sex couples.

Second, data on self-identified LGBT people show that bisexual and transgender people are more at risk and lesbian women and gay men at equal risk of poverty compared with heterosexual-identified people. One study pooled 2013–2016 NHIS data that included 2,600 self-identified LGB people (Badgett, 2018); the poverty rate was 14.3 percent for heterosexual women, 13.8 percent for lesbian women, and 27.3 percent for bisexual women; and the poverty rate was 11.0 percent for heterosexual men, 11.7 percent for gay men, and 22.9 percent for bisexual men. After controlling for other predictors, lesbian women and gay men were as likely to be poor as heterosexual people, but bisexual women and men were significantly more likely to be poor than heterosexuals with the same demographic, health, education, and other characteristics.¹ A recent study of data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) also found a similar risk of poverty for lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual men compared with their heterosexual counterparts and a significantly higher risk of poverty for bisexual women (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019).

Transgender people are much more vulnerable to poverty than are cisgender heterosexual, lesbian, and gay people according to two analyses of BRFSS data (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019; Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020). The poverty rate for transgender men was 33.7 percent, for transgender women 29.6 percent, and for gender-nonconforming people 23.8 percent; in comparison, the rate for cisgender heterosexual men was 13.4 percent, and for cisgender heterosexual women it was 17.8 percent

¹It is important to note, however, that the public-use NHIS dataset used in this study does not include a measure of urban residence, where wages are higher. As a result, the greater urban concentration of gay men than heterosexual men, in particular, could bias the poverty difference for gay men in the multivariable analysis.

(Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019). After controlling for predictors of poverty, transgender people (combined) had 70 percent higher odds of being poor than cisgender heterosexual men and 38 percent higher odds of being poor than cisgender heterosexual women. Similarly, the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), which is a large, purposive, community-based sample, found that one-third of transgender and gender-nonconforming adult respondents were living in poverty (James et al., 2016).

In addition to disaggregating the LGBT population, some research provides insights into subgroups of the LGBT population who are at greater or lesser risk of poverty.

- LGB people in couples, especially married couples, are less likely to be poor than single LGB people, based on 2013–2016 NHIS data (Badgett, 2018). These differences by marital status could reflect selection into marriage or the poverty-reducing effects of marriage.
- Same-sex couples and lesbian and bisexual women with children are more likely to be poor than childless couples or LGB women (Badgett, 2018; Brown, Manning, and Payne, 2016; Schneebaum and Badgett, 2019). Also, the poverty rates for same-sex couples raising children were twice as high as the rates for married different-sex couples raising children (Albelda et al., 2009; Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum, 2013).
- Blacks who identify as LGBT or are in same-sex couples have higher poverty rates than white LGBT people or same-sex couples and higher rates than non-LGBT Blacks (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019; Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum, 2013).
- People whose sex assigned at birth is female—women in same-sex couples and lesbian women generally, as well as transgender men—have higher rates of poverty than do all groups of cisgender men (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019).
- Among LGBT people, 26 percent living in rural areas are poor, compared with 21 percent of those living in urban areas (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019).
- In data from Washington state, LGB people 50 and older are as likely as heterosexuals to have incomes that are less than or equal to 200 percent of the poverty level (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013). Almost half (47 percent) of transgender people 50 and older had similarly low incomes in a recent survey (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2014).

Relatedly, several characteristics that are more common for LGB people may provide some protection from poverty, most notably higher levels of education and labor force participation, a lower probability of having chil-

dren, and living in urban areas (Badgett, Choi, and Wilson, 2019; Schneebaum and Badgett, 2019). Each of those factors tends to reduce the risk of poverty in general and therefore contributes to reducing the potential gap between LGB and heterosexual poverty rates.

The research on poverty is corroborated by other measures that indicate economic insecurity. An analysis from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health found that female sexual minorities were more likely than heterosexual women to have personal incomes in the near-poverty range (100–199 percent of the poverty level); both sexual minority women and men were more likely than heterosexuals to have experienced economic hardship in the past 12 months (such as unpaid rent or utility bills) (Conron, Goldberg, and Halpern, 2018).

Receiving means-tested benefits is another marker of economic insecurity. Same-sex couples are more likely to receive cash or cash-like public assistance benefits (such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP, food stamps]) than are married different-sex couples (Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum, 2013). Using several population-based surveys between 2011 and 2014, one study found that LGBT adults are more likely to report food insecurity and more likely to participate in the SNAP program than are non-LGBT adults (Brown, Romero, and Gates, 2016). Disparities were higher among bisexual people, women, young adults, and people of color. Other data also suggest that LGBT people overall have higher rates of use of Medicaid and SNAP than non-LGBT people (Rooney, Whittington, and Durso, 2018). Little is known about how low-income SGD populations are treated when seeking services and public assistance, but given the existence of bias in other economic settings, it is possible bias would also exist in public services. Policy simulations suggest that raising the minimum wage and reducing gender and racial wage gaps would reduce LGBT poverty (Badgett and Schneebaum, 2015, 2016).

These research studies have focused on economic insecurity, but many related topics are either mostly or completely unexplored (Burwick et al., 2014). For example, only a few studies have attempted to identify economic issues for aging LGBT people. Surveys show that the LGBT population is young and growing among younger cohorts (see Chapter 3), but older cohorts have faced different historical contexts and might have diminished social and financial resources in retirement, requiring particular policies and services (Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016). In addition, very little is known about the pathways into poverty or the barriers to leaving poverty for SGD populations. Higher take-up rates for means-tested programs might also disguise differences in treatment and experiences of LGBT people: exploring this issue would require administrative data and other research efforts. No research has focused on how inclusive or effective human services and

programs are for LGBT adults, nor have studies assessed the effectiveness of other services that are more directly targeted to low-income LGBT people. There has also been little systematic research about the interactions between poverty and the criminal justice system (Hunter, McGovern, and Sutherland, 2018). Finally, one in five respondents to the USTS reported that they had worked in the underground economy at some time in their lives, particularly in the sex or drug trades (James et al., 2016). A small body of available research links participation in survival economic work with arrests and incarceration (Fitzgerald, Elspeth, and Hickey, 2015; James et al., 2016) and social services discrimination (Bakko, 2019).

Occupational Attainment and Segregation

People's occupations provide an additional indicator of socioeconomic status. Only a few studies have directly addressed this issue, finding that LGB people have different occupational patterns than do heterosexuals (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a, 2019b; Pearson and Wilkinson, 2017; Tilcsik, Anteby, and Knight, 2015; Ueno, Peña-Talamantes, and Roach, 2013; Ueno, Vaghela, and Nix, 2018). These differing patterns of occupational attainment by an ascribed status, like gender identity and sexual orientation, are generally called occupational segregation. Occupational segregation matters because occupation is an important determinant of earnings, and it also reflects the inclusiveness of labor markets for SGD populations.

The studies of earnings discussed above usually controlled for occupation in their analyses, and several of them also highlighted that LGB people are overrepresented or underrepresented in particular occupational categories when compared with non-LGBT people (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger, 2008; Badgett, 1995; Baumle, Compton, and Poston, 2009). One study analyzing detailed occupational data for same-sex partners and different-sex partners in the ACS found clear patterns of occupation segregation: 22.5 percent of people in same-sex couples would have to change their occupations in order to have the same occupational distribution as the overall economy, compared with only 9 percent of people in different-sex couples who would have to change (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019b).

Researchers are divided about whether occupational segregation by sexual orientation is a positive or negative outcome. For example, one consistent finding across studies is that gender plays a smaller role in the sorting of LGB individuals into occupations than it does for heterosexual people (Badgett and King, 1997; Baumle, Compton, and Poston, 2009; del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019b; Ueno, Roach, and Peña-Talamantes, 2013). More specifically, lesbian and bisexual women are in occupations with a

higher percentage of men than are heterosexual women; gay and bisexual men are in occupations with a higher percentage of women than are heterosexual men. These patterns might be seen as positive if LGB people feel less constrained by early socialization or by gendered expectations about appropriate occupations than do heterosexual men and women. However, stereotyping and discrimination may also generate gendered barriers that shape those patterns. For instance, gay and bisexual men are less likely to be hired into jobs requiring stereotypically masculine characteristics (such as being assertive or aggressive), and lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to be hired when employers seek stereotypically feminine characteristics (such as being cheerful or gentle) (Ahmed, Andersson, and Hammarstedt, 2013; Drydakis, 2015; Tilcsik, 2011).

Stigma may also shape occupational choices of sexual and gender minorities in other ways. Compared with heterosexual people, LGB people are found in occupations that involve more task independence and social perceptiveness, which might protect them against discrimination and harassment if they were to disclose their sexual orientation (Martell, 2018; Tilcsik, Anteby, and Knight, 2015). Also, some evidence from Australia and the United States suggests that LGB people seek out occupations where they will have more tolerant coworkers (Badgett and King, 1997; Plug and Webbink, 2014).

One way to assess whether occupational segregation is benign would be to see its effect on earnings, and two studies suggest that this relationship is complicated by the role of education in both occupational attainment and income. The occupational patterns of men in same-sex couples tend to raise their earnings relative to the average for people in different-sex couples, while women in same-sex couples get only a tiny bump in earnings from their occupational patterns (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019b). However, those gains are largely because of individuals' relatively high education levels. After controlling for education and other relevant characteristics, the gains from occupations shrink for men in same-sex couples and are negative for women of all races in same-sex couples. Also, those gains are not the same across race, and it is mainly white and Asian people in same-sex couples who gain from occupational sorting, while Black and Hispanic people in same-sex couples are in occupations that tend to reduce their earnings relative to all earners (del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2019a). A study of one young cohort found that young women who had sexual contact with women in young adulthood had lower status occupations (measured by education and income in occupations) than those with early sexual contact or no sexual contact with women, at least partly because of lower levels of education (Ueno, Peña-Talamantes, and Roach, 2013). In contrast, young men who had dating relationships with men in young adulthood were in higher status occupations than men without same-sex

dating or those with early same-sex dating, at least partly because of their higher education levels.

In sum, research has established differences in occupational patterns across sexual orientation. But the research on how and why sexual and gender diversity shape occupational segregation is at an early stage. Further research will be necessary to distinguish the extent to which occupational segregation reflects stigma-related stereotyping and barriers or reflects greater freedom from gender stereotypes.

WORKFORCE ISSUES

Employment Discrimination

Research conducted over several decades has found that SGD populations face stigma and unequal treatment in the workforce. Assessments of discrimination toward SGD employees come in a variety of forms, but there are as yet no studies in the United States of discrimination against people with intersex traits. Self-reports of discrimination show that many LGBT people perceive that they have been treated unequally in the workforce. For example, findings from a 2017 survey using a national probability sample of more than 3,400 LGBT adults showed that one in five reported experiencing discrimination associated with their LGBT status when applying for a job (National Public Radio, 2017). A 2017 study of federal agencies in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics found that LGBT employees reported more negative workplace experiences than their non-LGBT colleagues (Cech and Pham, 2017). More than 9,000 people filed charges of employment discrimination based on either sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination with state and federal nondiscrimination agencies over the 2013–2016 period (Baumle, Badgett, and Boutcher, 2019).

The 2015 USTS includes substantial self-reporting of workplace discrimination by transgender and gender-nonconforming people: 19 percent report being fired, denied a promotion, or not getting hired due to their gender identity or expression (James et al., 2016). Other studies of non-random samples of transgender people reveal a range of workplace experiences when transitioning (Brewster et al., 2014; Dietert and Dentice, 2010; Lombardi and Malouf, 2001; Ruggs et al., 2015). In some cases, transgender workers report having supportive workplaces and positive experiences, while others have more negative experiences, including coworkers' refusal to use proper pronouns and negative treatment for deviating from gender norms. One study compared non-binary transgender people to transgender men and transgender women, finding that transgender women often reported the worst workplace outcomes in terms of unemployment, underemployment, and discrimination (Davidson, 2016).

Several audit studies that consider employer responses to resumes provide additional evidence of employment discrimination. These studies involve carefully constructed experiments to see if applicants who are sexual and gender minorities, as indicated primarily by activities on a resume, are treated differently than cisgender heterosexual applicants. A large U.S. study found that openly gay men in many states were less likely to be invited to a first-round interview than otherwise identical straight men (Tilcsik, 2011). That study implied that a gay man would have to apply to 14 jobs to get an interview while a heterosexual man would have to apply for only 9. A similar result was found for LGBT women in the United States (Mishel, 2016). A third experiment found evidence that racial and sexual stereotypes might interact in unexpected ways: Black gay male job applicants were seen as less threatening and as deserving of higher salaries than Black heterosexual male job candidates (Pedulla, 2014). However, transgender people in New York City who applied in person for jobs were significantly less likely to receive job offers for retail sales positions than cisgender applicants with comparable fictionalized resumes (Make the Road New York, 2010). Studies in other countries also find potentially discriminatory hiring practices for gay men and lesbian women in Sweden and the United Kingdom and for transgender people in four Asian countries (Ahmed, Andersson, and Hammarstedt, 2013; Drydakis, 2015; Winter et al., 2018). A challenge associated with experimental designs that focus on reaction to resumes is that they are generally limited to entry-level positions; assessments of discrimination at later career stages are limited.

Other possible evidence of employment discrimination comes from disparities in the probability of unemployment, defined as being available and searching for a job. Analyses of population-based data from Gallup show that 9 percent of LGBT-identified adults report being unemployed compared with 5 percent of non-LGBT adults. The 2015 USTS found that 15 percent of transgender and gender-nonconforming adult respondents said they were unemployed (James et al., 2016), and another study shows that, after controlling for other predictors of unemployment in BRFSS data, transgender people were more likely than cisgender men to be unemployed (Carpenter, Eppink, and Gonzales, 2020). In general, the research base is too thin to draw conclusions about unemployment disparities.

Many important research topics are understudied related to the experiences of LGBT people in the workplace. Expanding the research base will be necessary to better identify the sources of disadvantage and to design and evaluate interventions to reduce discrimination. Such research might include analyzing variation in the experiences of SGD populations by other important characteristics, such as race and ethnicity; variation by geographic location, in relation to policy and attitudes; and varia-

tion by industry and occupation. Research that studies the attitudes and behaviors of supervisors and coworkers of LGBT people might provide additional insights.

Compensation Discrimination

SGD populations experience compensation discrimination in the workplace, which includes unequal treatment between same-sex and different-sex couples regarding health insurance benefits and parental leave and access to transition-related care for transgender populations. Prior to the national legalization of marriage for same-sex couples in 2015, several studies documented disparities in access to health insurance among same-sex couples and their children (Ash and Badgett, 2006; Buchmueller and Carpenter, 2010, 2012; Heck, Sell, and Gorin, 2006; Ponce et al., 2010), with larger disparities for Hispanic men, Black women, and Native American and Alaskan women (Gilbert and Ortiz, 2015; Gonzales and Blewett, 2013). Both qualitative and quantitative studies have shown that LGBT employees in some firms formed “employee resource groups” that were influential in convincing employers to offer domestic partner benefits to employees with same-sex partners (Badgett, 2001; Raeburn, 2004; Briscoe and Safford, 2008; Creed, Douglas, and Scully, 2000), and unions sometimes bargained for these benefits (Boris, 2010; Holcomb, 1999). Access to the right to marry appears to have reduced disparities in health insurance among same-sex couples (Carpenter et al., 2018), although the research is too preliminary to draw strong conclusions.

More generally, several studies have documented changes in access to insurance coverage among SGD populations in relation to passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In 2013, prior to the full implementation of the ACA, 34 percent of a nationally representative sample of LGBT people making less than \$45,000 per year were uninsured (Baker, Durso, and Cray, 2014). Uninsurance among LGBT people in this income bracket dropped to 26 percent in 2014 and to 22 percent in 2017 (Baker and Durso, 2017). Data from the Health Reform Monitoring Survey similarly indicated that the share of LGB adults without health insurance across all income ranges decreased from 21.7 percent to 11.1 percent between 2013 and 2015 (Karpman, Skopec, and Long, 2015). Still, a 2017 analysis of Gallup data found that LGBT-identified adults remained less likely to report having health insurance than their non-LGBT counterparts (15 percent and 12 percent, respectively), though this finding did not account for age differences in the two populations: LGBT-identified individuals were younger.² (See more detailed discussion in Chapter 12 on health care access.)

²See <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT#economic>.

For transgender people, insurance exclusions for transition-related care have historically been a common problem in employer plans. In 2012, the Corporate Equality Index began to require self-insured employers to remove these exclusions from their employee benefits in order to receive a full score. By 2019, 62 percent of Fortune 500 employers, representing a 16-fold increase since 2010, had eliminated transgender exclusions from the coverage they offer their employees (Human Rights Campaign, 2019). The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program required participating carriers to eliminate transgender exclusions in 2016 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, n.d.), and at least 17 state governments and the District of Columbia also offer employee benefits that include transition-related care (Movement Advancement Project, 2020). In a related trend, several courts have found that transgender exclusions in employer-sponsored insurance violate Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act, which bans sex discrimination in employment, as well as Section 1557 of the ACA, which bans sex discrimination in health care and insurance (Glasser and Labbees, 2018).

Access to Military Service

Research suggests that military service can be a route to better economic outcomes, especially for marginalized populations, and the military is a large employer of SGD people (Martorell et al., 2014; Routon, 2014). Estimates from a 2010 study suggested that 2.2 percent of active and reserve forces in the U.S. military were lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Gates, 2010). A 2014 study estimated that 0.6 percent of U.S. active and reserve forces are transgender. The lifting of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy in 2010 meant that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals could serve openly in the U.S. military, but transgender individuals are currently banned from military service. The economic effects on individual LGBT people of both the lifting of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and the continuation of the ban on transgender people are unknown. Given the research suggesting positive economic benefits of military service among marginalized populations, it seems reasonable to assume that the ban on transgender military service effectively closes an avenue for economic advancement for this already economically disadvantaged population.

Workplace Disclosure of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Another important factor in assessing the effects of workplace discrimination is the degree to which SGD populations are “out” in their workplace environments. A 2013 population-based survey of LGBT adults conducted by the Pew Research Center found that, even though one-half of employed LGBT adults think their workplace is accepting of LGBT employees, only

one-third say they are open to most of their work colleagues about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Openness about sexual orientation is much higher among lesbian women and gay men (50 percent and 48 percent, respectively) than bisexual individuals (11 percent). Notably, LGBT adults are more out to family and friends than to their work colleagues. More than half of respondents said they were out to all or most of the important people in their lives. However, like the responses about the workplace, lesbian women and gay men were far more likely to be out (71 percent and 77 percent, respectively) than their bisexual counterparts (28 percent). However, the research base on workplace disclosure and its relationship to economic outcomes is very thin, at least in part because large-scale surveys that include sexual orientation and gender identity questions do not also include questions on workplace disclosure. Future research could approach disclosure as both an outcome variable that measures the workplace climate and as an explanatory variable that may predict other outcomes, such as experiencing discrimination, wage gaps, job turnover, and productivity.

Nondiscrimination Policies

Employment discrimination against public-sector workers is prohibited by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Until the Supreme Court’s *Bostock vs. Clayton County* decision in 2020, the status of protection against private-sector discrimination was uncertain, even though coverage had been extended by federal agencies and some federal courts (see Chapter 5). Between 2013 and 2016, more than 9,000 people filed charges of employment discrimination with state and federal nondiscrimination agencies on the basis of either sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination (Baumle, Badgett, and Boutcher, 2019). Enforcement agencies might increase the likelihood of a charge being filed when employees believe they face discrimination by making filing methods more transparent and accessible, as some European human rights agencies have attempted (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Evidence suggests that laws banning workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation have positive economic effects for sexual minority populations. Studies prior to 2020 found that gay men and men in same-sex couples saw lower wage gaps in locations where there was a state anti-discrimination law (Klawitter, 2011). An audit study of resumes found lower levels of discrimination toward gay men in states with anti-discrimination laws (Tilcsik, 2011). A more recent study also found that state anti-discrimination laws are associated with increased wages for gay men, but it also found an association with decreased employment among lesbian women (Burn, 2018). Additional research is needed into the policy

effects on other economic outcomes, as well as exploring more directly the effects of nationwide nondiscrimination laws on transgender people and on groups within LGBT populations. Early research on the effects of marriage equality suggests that such a policy change may be linked to higher rates of employment, more mortgage applications, and more health insurance coverage (Carpenter et al., 2018; Downing and Cha, 2020; Miller and Park, 2018; Sansone, 2019).

Some businesses and other private-sector employers have implemented their own sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination protections that cover employees regardless of state of residence. In some cases, qualitative research suggests those changes in policy emerged because of direct pressure from the employer's own employees (Badgett, 2001; Raeburn, 2004) or from unions, as noted above. As of the writing of this report, 93 percent of Fortune 500 companies have sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies, and 91 percent of Fortune 500 companies had gender identity protections (Human Rights Campaign, 2020). Other "best practices" by employers in the United States and globally include equal benefits, internal training on employer policies, prejudice-reduction trainings, clear guidelines for gender transitions, and employee resource groups (Human Rights Campaign, 2020; OECD, 2020).

Private-sector workplaces that have policies that affirm the inclusion of SGD people and prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are associated with positive outcomes for both the businesses and their employees. A review of 36 studies using nonprobability samples found that LGBT-supportive policies and affirming workplace climates are often associated with greater job commitment, improved workplace relationships, increased job satisfaction, and improved health outcomes among LGBT employees (Badgett et al., 2013). LGBT employees also reported an association between LGBT-affirming organizations and less discrimination and more openness. Comparisons of companies with and without LGBT-inclusive policies show that more inclusive companies report higher stock prices, return on assets, productivity, and more patents (Gao and Zhang, 2016; Johnston and Malina, 2008; Li and Nagar, 2013; Pichler et al., 2018; Shan, Fu, and Zheng, 2017; Wang and Schwarz, 2010).

HOUSING

Access to housing is another measure of economic well-being. This topic has received much less research attention than issues of employment, but it is important for several reasons. First, housing is a necessary resource to sustain life, and evidence of high rates of homelessness for LGBT young people indicates a pressing social and individual problem. Second, home ownership is both a means to obtain housing and an asset that makes up a

significant part of wealth for people in the United States, and evidence of disparities in home ownership between same-sex couples and different-sex couples have implications for differences in the wealth of SGD populations. Third, because of stigma, SGD populations may face barriers in the markets for credit and rental housing. Data on housing outcomes with measures of sexual orientation and gender identity (or other SGD markers) are limited, so the body of research reviewed in this section includes existing studies of population-based data, but it relies heavily on nonprobability samples and experiments to study disadvantages related to housing.

Homelessness

Existing studies show an elevated risk of homelessness among LGBT youth. An analysis of data from eight states using the population-based Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that LGB youth were twice as likely as their non-LGB counterparts to experience homelessness (Cutuli, Treglia, and Herbers, 2019). Surveys of homeless youth service providers also indicate elevated risks of homelessness among LGBTQ youth, with a higher risk among youths of color. Providers have reported that LGBTQ youth experience longer periods of homelessness than their non-LGBTQ counterparts, and service patterns suggest particular increases in transgender youth accessing services for homelessness (Choi et al., 2015). A systematic review of literature identified four main themes associated with LGBTQ+ homelessness: stigma, discrimination, and exclusion; mental health issues and substance use; sexual risks and vulnerability; and interventions and supports (McCann and Brown, 2019).

Studies of adult homelessness among the LGBT population reveal that adult LGBTQ+ people are also vulnerable to homelessness. In one recent study based on nationally representative samples, 3 percent of sexual minority and 8 percent of transgender adults reported having experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months, compared with only 1 percent of cisgender heterosexual adults (Wilson et al., 2020). A recent systematic literature review found that many homeless LGBT adults have challenges associated with HIV and substance use (Ecker, Aubry, and Sylvestre, 2019).

Evidence suggests that adult homelessness may be particularly acute among transgender and gender-nonconforming populations. In the USTS, nearly one-third of respondents reported having ever experienced homelessness, and 12 percent reported being homeless within the past year (James et al., 2016). The New York state 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment, a community survey of nearly 3,800 people, found that transgender respondents were substantially more likely to report housing insecurity (50 percent), defined as having difficulty paying for housing accommodation, than they were to report having ever been homeless

(31 percent) (Frazer and Howe, 2015). The New York study highlights a potential gap in the literature addressing homelessness issues among SGD populations, which focuses on a limited assessment of variation in forms of homelessness (e.g., sleeping outdoors, group shelters, “couch surfing” with friends or acquaintances) and rarely considers the extent or effects of housing insecurity. Transgender and gender-nonconforming adults in homelessness systems have reported experiencing frequent concerns regarding safety and gender-affirming supports. One study found that most shelters were not willing to house a transgender homeless woman in accordance with her gender identity (Rooney, Durso, and Gruberg, 2016).

Home Ownership and Wealth

Home ownership is both a source of housing services and an important source of wealth. Some research finds that LGBT populations have lower home ownership rates than cisgender heterosexual people. The 2015 USTS found only 16 percent of transgender and gender-nonconforming adult respondents indicated that they owned their homes, compared with more than 60 percent of all U.S. adults (James et al., 2016). Same-sex couples and sexual minorities are less likely to be homeowners than are heterosexuals after controlling for income and demographic factors (Conron, Goldberg, and Halpern, 2018; Jepsen and Jepsen, 2009; Leppel, 2007). More recent analyses still find lower home ownership rates among married same-sex couples than their married different-sex counterparts, but unmarried cohabiting same-sex couples are more likely to own their homes than unmarried different-sex couples (Gates, 2015). A 2016 study suggests that the introduction of legal marriage for same-sex couples has led to increases in mortgage applications among same-sex couples (Miller and Park, 2018).

Differences in home ownership can be associated with a wide array of possible disparities related to sexual and gender diversity. A gap in ownership rates can be a sign of discrimination in mortgage lending practices. Evidence suggests that same-sex couples experience mortgage discrimination. In a large-scale study of mortgage lending data, same-sex couples were 73 percent more likely than different-sex couples to be denied a mortgage, and they were charged up to 0.2 percent higher fees or interest rates. Also, a neighborhood’s higher same-sex couple population density adversely affects both same-sex and different-sex borrowers’ lending experiences (Sun and Gao, 2019). A gap could also be a sign of housing insecurity, meaning that SGD populations are more likely than others to lack sufficient resources to buy a home. Finally, differences in home ownership rates offer evidence of differences and possible disparities in asset and wealth accumulation.

Research that considers disparities in asset accumulation and wealth associated with SGD populations is rare. Population-based data resources to

comprehensively assess these issues do not exist. Although home ownership is occasionally measured, no major U.S. national population-based survey that measures assets and wealth includes measurements of sexual orientation and gender identity, creating a large knowledge gap that requires further research. This gap in knowledge about wealth is particularly problematic for assessing the economic well-being of aging SGD populations, who may receive fewer transfers of wealth from unsupportive families of origin and may have fewer children to count on for unpaid assistance with their needs in old age.

Discrimination in Rental Housing

Research shows that rental-related housing discrimination associated with sexual orientation and gender identity exists, but the extent of that discrimination is not well documented. Findings from the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) and the 2015 USTS show substantial self-reporting of housing discrimination. The NTDS found that 19 percent of respondents reported having ever been refused a home or apartment, and 11 percent reported being evicted because of their gender identity or expression (Grant, Mottet, and Tanis, 2011). Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of USTS respondents said they had experienced housing discrimination in the past year, which included evictions and being denied a home or apartment because of their transgender or gender-nonconforming status (James et al., 2016). Findings from an internet-based U.S. probability sample of lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults showed that 10 percent reported experiencing housing discrimination, with gay men and lesbian women reporting more discrimination than their bisexual counterparts (Herek, 2009).

In studies other than self-reports, researchers have found differential treatment of LGBT people in experiments that compare responses to LGBT people to those of non-LGBT people at key stages of the rental process, particularly in the initial response to a rental ad. Using telephone and in-person paired testing, two fair housing organizations found differential treatment between LGBTQ individuals and their heterosexual cisgender counterparts (Equal Rights Center, 2014; Fair Housing Centers of Michigan, 2007). A study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that same-sex male couples were significantly less likely than their different-sex couple counterparts to receive email responses from housing providers (Friedman et al., 2013). A separate academic study of email responses to inquiries about rental listings on Craigslist found discrimination against male same-sex couples, with the largest amount of discrimination against Black and Hispanic male couples (where race was designated through names) (Schwegman, 2019). The treatment of Black

male couples was less unequal in states that ban discrimination against sexual orientation in housing. The Black male couples also received fewer positive responses from property owners. Studies in Sweden and Canada have also found differential treatment between same-sex male and different-sex couples (Ahmed and Hammarstedt, 2009; Lauster and Easterbrook, 2011). One audit study of senior housing in 10 states found that same-sex couples experienced adverse differential treatment in comparison with different-sex couples in almost half of the tests conducted (Equal Rights Center, 2014).

The Urban Institute used in-person, telephone, and email testing to conduct one of the most recent and largest studies of LGBT-related housing discrimination in three metropolitan areas: Dallas-Fort Worth, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. (Levy et al., 2017). Their paired-testing study (funded by HUD) assessed differences between same-sex and different-sex couples and differences between transgender and genderqueer individuals compared with their cisgender counterparts. As with other studies, this study found more evidence of differential and discriminatory treatment among men in same-sex couples than among women in same-sex couples. Providers told gay men about fewer available rental units and were slightly less likely to schedule an appointment with them. Gay men were also quoted higher average yearly costs than were heterosexual men. Treatment of same-sex couples, regardless of gender, did not differ much by race or city. Relative to cisgender testers, transgender testers were told about fewer units. Of note, the Urban Institute study was considered a pilot test of methodologies used to assess differential treatment based on sexual orientation and gender nonconformity. The study included several tests of different approaches with regard to selection of testers, disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity, and a comparison of email and in-person assessments of discrimination.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The social science research on the economic well-being of SGD populations has focused mainly on comparisons of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people with heterosexual people. More recently, data on transgender people have allowed for some comparisons with cisgender populations. The research, which has analyzed earnings, household income, poverty, education, and occupational attainment, reveals a picture of economic inequality for LGBT people. Some research is at an early stage or is limited by currently available data. Accordingly, this chapter notes many unmet data needs and research opportunities. In particular, interventions that may currently exist to enhance well-being and to reduce inequality for SGD groups in these economic contexts are inadequate and untested. However, several general findings on economic well-being emerge from the existing research.

Evidence suggests that transgender people—and possibly bisexual people—have lower incomes and higher poverty than lesbian, gay, and cisgender heterosexual people. Lesbian women and gay men may have mitigated some of the effects of discrimination on earnings and household income through adaptive strategies in education, occupations, and family decisions, but they still face discrimination in the labor force. Research on individual earnings suggests that, after controlling for differences in income-related characteristics, gay and bisexual men earn less than heterosexual men, while lesbian and bisexual women earn less than heterosexual men but more than heterosexual women.

These general findings have been made possible by the growing availability of datasets that have measures of income as well as measures of sexual orientation or gender identity, thus improving the ability to analyze income differences by sexual orientation and gender identity. However, significant data gaps remain. Some samples are too small for analysis of older SGD populations or for detailed comparisons by race or ethnicity. In addition, no probability-based surveys with individual income measures include questions on transgender people or people with intersex traits. Some researchers have asked specifically whether sexual orientation effects on income have fallen over time in the United States. Findings from these studies are inconclusive.

Poverty and economic insecurity are more common among LGBT people than among cisgender, heterosexual people. Poverty rates are higher for female same-sex couples and lower for male same-sex couples than for married different-sex couples, which at least partly reflects the gender composition of the couple. But after adjusting for other predictors of being poor, both male and female same-sex couples are at greater risk of being poor than married different-sex couples. Among self-identified single and coupled LGBT people, bisexual and transgender people are more at risk of poverty and lesbian and gay people are at equal risk of poverty than self-identified heterosexual cisgender people of the same sex. Some groups within the LGBT population are at greater risk of poverty or low-income status: unmarried people, people with children, Black people, people living in rural areas, and people over age 50. Some studies suggest that food and housing insecurity are greater among LGBT people than among cisgender heterosexual people.

CONCLUSION 10-1: There is clear evidence of economic inequality for sexual and gender diverse populations. Economic vulnerabilities are greater for certain groups, including transgender people, bisexual people, lesbian women, and LGBT people of color. However, very little is known about how low-income SGD populations are treated when seeking services and public assistance, or about intersectional inequalities associated with race, ethnicity, and disability status.

In the workforce, lesbian and bisexual women are in occupations with a higher percentage of men than are heterosexual women; gay and bisexual men are in occupations with a higher percentage of women than are heterosexual men. These patterns might be seen as positive if LGB people feel less constrained by gendered expectations about appropriate occupations than do heterosexual men and women. However, stereotyping and discrimination may also generate gendered barriers that shape those patterns. Access to the right to marry appears to have reduced disparities in health insurance among same-sex couples, and changes in access to insurance coverage among SGD populations in relation to passage of the ACA have improved conditions for previously uninsured individuals.

Studies based on self-report data show that many LGBT people perceive that they have been treated unequally in the workforce. Many individual employers have created their own voluntary nondiscrimination policies. SGD populations have also experienced compensation and benefit discrimination in the workplace. In 2020, the Supreme Court held that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is prohibited by Title VII, the federal law that is part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (*Bostock v. Clayton County*). The efficacy of this clarity about nationwide anti-discrimination protections will depend on how well federal and state agencies and courts carry out its mandate.

CONCLUSION 10-2: Sexual and gender diverse people face discrimination in employment. The Supreme Court’s affirmation that Title VII prohibits such discrimination is new, and the improvement of outcomes for sexual and gender diverse people in the workplace will be contingent on effective enforcement.

Access to housing is another measure of economic well-being for sexual and gender diverse populations, but data on housing outcomes with measures of sexual orientation and gender identity are somewhat limited. Those limited data show significant disparities for SGD people.

There is a greater risk of homelessness among LGBTQ youth, with elevated risk for LGBTQ youth of color, than other youth. Adult homelessness may be particularly acute among transgender and gender-nonconforming populations. There are four main factors associated with LGBTQ homelessness: stigma, discrimination, and exclusion; mental health issues and substance use; sexual risks and vulnerability; and a lack of access to interventions and supports.

Some research finds that LGBT populations have lower home ownership rates than cisgender heterosexual people. Differences in home ownership can be associated with a wide array of possible disparities related to

sexual and gender diversity and can point to discrimination in mortgage lending practices. Differences in home ownership rates offer evidence of possible disparities in asset and wealth accumulation, but there are no population-based data that comprehensively assess these issues.

Because of stigma, SGD populations may also face barriers in the markets for credit and rental housing. Nearly a quarter of respondents to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey said they had experienced housing discrimination in the past year, and there is evidence of more differential and discriminatory treatment among men in same-sex couples than among women in same-sex couples.

CONCLUSION 10-3: Sexual and gender diverse people face discrimination in the housing market, with evidence showing differential treatment of LGBT applicants for rental housing and mortgages. LGBT youth have an elevated risk of homelessness, and sexual and gender diverse adults may also be at risk.

Many outstanding questions about the economic well-being of SGD people can be addressed with enhanced research that addresses known disparities and data gaps. For instance, research on lifetime workforce experience could measure the effects of labor force participation and human capital differences on income differences for SGD populations. Research on the influences on occupational attainment could address the roles of gender and sexuality stereotypes, preferences, barriers, and workplace characteristics. As access to health care is a critical component of well-being, it is important to also study how the provision of LGBT-relevant health care benefits, including same-sex partner benefits and transition-related care benefits, affect SGD communities.

Much more research is needed to assess the economic well-being of transgender people, non-binary people, and people with intersex traits. From wealth and asset accumulation to homelessness and housing insecurity, there is much more to be understood about how certain economic conditions affect SGD populations, particularly for groups identified as having bigger economic challenges, such as people in rural areas, older SGD people, and SGD people of color.

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Physical and Mental Health

Since the Institute of Medicine report, *The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding* (2011), the published literature on the physical and mental health of sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations has expanded substantially. Recent research emphasizes the complexity of the multilevel and intersecting factors that influence the well-being of SGD people and drive disparities in health status, health care access, and health outcomes in SGD populations. These drivers include stigma; minority stress exposures, such as discrimination; and other behavioral, environmental, and structural risk factors. The intensity and effects of drivers of disparities can vary across the life course and among different SGD communities on the basis of factors such as race, age, and gender. Research has also begun to underscore, however, the degree to which resilience and effective interventions can mitigate health risks and help reduce these disparities.

This chapter reviews the literature on physical and mental health in SGD populations in the United States, identifies major group differences, describes drivers of disparities, and highlights opportunities for interventions to address these disparities. It is outside the scope of this report to assess SGD population health in international contexts, though this is an important area of scholarship. The chapter covers physical health, with a focus on general well-being, health behaviors, cardiovascular disease, and cancer; reproductive and sexual health, including fertility; violence and victimization; and mental and behavioral health. Although these topics are addressed individually to highlight the specific evidence for each, it is important to note that they are deeply intertwined and share cross-cutting

influences, such as minority stress and systemic barriers to health care services. Research and interventions to understand and improve the health and well-being of SGD populations need to reflect these complex relationships while also seeking to clarify how both disparities and resilience uniquely manifest in specific groups within the SGD population.

Following this chapter, Chapter 12 looks at SGD population health in the United States in the context of health care access and utilization, with a focus on the importance of SGD people having access to adequate insurance coverage; culturally competent providers; and high-quality, evidence-based health care services, including gender-affirming care for transgender and non-binary people. It also discusses the challenges posed by the continued prevalence of two medical approaches to SGD populations that are not evidence based: unnecessary genital surgeries for children with intersex traits and conversion therapy targeting sexual orientation or gender identity.

The information presented in these two chapters reflects both the current body of research and a multidimensional understanding of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization [WHO], 1948). Health is central to well-being and quality of life for all people, but it is not equally distributed across populations. Health disparities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, morbidity, mortality, or opportunities to achieve optimal health. They are associated with a range of social, economic, and political determinants that are dynamic manifestations of the systems that distribute resources, protection, and power across society (Braveman et al., 2017). These determinants affect health by conferring social, economic, or political advantage on certain population groups, while limiting the resources available to members of disadvantaged groups for maintaining and improving their health and well-being. These determinants also mediate exposure to physical and mental health hazards, such as stigma, violence, discrimination, unhealthy environments, and inadequate medical care (Marmot et al., 2008; WHO, 2008). Health disparities thus represent the human embodiment of disadvantage and inequality in the daily conditions in which SGD people grow up, form families, work, age, and die (WHO, 2011).

Consideration of the social determinants of health introduces a moral and ethical dimension, frequently termed “health equity,” into discussions of disparities. Health equity means that everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, and it underscores that health disparities are avoidable and, therefore, unjust and unjustifiable (Braveman et al., 2017). Achieving health equity requires eliminating disparities by removing obstacles to good health such as discrimination, stigma, and their consequences. Health equity thus places an implicit

responsibility on policy makers, researchers, health care providers, advocates, and other stakeholders for accountable efforts to improve the health and well-being of populations experiencing disparities.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

General Health and Well-Being

Studies of general health and well-being have revealed that LGBTI adults tend to report worse health, lower health-related quality of life, and greater prevalence of disabilities than non-LGBTI people (Baker, 2019; Charlton et al., 2018; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013; Gates, 2014; James et al., 2016; Lett, Dowshen, and Baker, 2020; Meyer et al., 2017; Potter and Patterson, 2019; Rapp et al., 2018; Streed et al., 2017; Ward et al., 2014). Disparities in overall health have been found to be particularly substantial for bisexual and transgender people, especially non-binary people (Downing and Przedworski, 2018; Dyar et al., 2019, 2020; Lefevor et al., 2019). Emerging identity groups, such as asexual and pansexual populations, also appear to experience disparities in overall health and well-being (Borgogna et al., 2019; Yule, Brotto, and Gorzalka, 2013). In terms of mortality, there are only a few studies that focus on sexual orientation or gender identity, and none on intersex status. The studies that exist, however, report that mortality may be higher in LGBT than in non-LGBT populations (Asscheman et al., 2011; Asscheman, Gooren, and Eklund, 1989; Blosnich et al., 2014; Cochran, Björkenstam, and Mays, 2016; Cochran and Mays, 2011; Cochran and Mays, 2015; Dhejne et al., 2011; van Kesteren et al., 1997; Wiepjes et al., 2020).

Drivers of General Health and Mortality Disparities

The literature around both general well-being and mortality in SGD populations emphasizes the degree to which stigma and minority stress related to sexual orientation and gender identity (and presumably intersex status as well, though there is no research in this area) are important influences on these disparities (Gonzales and Ehrenfeld, 2018; Russo et al., 2012; Solazzo, Brown, and Gorman, 2018; Streed, McCarthy, and Haas, 2017). Physiologically, minority stress exposures contribute to the dysregulation of cortisol, which adversely affects metabolism, immune function, cardiovascular health, cognition, and mood (Berger and Sarnyai, 2015; DuBois et al., 2017). Minority stress is also associated with higher prevalence of unhealthy behaviors, such as tobacco use and binge drinking, and it is a risk factor for causes of mortality that include HIV and suicide. More research is needed to accurately measure minority stress exposures in SGD

populations and to investigate the origins, pathways, and consequences of minority stress for all aspects of health and life expectancy.

Bisexual health disparities, like other SGD health disparities, are often driven by stigma and minority stress (Doan Van et al., 2019; Friedman et al., 2014; Katz-Wise, Mereish, and Woulfe, 2017). While disparities related to minority stress can be buffered by social support, bisexual individuals report lower access to such support both within and outside of sexual minority communities, and they often report feeling socially isolated, invisible, and marginalized in both heterosexual and LGB communities (Meckler et al., 2006; Mulick and Wright, 2011; Saewyc et al., 2009; Yost and Thomas, 2012). Studies have found unfavorable attitudes toward bisexual people among gay and lesbian people as well as among heterosexual people (Dodge et al., 2016). A study using a feeling thermometer technique found that heterosexuals viewed bisexual people less favorably than all other comparison populations (including gays and lesbians and various religious, racial, and political groups) except for injection drug users (Herek, 2002).

For SGD Native American, Black, and other people of color, general health and mortality are additionally affected by exposure to racism. Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and Alaska Natives, for example, have experienced centuries of trauma that includes affronts to their cultures and the systematic disruption and destruction of their communities through massacres, transmission of non-Indigenous infectious diseases, and forced migration and assimilation (Brave Heart and DeBruyn, 1998; Kirmayer, Gone, and Moses, 2014; Walters and Simoni, 2002; Walters et al., 2011). Trauma from historical slavery and current structural violence, such as police brutality and high rates of incarceration, has similarly had pervasive negative effects on the physical and mental health of Black people (Chae et al., 2020; Williams, 2018). Historical trauma can transmit risk for poorer health and well-being to future generations by depleting psychological resilience and eroding supportive family, community, and economic structures.

Transgenerational transmission of stress- and trauma-related health risks can also occur through inherited epigenetic DNA modifications or in utero maternal-fetal exposure (Conching and Thayer, 2019; Walters et al., 2011). SGD people of color may experience the unique stressors of both racism and ethnocentrism in white SGD communities and rejection of their sexual orientation or gender identity by their racially or ethnically congruent families and communities (Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, and Link, 2013; Isasi et al., 2015; Pascoe and Smart Richman, 2009; Valdiserri et al., 2018; Worthen, 2018). They may therefore face health risks and disparities that differ from and may exceed those facing either white SGD communities or heterosexual and cisgender communities of color (Lett, Dowshen, and Baker, 2020; Tuthill, Denney, and Gorman, 2020).

Interventions to Improve Overall Health and Resilience

Resilience, a process that confers the ability to recover from or adjust to adversity, is an important counterweight to the effects of minority stress on general health and mortality in SGD populations. Studies conducted with a variety of SGD populations indicate that identity affirmation (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2017; Matsuno and Israel, 2018), social support (Baratz, Sharp, and Sandberg, 2014; Sani et al., 2019; Schweizer et al., 2017), family acceptance (Katz-Wise, Rosario, and Tsappis, 2016), and protective laws and policies (Hatzenbuehler and Keyes, 2013; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014) are associated with positive coping and resilience. Most of the research on resilience interventions has focused on youth. This research provides strong evidence for the role of school-based gay-straight alliances in promoting resilience among LGBTQ youth (Davis, Royne Stafford, and Pullig, 2014; Johns et al., 2019a; Poteat, Calzo, and Yoshikawa, 2016; also see Chapter 9). As of this writing, at least one comparative effectiveness research trial is under way to assess resilience to depression among racial and ethnic minority SGD populations (Vargas et al., 2019). More research is needed to identify effective interventions to promote SGD population resilience.

Health-Related Behaviors

Behavior patterns related to sleep, diet, exercise, and smoking are important determinants of health and well-being. When sleep is inadequate, for instance, people have more illnesses and accidents, and they suffer more chronic mental and physical health problems (Grandner and Pack, 2011; Walker, 2017). Results of recent studies suggest that sleep difficulties, such as reduced sleep duration and lower sleep quality, are more common among LGBT people than among heterosexual and cisgender people (Chen and Shiu, 2017; Cunningham, Dai and Hao, 2017; Harry-Hernandez et al., 2020; Kann et al., 2016; Patterson and Potter, 2019; Patterson et al., 2018; Xu, and Town, 2018). These findings are not completely consistent, however, suggesting that important patterns of disparities may be elucidated by more research on specific groups such as youth and transgender people. There is no evidence about sleep health among people with intersex traits.

Similarly, the evidence about diet and exercise in SGD populations is not entirely consistent. Some studies have found that sexual minority boys and girls were more likely than heterosexual youth to report low intake of fruit and vegetables (Rosario et al., 2014). Others have found no differences by sexual orientation (Boehmer et al., 2012; Laska et al., 2015), and some data suggest that the diets of sexual minority adults are as good as or pos-

sibly better than those of heterosexual individuals (VanKim et al., 2017). Likewise, a number of studies have found that sexual minority youth of all genders are less likely than their heterosexual peers to participate in team sports or regular physical activity (Calzo et al., 2014; Laska et al., 2015; Mereish and Poteat, 2015), while other studies show disparities in exercise habits for some gender or age groups but not for all (Boehmer et al., 2012; Rosario et al., 2014).

Cigarette smoking, by contrast, is clearly elevated among LGBT populations. The National Health Interview Survey found that 21 percent of lesbian, gay, or bisexual adults reported being current cigarette smokers, compared with 15 percent of heterosexual adults (Jamal et al., 2018). Smoking prevalence is also higher among transgender populations (Buchting et al., 2017; Hoffman et al., 2018). Smoking is a major risk factor for numerous diseases and conditions, including pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases, cancer, type 2 diabetes, periodontal disease, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and visual loss and blindness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], n.d.).

Drivers of Health Behavior Disparities

The minority stress theory suggests that disparities in sleep, diet, exercise, and smoking among SGD populations are related to experiences of chronic stress due to stigma and discrimination. It is well known that stress exacerbates sleep difficulties, such as insomnia (Akerstedt, 2006). Peer bullying and structural discrimination, such as laws barring transgender youth from participating in school sports, may discourage adolescents from participating in organized sports (Buzuvis, 2016; Cunningham, Buzuvis, and Mosier, 2018; Douall et al., 2018). Consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, is related to access to economic resources at both the household and neighborhood levels, making poverty and employment discrimination key covariates in investigations of diet among SGD populations (French et al., 2019). In addition to stigma and discrimination, risk factors for cigarette smoking among LGBT people include targeted tobacco marketing, lack of access to smoking cessation programs and treatments due to poverty and lack of health insurance, and a lack of cultural competency in smoking cessation programs (Jamal et al., 2018). For transgender people, a lack of access to gender affirmation is also associated with smoking and other health risk behaviors (Menino et al., 2018). Further study is needed on the drivers of health behaviors related to sleep, diet, exercise, and smoking, especially among SGD adolescents and older adults, transgender people, and people with intersex traits.

Interventions to Improve Health Behaviors

A variety of tailored 12- to 16-week interventions for overweight lesbian and bisexual women have included weekly group meetings, nutrition education, and physical activity support, with or without additional components of mindfulness, gym membership, and pedometer use. These tailored interventions have resulted in significant improvements in multiple health behaviors and health indicators, including physical activity, weight, and waist-to-hip ratio (Rizer et al., 2015). Key characteristics of health behavior interventions for sexual minority women include social support, education and goal setting, peer facilitation, and LGBT-friendly environments (Berger and Mooney-Somers, 2017).

Evidence of the efficacy of smoking cessation interventions for LGBT adults exists for community-wide smoke-free policies (Wintemberg et al., 2017), quit-smoking group-based interventions with or without pharmaceutical components (Eliason et al., 2012; Matthews et al., 2019), web-based interventions (Heffner et al., 2020), and social branding campaigns (Fallin et al., 2015). While LGBT-tailored programs are often preferred by LGBT participants, non-tailored programs can demonstrate similar efficacy (Grady et al., 2014). Promising interventions currently under study include tailored social media and app-based smoking cessation interventions for sexual and gender minority youth (Baskerville et al., 2016; Vogel et al., 2019).

Cross-sectional studies suggest that increased access to legal (e.g., gender-congruent identity documents) and medical (e.g., hormone therapy) gender affirmation and decreased exposure to structural discrimination may reduce smoking and increase physical activity among transgender adults (Jones et al., 2018; Myers and Safer, 2017; Shires and Jaffee, 2016). More research is needed into effective interventions to optimize health behaviors among SGD populations, particularly since interventions designed to improve such health behaviors as sleep, diet, exercise, and smoking have important influences on other areas of health that are discussed in more detail below, such as cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Cardiovascular Disease

Some studies have found no difference between groups such as heterosexual adults and gay and bisexual men in cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013). A growing body of evidence, however, indicates that LGBTI populations do experience CVD disparities, including elevated prevalence of coronary artery disease and angina and greater incidence of myocardial infarction and stroke (Alzahrani et al., 2019; Caceres, Veldhuis, and Hughes, 2019;

Caceres et al., 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Donato and Ferreira, 2018; Falhammar et al., 2018; Gonzales and Henning-Smith, 2017; Gonzales, Przedworski, and Henning-Smith, 2016; Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, and Slopen, 2013; Lagos, 2018; Lunn et al., 2017; Meads et al., 2018; Operario et al., 2015; Reisner et al., 2016a; Salzano et al., 2016, 2018; Silberbach et al., 2018; Streed et al., 2017). These disparities are greatest among bisexual compared to monosexual people, transgender compared to cisgender people, and Black compared with white lesbian women (Caceres, Veldhuis, and Hughes, 2019). One study also reported that gender-nonconforming individuals may have higher prevalence of coronary artery disease and greater incidence of myocardial infarction than either cisgender or transgender men and women (Downing and Przedworski, 2018).

Drivers of Cardiovascular Disparities

Disparities in CVD are driven by the greater prevalence in SGD populations of risk factors that include smoking, high blood pressure, and elevated levels of C-reactive protein, a biomarker of stress-related inflammation important in the pathogenesis of CVD (Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, and Slopen, 2013). Among sexual minority women and bisexual men, metabolic syndrome, which can include signs of insulin resistance, is also a common CVD risk factor (Caceres et al., 2018; Cunningham, Xu, and Town, 2018). As is the case for general health and mortality, many CVD risk factors in SGD populations are related to trauma and other minority stress exposures (Caceres et al., 2019a, 2019b; Rosengren et al., 2004; Sinclair and Wallston, 2004; Yusuf et al., 2004).

CVD risk among people with intersex traits varies by type of intersex trait as well as by experiences with hormonal and surgical therapies (El-Maouche, Arlt, and Merke, 2017; Los et al., 2016 Mooij et al., 2017). The cardiovascular effects of long-term hormones prescribed after gonadectomy are poorly understood (Gomez-Lobo and Amies Oelschlager, 2016). Hormone therapy similarly affects CVD risk among transgender people. Transgender women on estrogen therapy have increased risk of venous thromboembolism compared with cisgender people and transgender men (Dutra et al., 2019; Getahun et al., 2018; Gooren and T'Sjoen, 2018; Irwig, 2018; Quinn et al., 2017), and some studies suggest increased risk for myocardial infarction as well (Connelly et al., 2019). In transgender men, testosterone therapy is associated with elevated prevalence of CVD risk factors such as hypertension, insulin resistance, and dyslipidemia, though not with increases in CVD or mortality (Streed et al., 2017).

Interventions to Improve Cardiovascular Health

Most intervention research on prevention of CVD among SGD populations has focused on smoking cessation among LGBT adults, weight management among sexual minority women, and the benefits versus risks of hormonal therapies among people with intersex traits. Weight management and smoking interventions are discussed above in the section on health behaviors. Data on efficacy of CVD interventions for people with intersex traits are sparse, but several studies suggest early and regular screening and treatment for CVD risk factors such as hypertension and pre-diabetes among groups with elevated risk (Davis and Geffner, 2019; Los et al., 2016; Tamhane et al., 2018).

Cardiovascular health research priorities for SGD populations include the routine use of standardized measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status in CVD research studies, especially longitudinal studies; studies that use objective measures of CVD (e.g., biomarkers and electronic health record data) rather than purely self-reported data; and rigorous study designs to investigate the relationship between hormone therapy and CVD risk and outcomes for transgender people and people with intersex traits (Caceres, Brody, and Chyun, 2016). Research is also needed into the impact of and interventions to address intersectional minority stress exposures as risk factors for CVD in SGD populations (Veenstra, 2013).

Cancer

In 2019, the American Cancer Society estimated that 130,000 LGBTQ people were newly diagnosed with cancer, and 45,000 died of cancer. These estimates were derived by applying the estimated percentage of the U.S. population that is LGBTQ to the 2019 projected cancer incidence in the general population. More accurate statistics about the overall prevalence and incidence of cancers among LGBT, intersex, and other SGD populations are precluded by the fact that health care systems, cancer registries, and national repositories of cancer data do not yet routinely capture demographic information about sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status (Gomez et al., 2019). Also lacking are population-based prospective studies evaluating cancer-specific risks, mortality, and survivorship issues facing SGD populations (Boehmer, 2018; Kent et al., 2019).

Existing data do suggest, however, that the incidence of certain cancers may be elevated in specific LGBTI populations. These include, for example, anal cancer in gay and bisexual men and breast cancer in lesbian and bisexual women (Quinn et al., 2015). The lifetime risk of germ cell tumors varies considerably across intersex conditions (Pyle and Nathanson, 2017), and gonadal cancers have been associated with

a variety of intersex conditions (Gomez-Lobo and Amies Oelschlager, 2016). Despite a low risk of gonadal malignancy before puberty, many intersex people have unnecessary gonadectomy in childhood (see discussion in Chapter 12), which means the risks for some cancers in people with intersex traits are unknown.

Drivers of Cancer Disparities

Elevated rates of cancer in SGD populations result from complex interacting risk factors. These factors can be sociodemographic, such as education and age; economic, such as employment and insurance coverage; environmental, such as food, second-hand smoke exposure, and environmental pollution related to health services, such as access to recommended care and providers' levels of cultural and clinical competency in caring for SGD populations; and individual, such as genetics, birth parity, alcohol and tobacco use, and history of sexually transmitted infections. For example, use of alcohol and tobacco, as well as rates of HIV, human papilloma virus (HPV), and hepatitis C infections, are higher in some LGBT populations than non-LGBT populations, which increases the risk of lung, breast, colorectal, and other cancers associated with these exposures (Herbst et al., 2008; Hughes et al., 2017; Lee, Griffin, and Melvin, 2009).

Evidence also indicates that access to cancer-related preventive services is lower in LGBT populations than other populations, which leads to many missed opportunities for primary and secondary cancer prevention (Cathcart-Rake, 2018; Ceres et al., 2018). For example, lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to receive mammograms than heterosexual women and, if diagnosed with breast cancer, are less likely to be engaged in treatment (Malone et al., 2019). Lesbians are less likely to receive HPV vaccinations for cancer prevention than heterosexual women, and cisgender sexual minority women and transgender people with a cervix are less likely to receive cervical cancer screening than cisgender heterosexual women (Agénor et al., 2018; Braun et al., 2017; Porsch et al., 2019). Rates of routine cancer screening among intersex populations have not been studied (Gomez-Lobo and Amies Oelschlager, 2016).

These missed opportunities for prevention are often associated with systemic barriers, which include provider misinformation (e.g., the mistaken perception that lesbians do not need Pap smears) and previous patient experiences with and fear of medical maltreatment, which results in reluctance to seek care (Boehmer, 2018). For sexual minority women and transgender men in particular, a lack of access to gender-affirming practices and spaces around breast and cervical cancer screening can be a formidable barrier (Taylor and Bryson, 2015). These spaces are often socially marked as feminine, with pink color schemes, floral gowns, and

women’s magazines in the waiting rooms. Staff and other patients at such sites are often not prepared to see transgender men or masculine-presenting women, and responses to their presence may range from ignorant to hostile (Kamen et al., 2019). Similarly, health plans or providers may make incorrect assumptions about transgender people’s bodies when assessing risk and medical necessity for specific cancer screenings. They also may not be aware that transgender men and non-binary people who retain a cervix require regular Pap tests; transgender women and non-binary people who retain a prostate may require prostate exams, and all people with breast tissue, including transgender men who have had chest reconstruction, may need mammograms (Deutsch, 2016; Pratt-Chapman and Ward, 2020). Barriers to appropriate cancer screenings may be particularly salient for SGD people of color, who may face barriers based on race and ethnicity as well as sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status (Malone et al., 2019).

Interventions to Improve Cancer Prevention and Outcomes

Positive, destigmatizing, gender-affirming relationships with health care providers increase acceptance of cervical cancer screening (Agénor et al., 2015; Dhillon et al., 2020) and HPV vaccination (Apaydin et al., 2018) among LGBT people. Sexual minority women and trans-masculine people often prefer self-collected swabs for cervical cancer screening and HPV testing (Goldstein et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2016; McDowell et al., 2017; Reisner et al., 2018). There is no consensus or national recommendation around screening for anal cancer among gay and bisexual men; however, shared decision making about anal pap smears is recommended for men who have sex with men who are living with HIV (Margolies and Goeren, n.d.; Medical Care Criteria Committee and Brown, 2020).

A brief web-based intervention that provided tailored HPV information and monthly text reminders for gay and bisexual men was associated with increased HPV vaccinations among young sexual minority men (Reiter et al., 2018). Other recommendations for increasing HPV vaccination rates among young sexual minority men include creative use of mobile technology, bundling HPV vaccination with other health services, and increasing vaccine awareness (Fontenot et al., 2016).

The committee found few recent studies of breast cancer interventions for SGD populations. The most recent study described a community-engaged process of developing a culturally tailored breast cancer education program for LGBTQ individuals (Fung et al., 2019). Older studies included a culturally adapted intervention designed to improve breast cancer screening among Black sexual minority women; this intervention trained Black lesbians to be role models and lay health advisors for their community, but no efficacy data from this program have been reported (Washington and

Murray, 2005). Other intervention research included largely white samples: a tailored education intervention increased breast cancer screening in lesbians (Dibble and Roberts, 2003), and a risk counseling intervention with mostly white sexual minority women increased breast cancer screening rates at 24 months (Bowen, Powers, and Greenlee, 2006).

Data suggest that oncology providers could benefit from more education about SGD populations (Lisy et al., 2018; Schabath et al., 2019). A systematic review of LGBTQ anti-bias training for health care providers found that education was effective at increasing knowledge of LGBTQ health issues, experiential learning was effective at increasing comfort levels with LGBTQ patients, and intergroup contact was effective at promoting more tolerant attitudes toward LGBTQ patients (Morris et al., 2019). More research is needed into interventions to improve the full spectrum of cancer prevention, care, and outcomes for SGD populations, including transgender people and people with intersex traits.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections

Historically, much of the research on the health of LGBT populations has focused on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Coulter et al., 2014). This evidence shows that cisgender gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men are overrepresented among people living with HIV and represent the largest proportion of new HIV diagnoses every year in the United States (CDC, 2020). Of all the men living with HIV in the United States, 76 percent are gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, and 26,000 men who have sex with men acquire HIV each year (CDC, 2020). Young Black and Latinx men are overrepresented in these numbers (CDC, 2020). Similarly, men who have sex with men are overrepresented among STI incidence and prevalence figures overall (CDC, 2019).

Transgender people, particularly Black and Latina transgender women, are also heavily affected by HIV: a recent meta-analysis found that one in seven transgender women is living with HIV (Becasen et al., 2019). The rates are 44 percent for Black transgender women and 25 percent for Latina transgender women. Data are limited on HIV among transgender men and non-binary people; however, emerging data suggest that transgender men who have sex with men face similar risks for HIV as their cisgender male counterparts (Golub et al., 2019; Reisner et al., 2019). There are fewer and often poorer quality studies of the prevalence of other STIs among transgender people, with estimates that vary substantially by geography, type of STI, and study population (McNulty and Bourne, 2017).

Sexual minority women who inject drugs or have sex with cisgender men face a higher risk for HIV than heterosexual women with the same risk factors (German and Latkin, 2015; Owen et al., 2020). Data on other STIs among sexual minority women are sparse and often low quality; however, they indicate that STI transmission between women does take place (Takemoto et al., 2019). As with many other health conditions, the committee found no published data on HIV or other STIs among intersex people.

Drivers of HIV/STI Disparities

Stigma, violence, and discrimination across multiple axes of identity converge in the lives of LGBT and other SGD people, leading to higher rates of HIV/STI risk behavior and reduced access to and engagement in prevention (e.g., pre-exposure prophylaxis, condoms) and care services (e.g., anti-retroviral therapy) (Earnshaw et al., 2013; McNulty and Bourne, 2017; Mimiaga et al., 2019a; Mustanski et al., 2017; Nuttbrock et al., 2015; Poteat et al., 2016; Reisner et al., 2016b, 2020a; Sevelius et al., 2020a). Reduced access to protective structural assets, such as stable housing, employment opportunities, and affirming health care, are some of the mechanisms linking stigma to HIV/STI disparities for LGBT populations. For example, employment discrimination limits income-generating opportunities for many transgender women (James et al., 2016). As a result, survival sex work is common and, in the context of criminalization, is associated with increased vulnerability to contracting HIV (Becasen et al., 2019). A lack of access to gender-affirming care has also been identified as an HIV risk factor among transgender women (Sevelius et al., 2019).

Interventions to Address HIV and Other STIs

The magnitude of the burden of HIV and other STIs on LGBT populations has generated substantial research into effective interventions to eliminate these disparities. A growing body of data suggests that stigma-reduction interventions may be effective in reducing sexual risk behavior and improving engagement in HIV care (Mimiaga et al., 2018; White Hughto, Reisner, and Pachankis, 2015; Yang et al., 2018). A recent systematic review of multiple stigma reduction interventions to improve HIV prevention and care outcomes among men who have sex with men identified three main approaches: (1) education and mobile health strategies that reduce internalized and anticipated stigma by promoting self-acceptance, leadership, and motivation for behavior change; (2) peer support and training of health care providers to increase social support, knowledge sharing, and empowerment; and (3) community leader sensitization to reduce enacted and anticipated stigma (Dunbar et al., 2020).

There is strong evidence for the efficacy of group- and community-level behavioral interventions to reduce sexual risk behavior among men who have sex with men (Lorimer et al., 2013). Among a review of more than 100 studies, interventions that were based on a theoretical framework, delivered by trained professionals, and focused on skills building were the most consistently effective (Lorimer et al., 2013). HIV/STI prevention research with sexual minority men has increasingly focused on e-health interventions, including web-based, text-based, online-video, computer-assisted, multimedia, social network virtual simulation, and smartphone applications (Nguyen et al., 2019). A recent systematic review (Henny et al., 2018) identified 55 interventions, of which 49 achieved short-term risk-reduction behavior change; however, of the 4 studies with 12-month follow-up, only 1 of them maintained behavior change over this period. In a review of 45 e-health interventions that addressed the HIV care continuum, mobile texting was the technology most commonly reported (44%) (Henny et al., 2018). Medication adherence (60%) was the most common outcome measured, and 20 percent of interventions measured HIV viral suppression. Approximately 75 percent of studies showed preliminary or proven efficacy. Many of them relied on mobile technology and integrated knowledge or cognition as behavior change mechanisms.

HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has been a particularly powerful innovation in HIV prevention, capable of reducing HIV risk by more than 90 percent for individuals who adhere to prescribed regimens (Fonner et al., 2016). However, PrEP uptake and adherence has been low, particularly among Black and Latinx transgender women and men who have sex with men (Kanny et al., 2019; Poteat et al., 2019). Existing data suggest that addressing intersectional economic, institutional, interpersonal, and psychosocial barriers to PrEP is critical for effective HIV prevention in these populations (Cahill et al., 2017; Poteat et al., 2017). Employment and other structural intervention studies are currently under study to test their efficacy to reduce HIV/STI vulnerability among transgender women (Benotsch and Zimmerman, 2017; HIV Prevention Trials Network, n.d.) and gay and bisexual men (Hill et al., 2020).

Multiple studies with serodiscordant male sexual partners have demonstrated that HIV transmission does not occur when the partner living with HIV is engaged in effective antiretroviral treatment (Yombi and Mertes, 2018). Advocates have led an education campaign using the slogan “U = U”—“undetectable equals untransmittable”—which has been endorsed by multiple organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Lancet HIV, 2017). Ensuring that SGD people living with HIV have access to affirming health care from providers who are knowledgeable about current best practices in HIV prevention and treatment is critical both to increasing PrEP uptake and to the success of U = U.

The committee identified only one STI intervention designed for cisgender sexual minority women. A group-based, six-session, psychoeducational intervention with cisgender lesbian, bisexual, and queer women significantly increased sexual risk-reduction practices, STI knowledge, and self-efficacy for barrier use six weeks after the intervention ended (Logie et al., 2015). Similarly, the committee found only one intervention tailored specifically for transgender men: LifeSkills for Men, which adapted a small group-based behavioral HIV prevention intervention originally designed for young transgender women to address the unique needs of young transgender men who have sex with men (Reisner et al., 2016c). A pilot test found the intervention to be feasible and acceptable, with trends suggesting reduced HIV/STI risk behaviors across four months of follow-up.

Multiple group-based behavioral HIV prevention interventions developed for transgender women have shown some evidence of efficacy (Poteat et al., 2017). However, most were limited by less rigorous pre-post designs, short follow-up periods, or lack of any outcome evaluation. The only published full-scale behavioral HIV prevention randomized controlled trial for transgender women to date has been Project LifeSkills for young transgender women (Garofalo et al., 2018). This empowerment-based group intervention was delivered in six 2-hour sessions over 3 weeks, and intervention participants reduced condomless sex acts by 40 percent over 12 months of follow-up when compared with participants in a control group. One “status-neutral” peer-led group intervention, Sheroes, has demonstrated high feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary efficacy (Sevelius et al., 2020b). In another study of a couples-based HIV prevention intervention, transgender women and their primary cisgender male partners were randomized to a couples-based HIV prevention intervention comprised of three counseling sessions (two couples-focused sessions, which discussed relationship dynamics, communication, and HIV risk, and one individual-focused session on HIV prevention concerns) or a control condition (one session on general HIV prevention delivered to both partners together). At 3-month follow-up, participants in the intervention condition had 50 percent reduced odds of condomless sex with primary partners and 30 percent reduction with casual partners relative to the control condition (Operario et al., 2017). As part of a Special Project of National Significance, the Health Resources and Services Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services recently funded nine sites across the country to implement and evaluate interventions to improve care engagement for HIV-positive transgender women of color (Rebchook et al., 2017). While each intervention was different, common elements included community outreach, peer navigation, access to gender-affirming medical care (e.g., hormone therapy), case management, and transgender-competent HIV care (Chapter 12 discusses the lessons learned from this project).

Sexual Function

Most sexual health research with SGD populations, particularly transgender women and gay men, has focused on HIV/STIs, with less attention to other sexual health domains, such as desire, arousal, orgasm, pleasure, and other aspects of sexual function (Stephenson et al., 2017; Wade and Harper, 2017). However, evidence indicates that sexual minority men may report lower orgasm frequency, pleasure, and satisfaction than heterosexual men, and bisexual women report greater physical discomfort during sex and fewer orgasms than lesbians (Flynn, Lin, and Weinfurt, 2017). In an online convenience sample of almost 53,000 adults, heterosexual men were most likely to report that they usually or always orgasmed when sexually intimate (95%), followed by gay men (89%), bisexual men (88%), lesbian women (86%), bisexual women (66%), and heterosexual women (65%) (Frederick et al., 2018).

The study of sexual function among transgender people has focused on genital sensation after gender-affirming surgeries (Frey et al., 2017). Though limited by convenience sampling and small sample sizes, existing studies indicate that most transgender adults retain the ability to achieve orgasm and report satisfaction with their sexual functioning after gender-affirming surgeries (Sigurjonsson et al., 2017; Stephenson et al., 2017). A large European study of transgender adults found increases in sexual desire and arousal after surgery (Kerckhof et al., 2019). Data on sexual function among transgender people who have not had gender-affirming surgeries are limited.

Studies on sexuality among people with intersex traits have focused disproportionately on sexual function as an outcome of childhood genital surgery (see Chapter 12). High rates of sexual dissatisfaction, sexual inhibition, and sexual problems have been found across variables of gender, genital difference, specific intersex condition, or having undergone prior surgery (Kreukels et al., 2019). Studies have consistently linked prior history of clitoral surgery with decreased genital sensation and anorgasmia in comparison with intersex individuals who had not undergone clitoral surgery. With or without surgical intervention, concerns about genital appearance may affect sexual function for some intersex people (Gomez-Lobo and Amies Oelschlager, 2016; Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2018; van der Horst and de Wall, 2017). Multiple studies have found reports of dissatisfaction with genital appearance and satisfaction with genital function among intersex adults (Kreukels et al., 2019). Overall, concerns about long-term effects on sexual function from surgery performed in infancy support arguments to delay surgical intervention until the patient can provide informed consent. Ethical and other considerations around early genital surgeries for infants with intersex traits are discussed in more detail in Chapter 12.

Published studies assessing influences on sexual function among SGD populations are rare, and large gaps remain in understanding the relationship between minority stress and sexual function (Grabski and Kasperek, 2017; Grabski et al., 2018). Research on sexual function among LGBT and intersex people has been limited by the degree to which existing measures center and normalize cisgender, heterosexual, and non-intersex experiences of anatomy, desire, and sexual behavior, as well as researchers' failure to develop and use research instruments that have been validated among SGD populations (McDonagh et al., 2014; Reisner et al., 2020b). Better research tools to assess all domains of sexual health for LGBT, intersex, and other SGD people are needed (Barone et al., 2017; Sobecki-Rausch, Brown, and Gaupp, 2017). Given this lack of basic information about sexual function among SGD people, it is not surprising that no SGD-specific or SGD-inclusive interventions to improve sexual function were identified in the published literature.

Fertility and Contraception

Technological advances have greatly increased reproductive options for SGD populations. However, data on the prevalence and success rates of assisted reproduction among these populations are sparse. A systematic review of donor intrauterine insemination, in vitro fertilization, and gestational surrogacy among sexual minorities suggests that same-sex couples have higher success rates with assisted reproduction than their heterosexual counterparts (Tarin, Garcia-Perez, and Cano, 2015). However, studies have been limited by sampling bias, small sample sizes, and failure to control for influential covariates, such as age, smoking, reproductive history, and variation in intervention protocols.

Young sexual minority women, particularly bisexual women, have a higher rate of unintended pregnancy than their heterosexual peers, but there has been little study of their fertility behaviors (Ela and Budnick, 2017). In a recent longitudinal study of pregnancy risk among sexual minority women that examined possible reasons for this higher rate, which followed participants for 30 months, investigators found that sexual minority women had more partners, more sexual intercourse with men, less frequent contraceptive use, less use of a dual method of contraception (condom plus hormonal method), and more gaps in contraception use than heterosexual women. These findings highlight the importance of counseling on contraception and family planning for sexual minority women (Ela and Budnick, 2017).

Gender-affirming medical or surgical therapies for transgender individuals may result in reduced or complete lack of fertility (Cheng et al., 2019). Suppression of puberty with gonadotropin-releasing hormone

analogous can pause the maturation of germ cells and thus affect fertility potential. Testosterone therapy can suppress ovulation and alter ovarian histology, while estrogen therapy can lead to impaired spermatogenesis and testicular atrophy. The effect of hormone therapy on fertility is potentially reversible, but the extent is unclear. Gender-affirming surgery that includes oophorectomy or orchiectomy results in permanent sterility; see Chapter 12.

Research indicates that clinicians should counsel transgender patients on fertility preservation options prior to initiation of gender-affirming therapy (Cheng et al., 2019). A narrative review of fertility preservation among gender minorities found that many transgender adults want the option of fertility preservation (Rowlands and Amy, 2018). The current fertility preservation options for transgender people with ovaries and a uterus are embryo cryopreservation, oocyte cryopreservation, and ovarian tissue cryopreservation. For transgender people with testes, sperm cryopreservation, surgical sperm extraction, and testicular tissue cryopreservation are available. Transgender people face many barriers to fertility care, such as provider discrimination; lack of information; lack of insurance coverage; legal barriers, such as heterosexist and gendered requirements in state fertility coverage mandates; scarcity of fertility centers; financial burden; and emotional cost (Cheng et al., 2019). These barriers mean that all transgender people need to be informed of available fertility preservation options (De Roo et al., 2016; Knudson and De Sutter, 2017).

Data suggest that transgender men have limited access to reproductive health services and information, even if they are able to become pregnant (Cipres et al., 2017). One study of almost 200 transgender men found that many used contraception and had experienced pregnancy and abortion, even after social and hormonal gender affirmation (Light et al., 2018). Some contraceptive options may be undesirable to transgender men due to exposure to gender-incongruent hormones, like progestins or estrogens, or the requirement of pelvic exams for placement of intrauterine devices. Transgender men need gender-affirming counseling and care regarding reproductive health, and systems- and provider-level interventions are needed to create gender-affirming and inclusive reproductive health care environments and services (Hahn et al., 2019). Discrimination and other barriers to clinically appropriate and culturally responsive health care for transgender people are discussed in detail in Chapter 12.

Infertility is a common feature of some, but not all, intersex conditions (El-Maouche et al., 2017; Mooij et al., 2017). At the same time, intersex adolescents and adults who have a uterus and no or infrequent menstrual bleeding may erroneously assume that they do not need contraception and may thus be at risk for an unintended pregnancy. Unplanned pregnancies among people with intersex traits may be associated with higher rates of

spontaneous abortions, fetal malformation, and chromosomal abnormalities than among people without intersex traits. Very few data exist on the efficacy of cryopreservation in intersex individuals with viable gametes (Schleedoorn et al., 2019). Even when there has been evidence of efficacy, follow-up data are lacking. Discussion of parenting desires and options, including through adoption, donor gametes, and gestational surrogacy, is an important part of informed consent for hormonal and surgical interventions for individuals with intersex traits (Van Batavia and Kolon, 2016). Access to reproductive health specialists who are knowledgeable about intersex traits and who can discuss options for contraception, fertility preservation, and pregnancy is essential (Gomez-Lobo and Amies Oelschlager, 2016), as is further research on fertility options for intersex individuals.

VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION

Numerous studies show that LGBTQ people experience high rates of violence and victimization that begin early in the life course and persist into adulthood. Specific types of violence documented against LGBTQ people include family violence (McGeough and Sterzing, 2018); intimate partner violence (Edwards, Sylaska, and Neal, 2015; Finneran and Stephenson, 2013; Peitzmeier et al., 2020); sexual violence (Chen et al., 2020; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016); police violence (DeVylder et al., 2017, 2018); and structural violence, such as exclusion and discrimination in health care, employment, education, public accommodations, and other areas of everyday life (Casey et al., 2019). Hate crimes, including physical assault and other forms of bias-motivated violence, are also a serious concern for SGD people (Boynton et al., 2020; Burks et al., 2018; Coston, 2018; Cramer et al., 2018; Herek, 2008; Herek, Gillis, and Cogan, 1999; Katz-Wise and Hyde, 2012; Mills, 2019). Violence and victimization affecting people with intersex traits is an understudied issue, though interviews with families reveal that potential bullying on the basis of intersex traits is often cited by clinicians as a reason to have genital surgery in childhood (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Evidence indicates that LGBTQ youth disproportionately encounter violence and victimization relative to heterosexual and cisgender youth (Edwards, 2018; Johns et al., 2018, 2019b; Olsen et al., 2017; Poteat et al., 2020; Rostad et al., 2019). These experiences include being bullied electronically or at school, being threatened or injured with a weapon at school, experiencing sexual or physical dating violence, and feeling unsafe at or traveling to or from school. Elevated rates of adverse childhood experiences, including physical and sexual abuse, have also been found in LGBTQ populations (Baams, 2018; Merrick et al., 2018). LGBTQ adolescents have increased rates of polyvictimization—experiencing multiple

forms of victimization—relative to their non-LGBTQ peers (Baams, 2018; Schwab-Reese et al., 2018).

SGD people may also experience unique forms of victimization, such as identity abuse (Woulfe and Goodman, 2018), in which perpetrators leverage systems of structural oppression to harm individuals. For instance, perpetrators may use aspects of transphobia, such as withholding gender affirmation or using the threat of “outing,” as a form of blackmail to assert power and control over a transgender person (Peitzmeier et al., 2019). So-called “gay panic” or “transgender panic” defenses, in which defendants, typically cisgender men, leverage societal homophobia or transphobia to escape punishment in criminal cases involving the assault or murder of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person, are also related to identity abuse (Woods, Sears, and Mallory, 2016). Few studies have characterized perpetrators of violence and victimization against LGBT people (Coston, 2018).

Drivers of Violence and Victimization

The elevated rates of violence and victimization experienced by SGD people are rooted in societal oppression, stigma, and bias against LGBT and other SGD people. There are different patterns of violence and victimization on the basis of gender (i.e., identity as male, female, or non-binary) and transgender status. For example, youth who are both LGBQ and transgender have been shown to be at highest risk of past-year intimate partner violence, indicating that stigmatized sexual orientation and gender identity interact to structure risk of exposure to violence (Walls et al., 2019). Similarly, childhood gender nonconformity (i.e., having a gender expression that differs from societal expectations for feminine or masculine appearance and behavior) is associated with greater violence and victimization, independent of sexual orientation or gender identity (Adhia et al., 2018; Baams, 2018; Gordon et al., 2018; Klemmer et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2012a, 2013).

Violence and victimization that target people because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status are often exacerbated by racism, sexism, and xenophobia. For instance, high homicide rates for Black transgender women reveal increased vulnerability to gender-based violence at the intersection of race and gender identity (Dinno, 2017; Wirtz et al., 2020).

Interventions to Address Violence and Victimization

A systematic review of peer-reviewed literature from 2000 to 2019 on interventions and their effectiveness in preventing or reducing violence and victimization for LGBT youth identified only one intervention, anti-bullying laws (Coulter et al., 2019). These laws have been shown to help reduce

bullying victimization, particularly for sexual minority boys (Seelman and Walker, 2018). Protective laws that specifically include sexual orientation reduce the risk of suicide attempts, forced sexual intercourse, and feeling unsafe at school or on the way to or from school among all youth, regardless of sexual orientation (Meyer et al., 2019). In a meta-analysis of 15 primary studies with 62,923 participants, gay-straight alliances were associated with significantly lower levels of self-reported homophobic victimization, safety fears, and hearing homophobic remarks (Marx and Kettrey, 2016; see also Chapter 9). A recent cluster randomized control trial that tested the efficacy of a bystander intervention to reduce violence and violence acceptance for sexual minority male and female high school students in Kentucky was effective at reducing violence for heterosexual students but was less effective for sexual minority youth, particularly sexual minority males (Coker et al., 2020). This outcome points to the need for ongoing research to develop, design, and test interventions to address violence and victimization against LGBTQ youth.

In addition to anti-bullying laws, other structural interventions at the state and federal levels have sought to address violence and victimization against LGBTQ people. As of 2020, 11 states have banned gay and transgender panic defenses (Movement Advancement Project, 2020). Legal equality in the form of state policies for same-sex partnerships, employment nondiscrimination, and hate crimes laws has been shown to decrease the incidence of hate crimes based on sexual orientation (Levy and Levy, 2017). Sexual orientation and gender identity are included in the federal hate crimes law, which provides for enhanced criminal penalties in cases of bias-motivated violence and also requires improved tracking of hate crimes perpetrated against LGBTQ people (Mattson, 2018). Hate crimes laws are controversial, however, because of their potential to be misused against defendants from poor communities or communities of color, which are already over-policed and disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system (Swiffen, 2018).

Trauma-informed interventions are critical to address violence and victimization among LGBTQ people, but these interventions remain underdeveloped (Niolon et al., 2017; Peitzmeier et al., 2020). A recent scoping review found no SGD-specific programs to prevent or address intimate partner violence in SGD people (Subirana-Malaret, Gahagan, and Parker, 2019). However, interventions to mitigate the health-related sequelae of violence for SGD people are being developed and tested. For example, an intervention for HIV-negative men who have sex with men who have history of childhood sexual abuse was developed to address HIV acquisition risk and posttraumatic stress by integrating HIV risk reduction with modified cognitive and behavioral therapy for posttraumatic stress, trauma, and self-care (CBT-TSC). A randomized study of men who have sex with men found that

those who were assigned to CBT-TSC had reduced odds of condomless sex with an HIV-positive or unknown status partner; they also had reduced odds of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and avoidance symptoms relative to those in the control condition assigned only to HIV voluntary counseling and testing (O’Cleirigh et al., 2019). Additional interventional research is needed to prevent and address violence in SGD populations.

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Mental Health

Much of the early literature on the health of LGBT populations centered on mental health disparities and existed in tension with the misuse of mental health diagnoses to justify discrimination against and social exclusion of LGBT people. Since the release of the Institute of Medicine (2011) report, there has been a surge in research empirically evaluating determinants of and interventions for improving the mental health of LGBT and other SGD populations. Research indicates that disparities in SGD population mental health compared with the non-SGD population appear as early as adolescence and may persist even into older adulthood (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2015).

Adolescence is a vulnerable time for the development of mental health symptoms. Studies have consistently found that higher rates of mood and anxiety disorders, PTSD, eating disorders, and substance use disorders emerge in adolescence for LGBT populations (Plöderi and Tremblay, 2015; Russell and Fish, 2016). Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth aged 10 to 24 (Heron, 2019), and a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of population-based longitudinal studies found a significantly higher risk of suicide attempts for LGB youth relative to same-age heterosexual controls (Haas et al., 2011; Miranda-Mendizábal et al., 2017).

Mental health disparities that begin in adolescence can persist far into adulthood (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013). LGBT adults are at higher risk than non-LGBT adults for mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa (Hottes et al., 2016; McClain and Peebles, 2016; Plöderi and Tremblay, 2015). On a spectrum of suicidality anchored at one end by suicide attempts, research has produced evidence identifying increased risk in LGBT populations of other suicidal symptoms, such as non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal ideation (Jackman, Honig, and Bockting, 2016; Liu and Mustanski, 2012). There is also some evidence that severe mental illness—defined by the requirement of extensive psychiatric treatment in inpatient and outpatient settings and resulting in significant disability in one or more major life domains (Parabiaghi et al., 2006)—may occur at higher rates among LGBT populations.

Mental health risks vary among SGD groups. For instance, there is some evidence of higher rates of depression, eating disorders, and suicidality among bisexual people relative to lesbian and gay people (Plöderer and Tremblay, 2015; Pompili et al., 2014). In comparison with cisgender adults, transgender adults report elevated rates of psychiatric diagnoses, such as major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, PTSD, and eating disorders (Connolly et al., 2016; Dhejne et al., 2016; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2014; James et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2016; Mueller, De Cuypere, and T'Sjoen, 2017). Among military veterans, there is evidence of higher rates of suicidality for both LGB and transgender people and higher rates of depression, PTSD, serious mental illness, and sexual trauma among transgender people (Blosnich, Bossarte, and Silenzio, 2012; Brown and Jones, 2015).

Less is known about the epidemiology of mental health problems among intersex populations in the United States, as no population surveys currently assess intersex status (Tamar-Mattis et al., 2018). Research is often limited to a primary variable of surgical or medical treatment with identified outcomes of gender dysphoria and general health-related quality of life (Sandberg, Gardner, and Cohen-Kettenis, 2012). When particular psychiatric and neurocognitive outcomes are evaluated, it is generally in the context of a specific intersex condition (differences of sex development [DSD]). For instance, congenital adrenal hyperplasia and Klinefelter and Turner syndromes have been associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism (de Vries et al., 2019).

There has been much more research into the mental health and well-being of parents of infants and children with intersex traits than for people with intersex traits themselves, and much of this research has been in the context of making decisions regarding early genital surgery (Wisniewski, 2017). The dsd-LIFE Group, a multicenter European study that looked at mental health and quality of life among people with intersex traits, is a notable exception that has no current correlate in the United States (de Vries et al., 2019). Among the 1,022 participants in the dsd-LIFE study, all males and some females with specific DSDs reported increased rates of depression and anxiety relative to country-specific reference populations.

Research regarding the mental health of SGD populations of color has yielded mixed findings. For instance, among respondents to the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment-II surveys from 2008 and 2009, there were lower rates of depression for Asian, Black, and Latinx LGB students than for white LGB students (Lytle, De Luca, and Blosnich, 2014). In contrast, relative to white students, Black and multiracial students reported significantly higher rates of suicide attempts, while Latinx students reported lower rates of suicidal ideation and attempts, though this difference was not statistically significant. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) found that Black, Native American, Asian,

Latinx, Middle Eastern, and multiracial transgender adults reported higher rates of past-year and lifetime suicide attempt than white respondents, with the highest rates for Native American and multiracial respondents (James et al., 2016). An analysis of the Aging with Pride: National Health, Aging, and Sexuality/Gender Study population found decreased mental health-related quality of life for the older LGBT participants who were Black and Hispanic relative to white participants (Kim, Jen, and Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017).

Drivers of Mental Health Disparities

Mental health disparities among LGBT and other SGD populations are consistent with stress responses to external factors, such as stigma, discrimination, and violence (Clements-Nolle et al., 2018; James et al., 2016; Nuttbrock et al., 2014; Perez-Brumer et al., 2017; Reisner et al., 2016d; Whitton et al., 2016). Bias-motivated violence, such as hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity, may have particularly severe psychological consequences for LGBT people (Herek, Gillis, and Cogan, 1999). Internalized stigma and attempts to conceal one's identity to avoid stigma have been associated with psychiatric symptoms and psychological distress among LGBT populations and with suicide attempts among transgender adults (Gevonden et al., 2014; Hatzenbuehler and Pachankis, 2016). Conversion therapy that attempts to change sexual orientation or gender identity is also a mental health stressor for LGBT people: LGBT populations are at risk for exposure to conversion therapy, and exposure to conversion therapy is a risk factor for mental health problems. This topic is discussed in detail in Chapter 12.

Among LGBTQ youth, victimization on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is associated with worse depression, more anxiety, lower self-esteem, less school belonging, and higher prevalence of suicidality than for non-LGBTQ youth (Kosciw et al., 2018). Negative mental health symptoms, suicidal ideation and attempts, and risky behaviors among youth have been correlated with living in areas with higher rates of assault-based hate crimes against LGBT people or higher scores on composite indices of structural stigma (Hatzenbuehler and Pachankis, 2016). For example, in a population-based sample of 9th- through 12th-graders in Boston public schools, sexual minority youth residing in neighborhoods with higher rates of LGBT assault hate crimes were significantly more likely to report suicidal ideation and suicide attempts than those living in neighborhoods with lower rates of LGBT assault hate crimes (Duncan and Hatzenbuehler, 2014). No similar associations were found between LGBT assault hate crimes and either suicide ideation or attempt in heterosexual students, indicating that the results were specific to sexual minority adolescents. Furthermore, there

were no significant associations for non-LGBT crimes and suicidality in sexual minority adolescents, indicating the specificity of results to LGBT assault hate crimes.

Retrospective reports of adverse childhood experiences are also correlated with negative mental health outcomes and psychiatric illness in LGBT populations (Blosnich and Andersen, 2015; Hughes et al., 2017). A systematic review and meta-analysis of 73 studies that included more than 47,000 LGBT adults found high rates of such events, including interpersonal stigma and victimization, among LGBT participants (Schneeberger et al., 2014). Thus, exposure to higher numbers of adverse childhood experiences may contribute to the elevated rates of negative mental health outcomes found among LGBT people (McLaughlin et al., 2012; Roberts et al., 2012b).

Among SGD populations, some associations between mental health outcomes and exposure to stressors, stigma, and victimization are unique to specific groups. Bisexual women, for example, have a higher lifetime prevalence of rape and sexual assault than lesbian or heterosexual women, which may correlate with poorer mental health outcomes (Schulman and Erickson-Schroth, 2019). LGBT individuals with serious mental illness experience intersecting heterosexism and cisgenderism in psychiatric settings and ableism in LGBT spaces, which may exacerbate disparities (Kidd et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2014).

Though there are no studies of minority stress specifically among intersex populations, the dsd-LIFE study in Europe found that mediating factors for mental health disparities affecting people with intersex traits included self-esteem, openness, and shame (de Vries et al., 2019), which are consistent with experiences of minority stress. Similarly, experiences of social, sexual, and medical stigma have been found to occur among individuals with intersex traits (Ediati et al., 2017; Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2017a, 2017b, 2018). There are as yet no studies specifically exploring the ways in which structural or interpersonal stigma or minority stressors might influence intersex health disparities.

Military service may confer both risks and benefits to mental health. There is some evidence that LGBT people may be at higher risk of victimization than non-LGBT people while serving (Goldbach and Castro, 2016), though data are limited. Of the 3 percent of 2015 USTS respondents who were on active duty military, nearly 50 percent reported support from their commanding officers in social transition, though only 36 percent reported support in medical transition (James et al., 2016). However, there may also be a benefit to feeling a sense of belonging in a military or veteran population (Matarazzo et al., 2014). Respondents in the 2015 USTS reported nearly twice the rate of prior military service as the general population (15% and 8%, respectively), and despite higher rates of unemployment, serious psychological distress, and suicide attempts relative to the general

population, all rates were lower than those reported by nonveteran respondents (James et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with data from a 2014 survey of 183 transgender older adults, for whom prior military service predicted fewer depressive symptoms and greater health-related quality of life (Hoy-Ellis et al., 2017).

SGD populations of color may also experience minority stressors and stigma on the basis of their racial or ethnic identity, which may contribute to some findings of elevated mental health risk. Among older LGBT people of color, mediators of mental health quality of life included markers of stigma and stress, such as income, education, identity affirmation, social support, and discrimination (Kim, Jen, and Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017). Similarly, disparate rates of mental health problems among respondents of color to the USTS were mediated by victimization events (James et al., 2016).

Interventions to Address Mental Health Disparities

Emerging evidence has revealed interventions that improve mental health outcomes among SGD populations. Among adults, psychotherapies specifically created for LGBT individuals have been associated with improved mental health (Diamond et al., 2012; Hatzenbuehler and Pachankis, 2016; Lucassen et al., 2015). Additional interventional research is under way, including a transdiagnostic treatment approach to specifically address the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of minority stress processes for young adult sexual minority men (Pachankis et al., 2019). There are few data to guide interventions for LGBT people with serious mental illness (Evans et al., 2016). Training emphasizing cultural competency in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status for mental health providers and mental illness training for LGBT- and intersex-oriented service providers may be useful in improving care and outcomes, especially if such training results in LGBTI individuals feeling safe in disclosing more aspects of their identity to their providers (Kidd et al., 2016). Robust work has found that supportive home environments, affirming school climates, and laws and policies advancing marriage equality and prohibiting discrimination and bullying correlate with lower rates of suicide ideation and attempts in large, population-based analyses of LGBT youth (Hatzenbuehler and Pachankis, 2016; Raifman et al., 2017).

For transgender individuals, gender-affirming medical treatment and interventions targeted at building self-esteem and resilience through clinical care, support groups, activism, and family support have consistently been associated with improvements in mental health outcomes (Costa et al., 2015; de Vries et al., 2011, 2014; Hughto, Reisner, and Pachankis, 2015).

Family support was strongly associated with lower rates of psychological distress and lifetime suicide attempt in 2015 USTS respondents (James et al., 2016). Peer support has also been associated with improved psychosocial well-being for adults with intersex traits and has been recommended as a routine and essential part of intersex care (Krege et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016). Unfortunately, there appears to be a relative absence of research on interventions targeted specifically at improving mental health among LGBT older adults, bisexual people, LGBT military personnel and veterans, LGBT people of color, and intersex adults.

Substance Use and Behavioral Health

SGD populations are disproportionately burdened by substance use disorders across the life course, including use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs (Azagba, Latham, and Shan, 2019; Azagba et al., 2020; Boyd et al., 2019; Dai and Meyer, 2019; Gattamorta, Salerno, and Castro, 2019; Gonzales and Henning-Smith, 2017; Gonzales, Przedworski, and Henning-Smith, 2016; Hoffman et al., 2018; Kerridge et al., 2017; Krueger, Fish, and Upchurch, 2020; McCabe et al., 2019a, 2019b; Schuler et al., 2018). Substance use rates are consistently high for sexual minorities regardless of whether sexual orientation is measured as sexual identity, sexual attraction, or sexual behavior (Kerridge et al., 2017). There is substantial heterogeneity by gender identity and expression in substance use behaviors among the transgender population (Azagba et al., 2019; Buchting et al., 2017; Hoffman et al., 2018; Lowry et al., 2018; Newcomb et al., 2019; Watson et al., 2020). There is as yet no research on substance use among intersex populations.

Substance use disparities begin early for LGBT populations, with evidence showing that LGBT adolescents are at greater risk of substance use and misuse when compared with their heterosexual and cisgender peers (Day et al., 2017; Johns et al., 2018, 2019b; Johnson et al., 2019; Lowry et al., 2017; McCabe et al., 2013; Mereish, 2019; Phillips et al., 2019; Schuler and Collins, 2019). These substance use disparities may continue into young adulthood (Coulter et al., 2015; Jun et al., 2019) and persist well into older adulthood (Dai and Meyer, 2019).

It is important to consider subgroup differences when assessing substance use among SGD populations. For instance, prevalence and patterns of substance use behaviors, substance use disorders, and substance use morbidities are particularly heightened for bisexual people (Boyd et al., 2019; McCabe et al., 2019a, 2019b) and sexual minority women (Cochran, Björkenstam, and Mays, 2017; Fish, Hughes, and Russell, 2018; Kerridge et al., 2017; Krueger, Fish, and Upchurch, 2020; McCabe et al., 2019a, 2019b; Schuler et al., 2018).

Drivers of Substance Use and Behavioral Health Disparities

Substance use morbidity for LGBT people may result from exposure to high levels of minority stress from their disadvantaged social status; homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic bullying; or maladaptive coping to stressful life events. For example, in the 2013–2014 California Healthy Kids Survey of 316,766 students in 1,500 middle and high schools (grades 7, 9, and 11), gender- and sexuality-based harassment at school was higher for LGB youth relative to heterosexual youth, was independently associated with greater odds of substance use in every grade, and explained many disparities in substance use between LGB and heterosexual youth (Coulter et al., 2018).

In a nationally representative study using data from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)-III, sexual minorities were at substantially higher risk of severe alcohol use disorder than their heterosexual counterparts, and higher levels of sexual orientation discrimination increased the odds of alcohol use disorder in sexual minorities (McCabe et al., 2019b). This finding suggests that substance abuse prevention and treatment strategies should address sexual minority-specific vulnerabilities. Another study using NESARC-III data found that sexual orientation discrimination and stressful life events each accounted for substance use disorder disparities between sexual minority subgroups and heterosexual adults (Krueger, Fish, and Upchurch, 2020). These findings also suggest that pathways to substance use disorder disparities may differ for different sexual minority subgroups. The age at which exposure to social stressors occurs is also relevant for risk of substance use disorders. A nationally representative sample of non-heterosexual adults found that discrimination based on sexual orientation was most prevalent in early young adulthood, but it increased the odds of substance use disorders only if people were exposed to discrimination at older ages (Evans-Polce et al., 2020).

Due to the lack of gender identity data in U.S. health surveillance systems, population data are limited on pathways to social stress-related substance use disparities for transgender people compared to cisgender people. In nonprobability samples of transgender people, however, social stressors such as discrimination, family rejection, a lack of gender affirmation, and bullying and violence victimization are associated with substance use (Day et al., 2017; Gamarel et al., 2016, 2020; Gilbert et al., 2018; Jannat-Khah et al., 2018; Kidd et al., 2019; Klein and Golub, 2016; Menino et al., 2018; Reisner et al., 2015).

Social norms, social networks, and social support have also been implicated in sexual orientation disparities in substance use. With regard

to social norms, in a probability study of 3,012 middle and high school students (aged 11 to 18) in a mid-sized school district in the southern United States, sexual minority adolescents had higher perceptions of others' substance use behavior and more permissive perceptions of whether a substance use behavior is approved by others than heterosexual adolescents. These perceptions partially explained disparities for sexual minority youth in both lifetime and current substance use risk (Mereish et al., 2017). The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) study found that social network factors, including higher frequency or quantity of tobacco use and drinking to intoxication, reflected sexual orientation disparities in alcohol misuse (Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, and Xuan, 2015). An analysis of NESARC-III data found that functional support was associated with lower rates of alcohol use disorder for some sexual minorities, while structural support (type and frequency of kin and non-kin contact) increased the risk for other groups (Kahle et al., 2019).

Interventions to Address Substance Use and Behavioral Health Disparities

A review of LGBT substance use research between 2013 and 2017 found an emphasis on individual-level risk factors and a need for additional studies of protective factors and group differences by race and ethnicity, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, and gender identity (Kidd et al., 2018). Also needed are nationally representative samples and translation of findings into interventions to prevent and treat substance use for LGBT people. Research on substance abuse treatment utilization is underdeveloped and relies heavily on nonprobability samples (Flentje et al., 2015; Glynn and van den Berg, 2017). In a nationally representative study of adults, among those with any lifetime substance use disorder, some sexual minority adult groups had higher odds of lifetime substance abuse treatment utilization than others (McCabe et al., 2013). Nonetheless, many SGD persons who need substance use treatment do not access it due to stigma and other barriers to care (Allen and Mowbray, 2016) (see Chapter 12). Protective factors for reducing substance use among transgender and gender diverse youth are parent connectedness and higher levels of teacher connectedness (Gower et al., 2018).

There is a dearth of programs and treatments to prevent or intervene on substance use disparities in LGBT populations. In a systematic review of the peer-reviewed literature from 2000 to 2019 on interventions and their effectiveness in preventing or reducing substance use, mental health problems, and violence victimization in LGBT youth, only 12 interventions were identified, of which 2 were for substance use (Coulter et al.,

2019). Another review identified large research gaps in the area of tobacco prevention and cessation interventions for SGD youth and young adults (Baskerville et al., 2017). Some interventional research has addressed substance use in the context of sexual risk for HIV acquisition or transmission in gay and bisexual men (Mimiaga et al., 2019b; Parsons et al., 2014). For example, a randomized controlled trial of a tailored, culturally sensitive intervention for homeless gay and bisexual men found significant reductions in stimulant use over time for men assigned to a nurse case management plus contingency management or to a standard education plus contingency management program (Nyamathi et al., 2017). More rigorous research is needed, including studies to determine if adaptations of evidence-based interventions that include minority stress and other SGD-specific concerns are more effective than treatment as usual (Bochicchio et al., 2020). Additional interventional research is needed to understand and mitigate the substance use inequities found in LGBT populations. Research is also needed into the epidemiology, etiology, and treatment of substance use disorders among people with intersex traits.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The physical and mental health of SGD populations, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people, is substantially affected by external influences that include discrimination, stigma, prejudice, and other social, political, and economic determinants of health. Thus, SGD populations experience both physical and mental health inequities.

In addition to health disparities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, many SGD people also experience health disparities related to intersecting aspects of identity that include but are not limited to race and ethnicity. The associations between stress, stigma, social determinants of health, and health outcomes hold across multiple health conditions. Different social and individual risks may intersect to compound adverse health effects. Cross-cutting resiliency factors appear to mitigate some of these risks and can form the basis for interventions.

CONCLUSION 11-1: Sexual and gender diverse populations experience numerous disparities in physical and mental health. These disparities are unevenly distributed in relation to such factors as race and gender.

In comparison with heterosexual and cisgender populations, SGD populations have less favorable overall health and higher rates of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, exposure to violence, and HIV and other STIs. Among sexual minority women, lesbian and bisexual women have higher

odds of risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as hypertension and diabetes, as well as more risk factors for breast cancer. Transgender adults may have elevated rates of cardiovascular disease and myocardial infarction compared with their cisgender counterparts.

LGBT people and people with intersex traits are at risk of violence from family members, peers, intimate partners, and strangers as a result of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. Some of the highest risks of violence affect bisexual women and transgender people, particularly transgender women of color. Black transgender women are also disproportionately affected by HIV, as are cisgender gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, who are overrepresented among people living with HIV and represent the largest proportion of new HIV diagnoses every year in the United States.

Mental health disparities in SGD populations include heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms and greater suicidality among LGBT people as compared to heterosexual or cisgender individuals. Substance use and behavioral health disparities include greater use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs among LGBT people than among heterosexual or cisgender individuals. Sexual minority individuals are also less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report healthy sleep, and similar disparities may exist for transgender people.

CONCLUSION 11-2: Health disparities affecting sexual and gender diverse populations are often poorly understood due to gaps in research and data collection relevant to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status.

Because both clinical and population research studies rarely include measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, the full scope and magnitude of physical and mental health disparities and their differential effects across and within SGD populations is not known. There is a particular lack of longitudinal research, representative population surveys, experimental trials, and quasi-experimental studies that collect, analyze, and report health-related data in the context of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status.

Examples of health conditions and risks that are understudied in SGD populations include chronic diseases, such as dementia, cardiovascular disease, and cancer; health behaviors, such as diet, exercise, and sleep; suicidality; all-cause and specific mortality; quality of life; the physical, emotional, and sexual health and well-being of people with intersex traits across conditions and across the lifespan, especially among adolescents and adults who did not have genital surgery; and the physical and mental health of transgender people, including non-binary people. In many of these

areas, reliable instruments and scales validated for use with SGD populations have not yet been developed. There is also a relative dearth of data on intersections with other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability. Groups for which research is especially lacking include Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; people with intersex traits; asexual, bisexual, and non-monosexual people; and non-binary people.

CONCLUSION 11-3: The physical and mental health disparities experienced by sexual and gender diverse populations are driven by social forces, such as stigma, prejudice, and discrimination; they are not intrinsic personal characteristics related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. They may also be compounded by intersecting stressors, such as racism, sexism, and xenophobia.

There is no innate disorder associated with being an SGD individual. Rather, the disparities affecting SGD populations are driven by experiences of minority stress, which include both structural and interpersonal stigma, prejudice, discrimination, violence, and trauma. Minority stress exposures have many mental and physical consequences. Another important concept in relation to minority stress is resilience, which is the ability to maintain normal physical and psychological functioning when stress and trauma occur. More research is needed to elucidate the origins, pathways, and health consequences of minority stress and the factors that support resilience among SGD populations.

The consequences of minority stress are particularly severe for SGD Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, who are affected by exposure to compounded levels of racism, race-related stress, and trauma from multiple sources. They may therefore face stressors that adversely affect their health in ways that differ from and may exceed the disparities facing white SGD populations or heterosexual and cisgender populations of color. A specific focus on intersecting experiences of minority stress associated with both anti-LGBT bias and other forces of structural oppression is lacking in the minority stress literature.

CONCLUSION 11-4: Although a substantial amount of intervention research has been done in some areas of sexual and gender diverse population health (e.g., HIV among gay and bisexual men), there are notable gaps in research on interventions that address the influences of stigma, discrimination, and intersectional minority stress.

Interventional research in SGD health remains in its infancy. Evidence-based interventions are needed to prevent and address health inequities. These interventions need to address the root causes and multilevel fac-

tors driving SGD health disparities. These factors include vulnerabilities uniquely experienced by SGD people, such as stigma, discrimination, and other sexual and gender minority stressors, as well as intersectional stressors experienced by SGD people living at the intersection of multiple marginalized populations (e.g., racism experienced by Black SGD people). Interventions that address individual, interpersonal, and structural determinants of health are necessary to close SGD health disparities. Developing interventions tailored for specific SGD subgroups, including those targeting risks and harmful exposures specific to those groups (e.g., biphobia, transphobia, racism), and testing whether these tailored interventions are more effective than treatment as usual can help improve SGD population health.

Methodologically rigorous approaches are needed to move interventional research forward for SGD populations. This needed work includes implementing randomized controlled trials for intervention efficacy testing, as well as less traditional methods, such as pragmatic trials, natural experiments, and community-level randomization. In addition, rigorous scientific evaluation of existing and new programs, clinical care and service delivery, and policy and legal changes can help inform future opportunities to improve SGD population health. Leveraging resilience, including building upon strategies SGD people have used to resist societal oppression, is an important part of optimizing SGD health and well-being.

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Coverage, Access, and Utilization of Evidence-Based Health Care

Research indicates that access to adequate insurance coverage, culturally responsive providers, and high-quality, evidence-based health care services has the potential to significantly reduce the effects of health disparities on sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations. This chapter first reviews the literature on access to care, insurance coverage, and health services utilization in SGD populations. It then discusses in detail three topics that are particularly critical to ensure that clinical and policy approaches to health care for SGD populations are evidence based: gender-affirming care for transgender people, conversion therapy targeting sexual orientation or gender identity, and early genital surgeries for infants with intersex traits.

The importance of grounding clinical protocols and health-related policies on a firm evidence base is a central component of providing high-quality care to SGD people and developing effective strategies to improve SGD population health. Evidence indicates that gender-affirming medical care can significantly improve the health and well-being of transgender people. Conversely, virtually all major medical authorities agree that both “conversion therapy” to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of LGBTQ people and procedures to “normalize” the sex characteristics of children with intersex traits who are too young to participate in consent lack evidence of benefit and show evidence of physical and mental health harms.

Over the past decade, the evidence regarding the importance of gender-affirming care for transgender people has grown exponentially, with increasingly robust data on improvements in mental health outcomes and overall

well-being in particular. With regard to conversion therapy and early genital surgeries on infants with intersex traits, however, the evidence base has evolved in the opposite direction, indicating that these procedures have harmful consequences for the health of SGD people.

COVERAGE, ACCESS, AND UTILIZATION

SGD people often encounter barriers to health care services. These barriers include individual factors, such as health literacy; interpersonal factors, such as individual experiences of discrimination by health care providers and insurers; and broader structural factors, such as lower rates of health insurance coverage and higher rates of poverty among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities and households headed by same-sex couples, which puts health care financially out of reach for many. Another common barrier is a widespread lack of training for providers in SGD population health, which means that many individuals, particularly transgender and people with intersex traits, struggle to find culturally and clinically competent health care providers.

This section discusses insurance coverage, access to care, and utilization of health care services by SGD people. It focuses first on discrimination in access to health care and health insurance, which is an important influence on the well-being of SGD populations. It then discusses other insurance coverage issues for SGD people, followed by what is known about health services utilization in SGD populations, including considerations of care quality and health professions training.

Discrimination in Health Care and Health Insurance Coverage

Despite cultural and legal shifts such as the nationwide expansion of marriage equality for same-sex couples, discrimination against LGBT people in health care and coverage remains pervasive in the United States. A 2017 survey conducted by National Public Radio (NPR), the Harvard School of Public Health, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that 16 percent of LGBT people reported encountering discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity when seeking medical care (NPR, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2017). Transgender people are particularly likely to encounter discrimination in health care settings. According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), 33 percent of transgender people who had seen a health care provider in the previous year had at least one negative experience related to being transgender, such as being verbally harassed, physically assaulted, or refused treatment (James et al., 2016). A 2019 review found that, across eight studies, 27 percent (range: 19–40%)

of transgender people reported having been denied health care outright (Kcomt, 2019).

In health insurance, discrimination against SGD people has historically taken many forms. Some types of insurance discrimination prevent people from being able to obtain or afford a health insurance plan at all. These include denials of family coverage to same-sex couples, including legally married spouses (CCIIO, 2014), and preexisting condition exclusions targeting conditions such as cancer and HIV (CCIIO, n.d.). Those who do obtain a plan may then encounter barriers to using their coverage. For SGD people living with HIV, these barriers include adverse tiering (when insurers place certain drugs, such as HIV antiretrovirals, in high cost-sharing levels) and coverage exclusions for pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (Jacobs and Sommers, 2015; Underhill, 2012). For other SGD people, frequent coverage barriers include difficulty accessing preventive screenings (Agénor et al., 2014; CMS, 2015; Tabaac et al., 2018) and exclusion of coverage for such services as mental and behavioral health care, infertility treatments for same-sex couples, and gender-affirming care for transgender people (American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2013; Baker, 2017; Coursole, 2019). Among USTS respondents with insurance, 25 percent reported insurance discrimination on the basis of their gender identity (James et al., 2016). Their experiences included being denied coverage for what are often construed as “gender-specific” services, such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and prostate exams (13%); being denied coverage for care not related to gender affirmation (7%); and being denied coverage for gender-affirming surgery (55%) or hormone therapy (25%). Gender-affirming medical care for transgender people is discussed in detail below.

As described in Chapter 11, discrimination has direct negative consequences for health and well-being and exacerbates the significant health disparities that affect LGBT, intersex, and other SGD populations. Encounters with discrimination in health care settings also jeopardize health by engendering avoidance. In the NPR et al. study, 18 percent of LGBT people reported not seeking health care when they needed it for fear of discrimination; in the 2015 USTS, 23 percent of transgender respondents had not sought care they needed in the last year for fear of mistreatment (James et al., 2016; NPR, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2017). Similarly, people with intersex traits may avoid routine health care due to previous negative experiences with medical providers (Lambda Legal, 2018).

Given the health consequences of discrimination, laws and policies that prohibit discrimination are a critical intervention for protecting and improving the health and well-being of LGBT, intersex, and other SGD people. Both public and private entities have increasingly established

nondiscrimination protections that include these populations. Beginning in 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) promulgated a number of regulations that sought to ensure that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity did not hinder beneficiaries' access to a wide range of programs, including Medicare's Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly,¹ HHS grants and services,² HealthCare.gov and the state-based health insurance marketplaces,³ Medicaid managed care plans,⁴ plans covering the essential health benefits outlined in the Affordable Care Act (ACA),⁵ qualified health plans,⁶ and ACA-regulated health insurance plans more broadly.⁷ In 2011, the Joint Commission, which accredits approximately 80 percent of U.S. hospitals, began requiring accredited entities to establish nondiscrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity (Joint Commission, 2011).

In 2016, HHS released a regulation outlining its enforcement of Section 1557 of the ACA.⁸ This ACA provision, sometimes known as the Health Care Rights Law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability (including HIV status), or sex in any federally supported health program or activity.⁹ The 2016 regulation clarified that the sex nondiscrimination protections in Section 1557 include gender identity and intersex status (as well as pregnancy status) (Baker, 2016). The department also invited complaints of sexual orientation discrimination as a form of sex stereotyping prohibited under Section 1557. In addition to requiring equal access to health care services and health insurance coverage, the regulation clarified that such actions as refusing to use a transgender person's correct name and pronoun, assigning a transgender person to a hospital room or other facility on the basis of their sex assigned at birth, or excluding coverage for all care related to gender affirmation constitute discrimination (insurance coverage for gender-affirming care is covered in more detail below). Evidence indicates that this regulation was effective in addressing numerous forms of discrimination against LGBT people in health care settings (Gruberg and Bewkes, 2018).

As this report goes to press, the Section 1557 regulation is being contested through lawsuits in federal court regarding the scope of its protec-

¹42 C.F.R. § 460.98(b)(3) and § 460.112(a).

²45 C.F.R. § 75.300.

³45 C.F.R. § 155.120(c)(ii) and § 155.220(j)(2).

⁴42 C.F.R. § 438.3(d)(4), § 438.206(c)(2), and § 440.262.

⁵45 C.F.R. § 156.125(a) and (b).

⁶45 C.F.R. § 156.200(e) and § 156.1230(b)(3).

⁷45 C.F.R. § 147.104(e).

⁸45 C.F.R. Part 92.

⁹42 U.S.C. 18116.

tions for sex nondiscrimination. It is expected, however, that the Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Bostock v. Clayton County*, in which the Court ruled that the sex nondiscrimination protections in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act include gender identity and sexual orientation (see Chapter 5), will supersede contradicting interpretations of the ACA's sex nondiscrimination provision and lead to SGD populations being protected under Section 1557 (Keith, 2020). Still unresolved, however, are such issues as access to abortion and other health care services that are increasingly targeted by laws allowing health care providers to opt out of nondiscrimination requirements that they claim conflict with their religious beliefs (Keith, 2019). The impact of religious refusal laws on the health and well-being of SGD populations is a critical and understudied issue.

Health Insurance Coverage

Several factors have changed the landscape of health insurance coverage for LGBT people over the past decade. In addition to the nondiscrimination protections described above, these factors include marriage equality for same-sex couples and the implementation of coverage expansions under the ACA.

Legal relationship recognition expands the availability of health insurance coverage for same-sex couples. Prior to the 2015 Supreme Court decision legalizing marriage equality nationwide, state recognition of same-sex domestic partnerships, civil unions, or marriage was associated with narrower coverage gaps for same-sex couples and their children relative to families headed by different-sex couples (Gonzales, 2015; Gonzales and Blewett, 2013, 2014). The effects of the Supreme Court decision itself are difficult to discern given their overlap with the major expansion of coverage driven by the ACA. The ACA, which was enacted in 2010 and went into full effect in 2014, expanded the availability of coverage in two main ways. First, the law created sliding-scale tax credits intended to facilitate the purchase of health insurance coverage through new health insurance marketplaces, such as HealthCare.gov. Second, under the Supreme Court's 2012 interpretation of the ACA, states were given the choice to expand the eligible income ranges for their Medicaid programs.

Both of these mechanisms are important pathways to coverage for LGBT people, who tend to have lower incomes and higher rates of uninsurance than non-LGBT people. In the first half of 2013, prior to the full implementation of the ACA, 34 percent of a nationally representative sample of LGBT people making less than \$45,000 per year (the income range eligible for health insurance marketplace subsidies) were uninsured (Baker, Durso, and Cray, 2014). Following the opening of the marketplaces in fall 2013, uninsurance among LGBT people in this income bracket dropped to

26 percent in 2014 and to 22 percent in 2017 (Baker and Durso, 2017). Data from the Urban Institute’s Health Reform Monitoring Survey similarly indicate that the share of LGB adults without health insurance across all income ranges decreased from 21.7 percent in 2013 to 11.1 percent in 2015 (Karpman, Skopec, and Long, 2015). In 2015, uninsurance among transgender USTS respondents stood at 14 percent (James et al., 2016). A 2017 study based on Gallup data, however, found that the adult LGBT population as a whole remained more likely to be uninsured than the non-LGBT population—15 percent and 12 percent, respectively—though this analysis did not account for a greater proportion of young people in the LGBT group.¹⁰

One risk factor for uninsurance among LGB adults in the post-ACA era is being just older than 26, when coverage for young people through their parents’ plans often ends (Gonzales, Driscoll, and Quinones, 2019). Living in the South or Midwest is also a risk factor for uninsurance. These regions comprise the bulk of the states that have not expanded their Medicaid programs and are home to substantial numbers of LGBT people living in poverty. Williams Institute estimates that 24 and 23 percent of LGBT people living in the South and the Midwest, respectively, have incomes below the federal poverty level (Choi, Badgett, and Wilson, 2019). An analysis of data from the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicated that a lack of Medicaid expansion is associated with higher prevalence of uninsurance among lower-income LGB adults: LGB adults with annual household incomes under \$25,000 in states that did not expand Medicaid in 2014 had higher rates of uninsurance than LGB adults in states that did expand Medicaid—37.5 and 23.3 percent, respectively—though this analysis could not confirm that all of the uninsured would have been eligible for expanded Medicaid (Gonzales and Henning-Smith, 2017a).

Beyond providing coverage to low-income people, Medicaid is also particularly important for LGBT people with specific health care needs, such as people with disabilities and people living with HIV. Both population-based and purposive sampling studies indicate that the prevalence of disability is higher among LGBT people than in the general population. An analysis of Washington state BRFSS data, for instance, found that 35.5 percent of lesbians and 36.2 percent of bisexual women had a disability, compared with 25.9 percent of heterosexual women; 26.2 percent of gay men and 40.1 percent of bisexual men had a disability, compared with 22.5 percent of heterosexual men (Fredriksen-Goldsen, Kim, and Barkan, 2012). Among transgender people, 39 percent of 2015 USTS respondents reported having a disability, compared with 15 percent of the general population (James et

¹⁰See: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT#economic>.

al., 2016). In comparison with binary-identified transgender people, non-binary transgender adults in a pooled BRFSS sample from 30 states and Guam between 2014 and 2016 were more likely to report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems (adjusted odds ratio [aOR]: 2.44; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.36, 4.34) (Streed, McCarthy, and Haas, 2018).

Though precise statistics are not available, disability for some LGBT people is related to living with HIV. To qualify for Medicaid coverage under pre-ACA eligibility rules, people living with HIV had to have both low incomes and a disability (or otherwise be categorically eligible by, for example, being a parent) (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2019). This led to situations in which people living with HIV could not afford treatment and had to allow their health to deteriorate to a disabling AIDS diagnosis before being able to access Medicaid coverage that could have kept them healthy (IOM, 2011a). The ACA resolved this problem in states that expanded their Medicaid programs. Access to care for people living with HIV is one of the many reasons that Medicaid expansion or broader health system reform, such as “Medicare for All” or another form of universal coverage, is a critical health issue for SGD populations.

Medicaid is also an important source of health insurance coverage for transgender people for both income and medical reasons. In the 2015 USTS, 29 percent of transgender respondents were living below 124 percent of the federal poverty line, which is nearly twice the rate of poverty among the general population (14%). Rates of poverty were higher among transgender respondents who were living with HIV (51%), had a disability (45%), or belonged to communities of color (43, 41, 40, and 38% among Latinx, Native American, multiracial, and Black respondents, respectively). The proportion of USTS respondents insured by Medicaid, however, was slightly smaller (13%) than the general population (15%). Barriers to Medicaid coverage for transgender people include restrictive income eligibility requirements in states that have not expanded Medicaid and the checkered history of Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming services, which is discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

Health Services Utilization

Factors that can encourage or discourage care seeking include insurance coverage and benefit design; income and education; health status, including chronic conditions and acute care needs; health literacy; clinical and cultural competency among medical providers; geographic availability and physical accessibility of providers; and previous positive or negative experiences in health care settings (Committee on Health Care Utilization and Adults with Disabilities, 2018). Given the complexity of this constel-

lation of factors, it is difficult to characterize or predict broad trends in care utilization among SGD populations. For instance, the establishment of new legal protections may improve SGD population health and thus lead to fewer care visits; at the same time, however, the existence of new protections may encourage SGD people to seek care instead of avoiding it for fear of discrimination, which might lead to more care visits.

Some evidence suggests that sexual minority populations have high baseline care utilization. An analysis of data from the 2003–2011 nationwide Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, adjusted for sociodemographic factors, health risk behaviors, and health conditions, found that both men and women in same-sex partnerships had 67 percent (aOR: 1.67; 95% CI: 1.04, 2.67) increased odds of past-year emergency department visits and 51 percent (aOR: 1.51; 95% CI: 1.11, 2.07) increased odds of more than three physician visits in the previous year in comparison with people in different-sex partnerships (Blosnich et al., 2016). This finding is in keeping with the minority stress model, which suggests that sexual and gender minorities have worse health related to their lower social status and thus may require more medical care than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. Also in keeping with this model, Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2012) observed a decline in medical care visits and mental health care visits among both partnered and single sexual minority men in the 12 months following the establishment of marriage equality for same-sex couples in Massachusetts.

Among transgender people, an analysis of data from the California Health Interview Survey found that transgender respondents had lower utilization rates of both primary and specialty care than non-transgender respondents (Ehrenfeld, Zimmerman, and Gonzales, 2018). Similarly, a study of transgender Medicare beneficiaries found a decreasing trend in mental health care use between 2009 and 2014 (Progovac et al., 2019). Use of gender-affirming health care services, however, has been rising since 2000 (Canner et al., 2018). This trend is likely related to a combination of a growing transgender population in the United States, improved coding practices that make it easier to identify transgender people and gender-affirming medical services in data sources such as insurance claims, and removal of barriers to insurance coverage for these services.

Further complicating assessments of care utilization is evidence that barriers to care can persist even after coverage becomes more available. Using data from the 2013–2015 National Health Interview Survey, for instance, Hsieh and Ruther (2017) documented numerous issues facing sexual minority people seeking health care, including ongoing use of emergency departments for primary care; delayed or unmet care needs due to cost; and delayed or unmet care needs for nonfinancial reasons, such as

not being able to get an appointment with a medical provider or lacking transportation to a provider's office. Gonzales and Henning-Smith (2017b) similarly found that gender-nonconforming people in a 2014–2015 BRFSS sample from 27 states and Guam were almost twice as likely as a reference group of cisgender women to have unmet care needs due to financial issues (aOR: 1.93; 95% CI: 1.02, 3.67), and they were more than twice as likely not to have received a routine check-up in the previous year (aOR: 2.41; 95% CI: 1.41, 4.12). There is a lack of data on utilization among people with intersex traits.

Quality of Care and Health Professions Training

Common frameworks for quality improvement in health care include the six aims of safety, timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, patient-centeredness, and equity set forth by the Institute of Medicine (2001) and the “triple aim” of improved patient experiences of care, improved population health outcomes, and reduced costs developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (Berwick, Nolan, and Whittington, 2008). Scant research has explored quality of care issues, including definitions, priority outcomes, and measurement, among SGD populations. Another aspect of care quality is attention to the social determinants of health at the population level and to the social needs of individuals in health care contexts. Major negative social influences on the health of SGD populations include but are not limited to discrimination and a lack of access to culturally responsive providers; family and peer rejection and bullying; unemployment and poverty; and a dearth of feelings of community cohesion, safety, and participation (IOM, 2011b). These generate social needs such as trauma, housing insecurity, financial strain, and social isolation, particularly among groups such as SGD youth and older adults. It is important for researchers, care providers, and policy makers to develop and evaluate targeted efforts to address social determinants of health and meet social needs for SGD people. The experiences of SGD patients have also not been fully explored in the context of new care delivery models intended to improve quality, coordinate care, and restrain costs, such as accountable care organizations and patient-centered medical homes (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2016).

Regardless of how care delivery is organized, providing cultural and clinical competency training about SGD populations for the entire health workforce is critical to ensuring that SGD people can access high-quality care. Training in providing culturally responsive and clinically appropriate care for SGD people needs to begin early for medical students and other health professions trainees, including but not limited to nurses, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners (AMA, 2019; Obedin-Maliver et al., 2011; Streed et al., 2019b). The American Association of Medical Colleges

has published curriculum resources to support early clinician training in SGD health topics (Hollenbach, Eckstrand, and Dreger, 2014).¹¹

Another strategy for promoting cultural responsiveness to SGD concerns in health care settings is encouraging the career development of SGD-identified health professionals. Sexual and gender diversity, alongside other forms of representation such as racial diversity, strengthens the health care workforce by bringing in new perspectives to inform the delivery of care and helping patients build trust with providers whose backgrounds mirror theirs (Tanner, 2020). Unfortunately, research indicates that SGD people remain significantly underrepresented in the scientific workforce, and many workforce diversity initiatives—such as those supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—do not include SGD populations despite the designation of sexual and gender minorities as an NIH health disparity population in 2016 (Freeman, 2018).

In terms of SGD cultural responsiveness among practicing providers, a 2016 systematic review by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality called for clearer definitions of cultural competency for LGBT populations, clarification on the relationship between cultural competence and patient-centered care, and greater availability and assessment of training curricula (Butler et al., 2016). In 2020, the Human Rights Campaign's Healthcare Equality Index, which provides training and assesses LGBT cultural competency at hospitals and other health care organizations across the country, reported that the 765 health care facilities evaluated nationwide in the previous year had accumulated more than 150,000 hours of LGBT-specific cultural competency training (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2020).

Another resource related to cultural responsiveness in working with SGD patients are the federal Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards, which include sexual orientation and gender identity among aspects of patient identity that require attention and respect from care providers (Office of Minority Health, 2013). The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also promotes cultural competency training around sexual and gender diversity (SAMHSA, 2020), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which oversees the community health centers program and the Ryan White program, funds the National LGBT Health Education Center at Fenway Health, a federally qualified community health center located in Boston that specializes in serving LGBTQ people and people living with HIV.¹² The National LGBT Health Education Center provides a variety of downloadable resources and continuing medical education modules on

¹¹ See <https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/mission-areas/diversity-inclusion/lgbt-health-resources>.

¹² See <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org>.

culturally responsive and clinically appropriate care for LGBTQ people and people with intersex traits.

In addition to the National LGBT Health Education Center, HRSA supports the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California at San Francisco, which conducts research and publishes care guidelines and other resources about various aspects of transgender health, particularly in relation to HIV.¹³ Between 2012 and 2017, HRSA partnered with the Center of Excellence and several other community-based organizations on a Special Project of National Significance that investigated strategies for engaging and retaining HIV-positive transgender women of color in high-quality care. Important factors identified in this project included providing transgender-specific cultural and clinical competency training for the health care workforce; addressing social determinants of health, such as housing, as part of the provision of health care services; and recognizing the central role that gender-affirming services and personal empowerment can play in improving care and outcomes for transgender people living with HIV, particularly transgender women of color (Health Resources and Services Administration, n.d.; Rebchook et al., 2017). Resources on serving other specific SGD populations have also been created by both public and private entities: in 2010, the federal Administration on Aging (now the Administration for Community Living) funded the creation of the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging to provide information and resources for health care personnel working with LGBT elders,¹⁴ and organizations such as Lambda Legal have published guidelines for hospitals on establishing affirming policies for transgender people (Lambda Legal, 2016) and people with intersex traits (Lambda Legal, 2018).

Alongside cultural and clinical competency training and a diverse health professions workforce, data collection about sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status in health care and public health activities is a critical component of understanding and effectively addressing health disparities among SGD populations. Both *Healthy People 2020*, released in 2010, and *Healthy People 2030*, released in 2020, call for an increase in the number of population health surveys that include sexual orientation and gender identity measures,¹⁵ and federal regulations governing incentive programs for electronic medical records require that certified systems have the capacity to collect, store, and retrieve structured data on sexual orientation and gender identity (Cahill et al., 2016). The NIH Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office also promotes research into the health of

¹³ See <https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth>.

¹⁴ See <https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org>.

¹⁵ See <https://www.healthypeople.gov>.

SGD populations¹⁶ (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of data collection).

GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

The first U.S. clinics providing gender-affirming care to transgender individuals opened in the 1960s and 1970s. Practice and research in the field of transgender health, however, was stymied in the 1980s and 1990s by the spread of public and private insurance exclusions for gender-affirming care. As these exclusions have begun to be removed, there has been exponential growth in evidence regarding the medical necessity of this care, and gender affirmation has emerged as a core intervention to improve the health and well-being of transgender people. This section reviews the components of and clinical and population evidence concerning gender affirmation.

Components of Gender Affirmation

Broadly speaking, gender affirmation is a process by which people who identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse take steps to fully express their true gender. (An older but still common term for the process of gender affirmation is gender transition.) Gender affirmation may have social, legal, and medical components. Socially, people may use a name or pronoun different from those they were assigned at birth, or they may change aspects of their gender expression, such as hairstyle and clothing. Legal affirmation may include name or gender marker changes on identification documents—such as passports, driver’s licenses, and birth certificates—which are affected by state and federal laws and policies. Gender-affirming clinical care may include psychosocial support, hormone therapy, and surgeries.

Psychosocial support for gender affirmation typically focuses on reducing emotional distress and supporting decision making regarding social, legal, and medical steps. Some young transgender people and their families opt for medication to delay the onset of puberty. Adults and some adolescents may take feminizing or masculinizing hormones to achieve gender-congruent secondary sex traits, often in conjunction with medications that suppress menses or block androgens. Many transgender adults and older adolescents undergo surgery to align the appearance of their face, chest or breasts, body shape, and genitals with their gender, and some may also pursue speech therapy or hair removal. Gender affirmation is different for every person: some people may take only social or legal steps, while others may need gender-affirming prescriptions or medical procedures. Regardless

¹⁶See <https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/sgmro>.

of an individual's path in relation to gender affirmation, social support and integrated, multidisciplinary care are essential for all transgender people, especially youth, and are consistently associated with improved mental health, social involvement, and self-esteem (Rafferty, Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, and Committee on Adolescence, 2018).

Guidelines and Policies Related to Gender Affirmation

Clinicians who provide gender-affirming psychosocial and medical services in the United States are informed by expert evidence-based guidelines. In 2012, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) published version 7 of the *Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender, Transsexual, and Gender-Nonconforming People*, which have been continuously maintained since 1979, and revisions for version 8 are currently under way (Coleman et al., 2012). Two newer guidelines have also been published by the Endocrine Society (Hembree et al., 2017) and the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health (UCSF Transgender Care, 2016). Each set of guidelines is informed by the best available data and is intended to be flexible and holistic in application to individual people. All of the guidelines recommend psychosocial support in tandem with physical interventions and suggest timing interventions to optimize an individual's ability to give informed consent. Mental and physical health problems need not be resolved before a person can begin a process of medical gender affirmation, but they should be managed sufficiently such that they do not interfere with treatment.

A major success of these guidelines has been identifying evidence and establishing expert consensus that gender-affirming care is medically necessary and, further, that withholding this care is not a neutral option (World Professional Association for Transgender Health, 2016). A number of professional medical organizations have joined WPATH in recognizing that gender-affirming care is medically necessary for transgender people because it reduces distress and promotes well-being, while withholding care increases distress and decreases well-being (American Academy of Family Physicians, 2012; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2018; American College of Nurse-Midwives, 2012; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2011; AMA, 2008; American Psychiatric Association, 2018; American Psychological Association (APA), 2008, 2015; Endocrine Society, 2017). Accordingly, public and private insurers have expanded access to gender-affirming care; some have done so proactively, while others have been required by state and federal nondiscrimination laws to remove coverage exclusions (Baker, 2017).

Coverage requirements for gender-affirming care typically rely on an overarching principle of parity between medically necessary services for transgender and cisgender people. Treatments that are gender affirming for transgender patients are covered by public and private insurers for

intersex and cisgender people for a variety of conditions, including genital difference, endocrine disorders, cancer prevention or treatment, and reconstructive surgeries following an injury. Examples of these services include testosterone or estrogen replacement therapy after surgery or menopause, vaginoplasty after pelvic surgery or for women with vaginal agenesis in the context of an intersex condition, and phalloplasty for cisgender male service members injured in war (Baker et al., 2012; Balzano and Hudak, 2018; Spade et al., 2009).

As this report goes to press, 24 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws or made administrative changes prohibiting transgender-specific insurance exclusions in private coverage (Movement Advancement Project, 2020a). However, Medicaid programs in 10 states continue to explicitly exclude gender-affirming care for transgender individuals, and many states do not address the issue of this coverage in Medicaid (Mallory and Tentindo, 2019). At the federal level, the Medicare program removed its exclusion for “transsexual surgery” in 2014 (HHS, 2014), though coverage decisions related to gender-affirming surgeries are still made on a case-by-case basis (CMS, 2016). As discussed above, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act also has substantial ramifications for coverage of gender-affirming care: the 2016 HHS regulation embraced the principle of parity and prohibited categorical exclusions of gender-affirming care under the rubric of sex nondiscrimination. This aspect of the regulation remains contested in court, but it is expected that the original regulation’s specific protections for transgender people will be found to be well within the scope of federal law and the agency’s authority (Keith, 2020).

In order to justify coverage for gender-affirming care, insurance providers in the United States and most other countries require a supporting diagnosis. In 2013, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), 5th edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) replaced the diagnosis of gender identity disorder with gender dysphoria. Whereas gender identity disorder was perceived as pathologizing a person’s gender identity, gender dysphoria emphasizes the clinically significant distress and impairment that can accompany incongruence between assigned sex and gender identity (Robles et al., 2016). A person who experiences no distress or impairment due to this incongruence will not meet diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria. More recently, the *International Classification of Diseases*, 11th revision (WHO, n.d.) has replaced transsexualism and gender identity disorder with gender incongruence and moved the diagnosis out of the mental and behavioral disorders chapter and into a new chapter on sexual health.

Many insurers and some health care providers require documentation that an individual meets guideline requirements, including diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria, as a prerequisite for hormonal or surgical

treatment. Because of the power differential inherent in this construct, this practice has been described as “gatekeeping” and can function as a significant barrier to accessing care. In a survey of transgender adolescents, for instance, participants described distress at having to prove to a mental health provider that they were “trans enough,” having to wait for approval for treatment, and perceiving that their therapist feared legal liability should a person later regret the treatment (Gridley et al., 2016). Even transgender people with insurance coverage and access to providers report difficulty in navigating diagnosis-based requirements imposed by providers and insurers (James et al., 2016). Over the past 10 years, some U.S. medical professional organizations have increasingly moved to reduce psychiatric gatekeeping by shifting toward an informed consent and shared decision-making model, especially for adults (Schulz, 2018). Some countries have further underscored that transgender identity is not a pathology by recognizing gender affirmation as fundamental to the human right to self-definition and removing requirements that transgender people seeking gender-affirming medical care present with a diagnosis such as gender dysphoria (Aristegui et al., 2017).

Outcomes of Gender-Affirming Interventions

The evidence base for gender affirmation across age groups has grown rapidly over the last decade. For transgender youth who have not yet reached puberty, social affirmation and support are primary interventions. Using data from electronic records from the Kaiser Permanente system, recent work has suggested that prepubescent transgender children experience increased rates of mental health problems, especially anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorders, relative to cisgender children (Becerra-Culqui et al., 2018). However, research also shows that, when transgender children in this age group are socially affirmed and supported by their families, their rates of depression are much nearer to those of cisgender children (Durwood, McLaughlin, and Olson, 2017). In one study, transgender youth who were socially affirmed had elevated rates of anxiety relative to their cisgender peers, but this difference was not clinically significant and may have reflected ongoing social stigma and minority stress (Olson et al., 2016). Another study found that using transgender youths’ chosen names in home and at school was associated with reduced depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior (Russell et al., 2018).

Puberty blockers, typically gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogs, have been used since at least the late 1990s to prevent development of irreversible secondary sex traits and to give youth more time to explore their gender identity (Cohen-Kettenis and Van Goozen, 1998). In 2014, a landmark paper provided longitudinal data from a cohort of youth in the Netherlands: among this group, puberty suppression, followed several years

later by gender-affirming hormones and surgery, was effective in reducing gender dysphoria and restoring well-being equal to or better than same-age cisgender young adults (de Vries et al., 2014). Though most data on puberty suppression are limited and drawn from convenience samples in European clinics, this fully reversible gender-affirming intervention appears to confer improved psychological functioning and may reduce gender dysphoria (Mahfouda et al., 2017).

There is inconsistent and limited evidence regarding risks of irreversible low bone density and infertility (Chew et al., 2018; Mahfouda et al., 2017; Rafferty, Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, and Committee on Adolescence, 2018). In recognition of these risks, guidelines recommend monitoring bone density and counseling on fertility preservation prior to treatment (Hembree et al., 2017). Of note, while evidence indicates that social affirmation and puberty suppression are low risk and effective interventions for young transgender youth, there may be a significant delay between recognition and disclosure of gender incongruence: in one cohort, participants reported identification of gender incongruence on average at age 8 and disclosure to caregivers on average at age 17 (Olson et al., 2015). Support from parents and affirmation of gender diversity are critical to creating safe opportunities for young people to access the psychosocial and medical care that they need in a timely manner.

Hormone therapy with testosterone or estrogen is a common gender-affirming treatment for transgender adults and older adolescents. Though limited by heterogeneity of methodology, regimen, and outcomes measures, systematic reviews and meta-analyses consistently find that gender-affirming hormone treatment is associated with significant reductions in gender dysphoria, psychological symptoms, and psychiatric diagnoses and with improved markers of well-being, including quality of life, interpersonal functioning, psychological adjustment, sexual function, body satisfaction, and self-esteem (Costa and Colizzi, 2016; Dhejne et al., 2016; Keo-Meier et al., 2015; Murad et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018; Rowniak, Bolt, and Sharifi, 2019; White Hughto and Reisner, 2016).

Both the WPATH and Endocrine Society guidelines identify age 16 as a general starting point for gender-affirming hormones, with the recognition that some adolescents benefit from earlier treatment (Coleman et al., 2012; Hembree et al., 2017). Evidence for hormone therapy in adolescents comes largely from outside of the United States and inconsistently tracks outcomes (Chew et al., 2018; Olson-Kennedy et al., 2016). The data available suggest that hormone therapy in adolescents likely yields reductions in dysphoria and distress and improvements in well-being similar to those in adults (Mahfouda et al., 2019). Gender-affirming hormone therapy can be managed for most patients by primary care providers,

as it typically involves long-term maintenance on doses similar to those used for cisgender patients with conditions such as hypogonadism (Wylie et al., 2016).

Surgeries involving the genitals or secondary sex characteristics can also improve health and well-being among transgender people and are an important and medically necessary aspect of gender-affirming care (Bailey, Ellis, and McNeil, 2014; Castellano et al., 2015; Murad et al., 2010; Passos et al., 2020; Wernick et al., 2019). Many factors affect an individual's need for and access to gender-affirming surgeries. In the 2015 USTS, only 25 percent of respondents had undergone some form of gender-affirming surgery, such as genital reconstruction or chest reconstruction, and having surgery was correlated with higher incomes (James et al., 2016). Respondents also reported varying degrees of experience with or need for specific procedures: 97 percent of transgender men had or needed chest reconstruction surgery, and 22 percent of transgender men had or needed phalloplasty. Similarly, 95 percent of transgender women had or needed hair removal procedures, and 76 percent had or needed vaginoplasty. Non-binary individuals generally had and needed fewer surgeries than their binary-identified counterparts: 48 percent of non-binary individuals assigned female at birth had or needed chest surgery, and 12 percent of non-binary individuals assigned male at birth had or needed vaginoplasty.

Surgeries for transgender men and other trans-masculine people may include bilateral chest reconstruction, salpingo-oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries and fallopian tubes), hysterectomy, genital reconstruction (metoidioplasty or phalloplasty with or without prosthesis), and, rarely, vocal surgery. Chest reconstruction, which involves removal of breast tissue and nipple preservation, is associated with significant improvements in mental health and well-being among trans-masculine adolescents and adults (Agarwal et al., 2018; Mahfouda et al., 2019; Van Boerum et al., 2019). A systematic review of studies of genital surgeries that included metoidioplasty indicated that 93 percent of patients were satisfied with the outcome, including preserved erogenous sensitivity, despite significant rates of postoperative complications (Morrison et al., 2016). A systematic review of penile prosthetic outcomes for 792 transgender men over a mean follow-up period of three years found inconsistent reporting of sensory, urinary, satisfaction, and sexual outcomes after surgery, with 36 percent reporting prosthesis complications (Rooker et al., 2019).

Surgeries for transgender women and other trans-feminine people may include breast augmentation, facial feminization, vocal surgery, orchiectomy, and vaginoplasty. Some studies have shown improvements in quality of life and high patient satisfaction following facial feminization procedures for trans-feminine individuals, including reshaping the contours of the face and larynx (Ainsworth and Spiegel, 2010; Van Boerum et al., 2019). A

systematic review of vaginoplasty for transfeminine individuals identified 26 studies with a total of 1,563 patients; although measures used to track outcomes varied between studies, and complications were frequent, with neovaginal stenosis the most common, patients tended to report high ratings in both sexual function and satisfaction after surgery (Horbach et al., 2015).

The research regarding outcomes for surgery in youth under 18 is sparse, in part because it is generally not clinically recommended for legal minors, though there is only a small amount of low-quality evidence that supports this limitation (Hembree et al., 2017). Chest masculinization is sometimes appropriate for youth 16 or older (Coleman et al., 2012), and some surgeons perform vaginoplasty on minors under specific circumstances (Milrod and Karasic, 2017). Several studies provide positive evidence regarding the benefits of chest reconstruction in minors, with reduced depressive and anxious symptoms and improved chest dysphoria; the most common complications were changes in sensation and scar cosmesis (Mahfouda et al., 2019). There are very few data regarding genitoplasty for minors.

As noted above, available evidence generally indicates that gender-affirming medical interventions, including surgeries, are associated with improvements in gender dysphoria, mental health, and quality of life for transgender people. Evidence also suggests, however, that mental health conditions can persist after treatment: for instance, a 2011 Swedish registry study of 324 patients who had undergone gender-affirming surgeries between 1973 and 2003 found increased rates of suicide attempts and psychiatric hospitalizations relative to population controls (Dhejne et al., 2011). The study notes that surgeries did alleviate gender dysphoria, and the study was unable to determine how patients might have fared without surgery. When a more recent Swedish registry study tracked mental health treatment utilization among people with a gender incongruence diagnosis relative to people without gender incongruence between 2005 and 2015 (N = 2,679), time since gender-affirming surgery was associated with reduced need for mental health services (aOR: 0.92; 95% CI: 0.87, 0.98) (Bränström and Pachankis, 2019). A reanalysis of these data compared individuals with gender incongruence who had gender-affirming surgery with those who did not and found comparable rates of reduced need for treatment for mood disorders between the groups, but higher rates of treatment for anxiety disorders among the group who did have surgery (aOR: 1.40; 95% CI: 1.00, 1.97) (Bränström and Pachankis, 2020). The authors note that the comparator nonsurgical group is heterogeneous, including a mixture of patients who both did and did not want surgery. Furthermore, as was discussed in detail in Chapter 11, transgender people have significantly elevated rates of mental health problems due not just to the experience of

gender dysphoria but also because of minority stress and stigma. While social and medical affirmation reduce gender dysphoria and can mitigate the impact of social factors, such as discrimination and family rejection, medical affirmation may not fully resolve or protect from experiences of stigma and stress. Future studies examining outcomes of gender affirmation should assess and control for these factors. Related research needs include exploration of factors that can promote resilience in different family and community settings and across the life course (Bockting et al., 2016).

Another major limitation in research on postsurgical outcomes is the absence of patient-reported outcome measures that have been validated in transgender and non-binary post-operative patient populations (Andréasson et al., 2018; Barone et al., 2017; Dy et al., 2019). Recent data overall suggest that satisfaction after gender-affirming surgeries is high and risk of regret is very low. For example, the Center of Expertise on Gender Dysphoria at the Free University Medical Center in Amsterdam published results from 43 years of clinical care in which regret was reported in only 14 patients (0.5%) of the more than 5,300 patients who underwent gonadectomy as part of gender affirmation (Wiepjes et al., 2018). A smaller study found that only 1 of 68 patients who received chest masculinization surgery experienced regret “sometimes” (Olson-Kennedy et al., 2018), consistent with findings from older research (Gijs and Brewaeys, 2007). Similarly, a 2018 systematic review and meta-analysis of 46 articles with 3,716 cases of vaginoplasty for transgender women reported a cumulative rate of regret of 1 percent, compared with an overall satisfaction rate of 92 percent across different surgical techniques (Manrique et al., 2018). While many studies do not qualitatively assess degree and reasons for regret, in one study patients who reported regret with surgeries reported mild regret and attributed this to cosmetic or functional outcomes rather than the decision to have surgery (van de Grift et al., 2017).

Substantial progress has been made over the past decade in research on outcomes of gender-affirming interventions, and there are ample opportunities for improvement. To address the scarcity of data and difficulties extrapolating findings from relatively homogeneous European samples, a United States-based comprehensive registry that tracks patient-centered outcomes for both youth and adults could lead to valuable insights on the benefits of medically supervised gender affirmation (Kimberly et al., 2018). Much remains to be learned regarding optimal timing and risk profiles for surgeries and other medical interventions, aided by standardized and validated tools for body satisfaction, gender-related quality of life, gender dysphoria, and mental health (Olson et al., 2016). Standardized assessment and reporting of outcomes are particularly essential for helping clinicians and patients understand surgical options. In this area, too, more attention is needed to populations that tend to be invisible or underrepresented in

clinical research, especially transgender people of color and non-binary individuals. Very little is known about the experiences and options for treatment for transgender individuals with intersex traits, especially those who had irreversible treatments as children. Overall, however, the evidence indicates that gender-affirming interventions, including social affirmation, hormonal treatment, and surgeries, are medically necessary for reducing distress and improving the health and well-being of transgender people.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Efforts to change sexual orientation or gender identity, which initially gained traction in the 1960s and which are often referred to as conversion or reparative therapies, assume that non-cisgender and non-heterosexual identities are abnormal. In 2009 the APA produced a landmark report that systematically reviewed the evidence of efficacy for sexual orientation change efforts (APA, 2009). Most of this research was conducted prior to 1981, and very few studies were experimental in design. The task force found that some people sought sexual orientation change efforts due to distress over their sexual orientation but that the treatments were unable to reduce same-sex attractions or increase other-sex attractions. Furthermore, there was evidence that individuals experienced harm from these treatments, including sexual dysfunction, depression, anxiety, and suicidality. With regard to gender identity, while interest in the so-called “desistence” of transgender identity has been informed by studies suggesting that as high as 80 percent of prepubertal youth presenting to pediatric gender clinics ultimately do not identify as transgender, many of the youth included in these studies did not meet full DSM criteria for a gender incongruence diagnosis (Olson, 2009). Recent evidence supports that early social affirmation of transgender identity is associated with good outcomes (Olson et al., 2016; Durwood, McLaughlin, and Olson, 2017) and that lack of social affirmation correlates with depression, anxiety, and suicidality (de Vries et al., 2016; James et al., 2016).

Consequently, sexual orientation and gender identity conversion efforts have fallen out of favor in mainstream psychological and psychiatric practice. By the time of the 2011 Institute of Medicine report, many medical organizations had issued statements condemning sexual orientation change efforts based on the lack of efficacy and evidence of harm. Many of these organizations have since updated their positions to decry conversion therapy for both sexual orientation and gender identity (AMA and GLMA: Medical Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality, 2018; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2018; Rafferty, Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, and Committee on Adolescence, 2018; SAMHSA, 2015; Streed et al., 2019a).

However, there is recent evidence that LGBTQ youth and adults continue to be exposed to conversion therapy. A 2019 report from Williams Institute estimated that 698,000 adults between ages 18 and 59 have undergone conversion therapy from a licensed professional or religious advisor, of whom 350,000 were adolescents when treated (Mallory, Brown, and Conron, 2019). The same study estimated that an additional 57,000 youth will receive conversion therapy from a health care or religious provider before 18 years of age. Among 25,000 LGBTQ youth respondents to a 2019 national survey, 67 percent reported that someone attempted to convince them to change their gender identity or sexual orientation (Trevor Project, 2019). A survey of 762 marriage and family therapists and members of the American Academy of Marriage and Family Therapists, which has a position statement against conversion therapy, found that 19.4 percent of respondents believed it was ethical to practice sexual orientation change therapy, and 3.5 percent of respondents had done so. This belief was associated with higher levels of negative beliefs about LGB clients than those of other therapists (McGeorge, Carlson, and Toomey, 2015).

A recent survey was among the first to evaluate the link between sexual orientation change therapy and the health of young people: among 245 white and Latinx LGBT individuals between the ages of 21 and 25, exposure to conversion efforts within or outside of their families during adolescence was associated with higher family religiosity, lower family socioeconomic status, and higher individual gender nonconformity (Ryan et al., 2018). In addition, exposure to conversion efforts during adolescence was significantly associated with increased suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and depression, as well as diminished life satisfaction, self-esteem, social support, educational attainment, and lower income in young adulthood.

A systematic narrative review of gender identity conversion efforts found few data and a notable absence of research about their effects on both adolescents and adults (Wright, Candy, and King, 2018). However, a recent study using data from the 2015 USTS found that 14 percent of respondents had been exposed to gender identity conversion therapy during their lifetimes; exposure was associated with significantly higher rates of past-month severe psychological distress and lifetime suicide attempts compared with respondents who had not been exposed to such therapy (Turban et al., 2019). Exposure to gender identity conversion therapy before age 10 was associated with nearly twice the rate of lifetime suicide attempts.

The available evidence suggests that sexual orientation and gender identity conversion efforts are ineffective and dangerously detrimental to the health of SGD populations, especially for minors who are unable to give informed consent. As of early 2020, 20 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and a number of municipalities had outlawed sexual orientation and gender identity conversion therapy for minors (Move-

ment Advancement Project, 2020b). As growing numbers of professional organizations and governments call for or legislate an end to conversion therapy, particularly for minors, it is important for clinicians working with SGD populations to understand the effects that these experiences can have on individuals, even many years later. Research on strategies for helping individuals who have experienced conversion therapy to heal and recover is essential. In order to end the practice of conversion therapy, it is not sufficient for professional organizations to recommend against conversion therapy; rather, professionals may require dedicated and specific training on the inefficacy and danger of conversion treatments, and insurance providers should consider limiting coverage for these non-evidence-based practices.

INTERSEX GENITAL SURGERY

The most expansive estimations of the prevalence of intersex traits, including any variation in any marker of sex (chromosomes, internal reproductive anatomy, external genital shape, and secondary sex traits), concludes that up to 1.7 percent of the population has an intersex trait (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Estimates based on the number of people with clinically identifiable sexual or reproductive anatomic variations are closer to 0.5 percent (Nordenvall et al., 2014). Estimates for prevalence of infants born with obvious genital diversity, sometimes known as ambiguous genitalia, range from 0.03 percent to 0.1 percent (Blackless et al., 2000; Hughes et al., 2007; Thyen et al., 2006). Such variations can include differences in the length of the genital tubercle or glans (as in a shorter penis or longer clitoris), a narrow or absent vaginal opening, or presence of partially fused labia or a partially separated scrotum. This section focuses primarily on early genital surgery for children born with obvious genital diversity, which remains the most contentious area of clinical care—and increasingly, health law and policy—for persons with intersex traits (Dalke et al., 2020).

Genital Diversity and Early Genital Surgeries

Although some infants with genital diversity require urgent surgery to address urinary obstruction or exposed pelvic organs (Woo, Thomas, and Brock, 2010), many have no immediate medical concerns and do not require urgent medical treatment (Romao and Pippi Salle, 2017). Because the appearance of the external genitals is typically the primary datum for the sex assigned to infants at birth, genital diversity can lead to uncertainty about which sex a child with intersex traits should be assigned. Similarly, eventual gender identity cannot be readily predicted for many people with intersex traits based on the appearance of their genitals at birth (see more

detailed discussion below). Currently, clinicians and advocates alike typically recommend a binary but flexible sex assignment, informed by the balance of sex markers and the specific intersex condition the child has, which will contribute to the person's gender identity later in life.

Early genital surgeries primarily seek to align genitalia with assigned sex. Feminizing surgeries reduce the size of a clitoris, shape a vulva, or create or lengthen the vagina of a child assigned female. Masculinizing surgeries may reposition a urethra that is not located at the tip of the penis or create a phallus for a child assigned male. Early removal of gonadal tissue may also be recommended to reduce risk of malignancy or the pubertal production of hormones (and therefore secondary sex traits) that are discordant with the child's assigned sex. In the United States, many of these surgeries are performed in infancy.

In 2016, an international consensus group offered an update on genital surgery for children with obvious genital difference and identified a broad set of benefits for surgeries (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Physically, surgeries seek to promote "functional genital anatomy to allow future penetrative intercourse (as a male or a female)" (p. 141), as well as fertility, urinary function, menstruation, and the avoidance of malignancy and secondary sex traits that are discordant with assigned sex. Psychosocially, surgeries also purportedly "foster development of 'individual' and 'social identities'," reduce genital-related stigma, and support "the parents' desire to bring up a child in the best possible conditions" (p. 142). Since the early 1990s, however, intersex advocates have called attention to the physical and emotional harms of surgery, especially when performed before a child is old enough to participate in the decision. Indeed, in the absence of cloacal exstrophy (exposure of pelvic organs), urinary obstruction, or current malignancy, there is no medical urgency for such surgeries; they can be safely deferred until a child is older. At the core of the debate is a question as to what to do and when: what, if any, surgeries should be performed on very young children? This question ultimately calls for the weighing of relative physical and emotional risks, benefits, and alternatives to such surgeries.

Synthesis of the evidence base is complicated by significant heterogeneity of anatomic and medical considerations, surgical procedures, and dynamic psychosocial aspects over the life course. The available research on outcomes also has significant methodological limitations, with many outcomes reported from single surgeons or programs and inconsistency in measurement instruments, study designs, sample sizes, reported outcomes, and follow-up periods. Studies often have insufficient postsurgical follow-up to evaluate outcomes of childhood interventions on adult physical, sexual, and psychological well-being. Many studies also lack an effective comparator group, as there are no standard nonsurgical pathways for children with genital difference.

A review of these surgeries follows, along with an assessment of what is known about the outcomes of these interventions. The risks and benefits of each group of surgeries are discussed together, as these tend to be specific to the physical intervention itself. Some psychosocial outcomes, however, are discussed in aggregate, to reflect more limited data and overlaps in psychosocial experiences among intersex variations.

Gonadectomy

Removal of the gonads yields two potential benefits in the form of risk reduction: avoiding gonadal malignancy and undesired secondary sex traits. The risk of malignancy tends to be higher for intra-abdominal testes or atypically developed gonads, but it has to be balanced against the potential benefits of hormone-producing tissue (Pyle and Nathanson, 2017). Individuals with complete androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS) have very low risk of testicular malignancy in childhood or adolescence, do not develop masculine secondary sex traits in puberty, and derive a high bone health benefit from endogenous hormone production; in these cases, it is generally recommended to defer gonadectomy until after puberty. Individuals with gonadal dysgenesis (in which gonads do not fully develop into ovarian or testicular tissue) have a higher risk of malignancy with little hormone production, and childhood gonadectomy is consistently recommended (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Some assigned girls with a 46,XY karyotype, testicular tissue, and full or partial androgen response, as in partial AIS or 5-alpha reductase deficiency, have moderate or low risk of malignancy and less predictable responses to hormone production at puberty. Gonadectomy is sometimes considered for these children to reduce distress and uncertainty around a “mixed” puberty (Mouriquand et al., 2016).

There are significant risks from gonadectomy. Some people with typically developed intra-abdominal testes, as in complete AIS and 5-alpha reductase deficiency, may be capable of producing mature sperm with assisted reproductive technology (Finlayson et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2014). For such people, gonadectomy can amount to sterilization. Removal of sex hormone-producing gonadal tissue can lead to low bone mass, genital changes, sexual dysfunction, and mood changes, for which individuals may require a lifetime of hormone replacement therapy. If the surgery is performed prior to puberty, people may be prescribed hormones congruent with their assigned sex rather than identified gender. Importantly, recent evidence suggests that puberty blockers may be a viable nonsurgical alternative to support gender identity exploration and allow time for informed consent, and in most cases, surgery need not be done in early childhood (Canalichio et al., 2020).

Feminizing Surgeries

Feminizing surgeries include clitoral and vaginoplasty surgeries. Clitoral surgery is most often recommended for 46,XX children with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) who are assigned female, with concerns primarily about genital “ambiguity” (Mouriquand et al., 2016). In recognition of inadequacies of earlier techniques, like clitoral amputation and recession, microsurgical approaches aim to preserve clitoral nerve and vascular supply, and in some cases they “bury” rather than remove parts of the clitoris should an individual wish to reverse the surgery in the future (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Vaginoplasty may also be recommended for assigned girls whose vaginas do not connect to the perineum, thereby limiting penetrative sex and impairing fertility and outflow of menstrual blood (Mouriquand et al., 2016). For assigned girls with shorter or absent vaginas and without uteruses (as in AIS, gonadal dysgenesis, or Mullerian agenesis), vaginoplasty carries the sole benefit of allowing penetrative intercourse.

There is some evidence that 46,XX women with CAH were satisfied with feminizing genital surgeries (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Reviewers have concluded from surveys of women who had undergone feminizing genitoplasty as children that women prefer earlier timing of surgery (de Jesus, 2018). Indeed, in one survey of adult women with CAH or AIS who had genital surgeries at an average of 3.8 years, 17 out of 24 reported that surgery had been done at the proper age (Fagerholm et al., 2011). However, these surveys are small and limited. Importantly, a large systematic review and meta-analysis found that only two studies surveyed 46,XX female CAH patients’ satisfaction with surgery, of which the majority were satisfied (Almasri et al., 2018).

Long-term data regarding the reversibility of and sensory and sexual outcomes from these procedures are lacking, especially for more novel microsurgical approaches. Data regarding preserved sexual function after clitoral surgery is challenged by studies revealing significant rates of long-term sexual dysfunction and anorgasmia (de Jesus, 2018). Because studies of sexual quality of life may be confounded by psychosocial issues, attempts have been made to study postsurgical sensitivity objectively with a device capable of analyzing thermal and vibratory sensation. Many patients, however, have refused to participate in such studies, which may reflect discomfort or even trauma associated with previous experiences of medical care (de Jesus, 2018). Limited data suggest unfavorable patient satisfaction with cosmesis after vaginoplasty, as well as a high incidence of postsurgical vaginal stenosis. If this occurs, patients may experience pain with intercourse and require self-dilation or repeat surgery. While there has been some evidence supporting benefit of surgery for women with CAH, multiple studies of adult women with CAH find less frequent sexual activ-

ity and lower frequency of orgasm, including among the small reported number of people with CAH who did not undergo surgery (de Jesus, 2018). Notably, there are no objective scales validated to assess sexual function in women with intersex traits. There are few data evaluating long-term urological complications after feminizing genitoplasty.

Masculinizing Surgeries

Masculinizing surgeries aim to facilitate standing urination, penetrative intercourse, and a “cosmetically pleasing appearance” (Winship, Rushton, and Pohl, 2017). These procedures include hypospadias repair and phalloplasty. Hypospadias is characterized along a spectrum from distal (urethra opening near, but not at, the tip of the penis) to proximal (urethra opening at the base of the penis). Most individuals with distal hypospadias do not have differences of sex development (DSD), so this variation is not reviewed here.

Proximal hypospadias is often associated with diversity of penile and scrotal appearance, and at least one of three children born with proximal hypospadias and an undescended gonad will have other features of a DSD, such as non-XY karyotype (Romao and Pippi Salle, 2017). Phalloplasty may be recommended for 46,XY assigned boys born with a smaller than usual, or absent, penis. Although many of these children were historically assigned female, longitudinal data have revealed higher rates of gender dysphoria for those assigned girls than those assigned boys (Meyer-Bahlburg, 2005), and there is some evidence that urologists increasingly favor male sex assignment (Diamond et al., 2011).

The primary cited benefit of proximal hypospadias repair is avoidance of distress due to difference and stigma (Bush and Snodgrass, 2017), which is accomplished through achieving decreased spraying with urination and capacity for penetrative intercourse. Although long-term outcome studies for proximal hypospadias do not consistently track lower urinary tract symptoms, some studies have reported rates of lower urinary tract symptoms as high as 100 percent after proximal hypospadias surgeries (Gong and Cheng, 2017). Multiple studies have found persistent penile curvature and dissatisfaction with cosmesis after masculinizing surgeries (Tourchi and Hoebeke, 2013), and there is no commonly used objective measure of penile appearance after surgery (Gong and Cheng, 2017). Very few outcome studies for masculinizing surgeries have evaluated erectile dysfunction, and “most pediatric urologists do not follow patients into adulthood and have little experience in sexual medicine” (Winship, Rushton, and Pohl, 2017, p. 287). One study found that more than two-thirds of adult men with proximal hypospadias reported some sexual dysfunction and decreased sexual quality of life after surgery (Chertin et

al., 2013). Reoperations and complications may contribute to urinary and sexual dysfunction, with complication rates ranging from 4 to 68 percent, and reoperation rates ranging from 23 to 52 percent (Gong and Cheng, 2017). Higher rates of reoperations and complications are associated with longer durations of follow-up, suggesting that long follow-up periods may be important elements of studies examining adverse postoperative outcomes (Gong and Cheng, 2017).

Psychosocial Outcomes after Genital Surgery

Patient Considerations

The absence of holistic and validated tools for assessment of sexual well-being and gender identity, patient satisfaction, and patient-centered surgical outcome measures present significant challenges in identifying robust conclusions regarding the psychosocial risks and benefits of early surgery. There are, however, some data regarding the outcomes of psychosocial distress and gender identity in the context of surgery.

Avoidance of distress due to social stigma and bodily difference has been offered as an indication for feminizing surgeries (de Jesus, 2018), masculinizing surgeries (Bush and Snodgrass, 2017), and gonadectomy for patients who may develop discordant secondary sex traits at puberty (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Of note, as discussed in Chapter 11, evidence indicates greater rates of psychological distress for individuals with intersex traits than the general population, but there is very little research exploring why. Rather, much of the research and clinical discourse reveals an implicit bias that genital or sexual difference is *de facto* abnormal and distressing and that “normalizing” surgery is a solution to this problem (Dalke, Baratz, and Greenberg, 2020). One series of qualitative studies suggested that 46,XX assigned and identified females with CAH experience stigma in medical, social, and sexual settings related to their genitalia and secondary sex traits; however, these studies included both women who did and did not have surgery, suggesting that surgery did not fully protect women from experiencing stigma (Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2017a, 2017b, 2018). Of note, there are very few robust data exploring the benefits of surgery for patients with intersex traits, especially those who do not have CAH. Because standard practice has been to perform surgery early, however, there are few studies evaluating rates of psychosocial distress or satisfaction among individuals who did not undergo surgery, nor is there clear evidence that genital surgery itself reduces psychosocial stress (Roén, 2019). In a series of interviews, parents of children who did not undergo genital surgery reported that their children had attended school, had friends, and had not experienced bullying or harassment (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

There is some evidence that early genital surgery may unintentionally compound psychosocial distress. Multiple studies report that genital examinations in childhood can be experienced as intrusive, aversive, stigmatizing, and objectifying, particularly when children are not engaged in dialog with their providers (Roen, 2019). Qualitative research suggests that shame and a sense of “differentness” are correlated with both feminizing and masculinizing interventions: “going through surgery as a child might highlight bodily difference as stigmatising rather than facilitating the management of shame” (Roen, 2019, p. 517). This finding is consistent with information from intersex people themselves, who report experiences of anger, guilt, and trauma related to early surgery that was carried out without their consent, especially when they did not receive adequate information about their bodies or the procedures that were performed on them (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Of particular interest in genital surgery is gender outcomes, particularly given the risk of developing a gender identity discordant with a sex that was assigned at birth and then surgically reinforced. Some intersex traits, such as complete AIS, complete gonadal dysgenesis, and proximal hypospadias without DSD, are associated with very low likelihood of gender dysphoria (Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2016). Other intersex traits are associated with much higher rates, such as 46,XY individuals with cloacal exstrophy who are assigned female (Meyer-Bahlburg, 2005). A systematic review and meta-analysis found that 8 to 13 percent of 46,XX assigned female individuals with CAH did not identify as female (Almasri et al., 2018), which is much higher than the estimated 0.6 percent population prevalence of transgender identity among the general population (Flores et al., 2016). One very small, non-U.S. study found 46,XX assigned males with CAH can also experience gender dysphoria (de Jesus, Costa, and Dekermacher, 2019). Few data have been published on gender identity among individuals with partial AIS, 5-alpha reductase deficiency, or 17-beta hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency. Most studies evaluating gender identity among individuals with intersex traits have taken a binary view of gender, which could underreport rates of non-cisgender identities. Sex assignment at birth has become increasingly nuanced and focused on patient-specific recommendations (Kolesinska et al., 2014). Early and irreversible interventions may limit opportunities for gender affirmation later in life, which supports deferral of surgeries until the person’s gender identity and ability to participate in the decision are established.

Parental Considerations

As is discussed in Chapter 11, much of the psychosocial research on intersex issues focuses on the mental health of parents. This work suggests that parents of children with genital difference experience stress similar to parents of children with chronic illness and, in some cases, also have de-

pression, anxiety, and decreased mental health quality of life (Wisniewski, 2017). Parents report fearing that their children will be teased, excluded, or stigmatized because of their genital differences (Wisniewski, 2017), and reduction of parental distress is often cited as a benefit of early genital surgery. However, there have been no studies examining experiences of bullying among children with intersex traits, and thus no evidence is available to indicate that surgery reduces the risk of bullying. Surgeons may be more likely to find a child's preoperative genital appearance unsatisfactory than parents (Nokoff et al., 2017), and this possibility raises the question of whether parents' perceptions of their child's genitals are influenced by the medical team's implicit bias. Overall, there is no evidence that genitoplasty directly targets parental distress, nor is there evidence that parental distress is intolerable or cannot be addressed in other ways (Roen, 2019).

An important consideration around parents is the process by which they make decisions about their child's health care. One ethical concern involved in this process is informed consent. Ethicists generally assume that parents can give informed consent for their child's health care as actors in the child's best interests (AMA, 2018). However, some scholars have suggested that, because the uniqueness of intersex surgery might affect a child's fundamental human rights, a court order might be required for the parent to give informed consent (Dalke et al., 2020). Evidence has also challenged the integrity of informed consent at a micro-ethics level. One study of self-identified DSD clinics found gaps in informed consent processes: more than two-thirds of the clinics did not document discussion of risks of surgery, including additional procedures, sexual dysfunction, psychosocial distress, gender uncertainty, and that interventions could be deferred until a later time (Rolston et al., 2017). Even with sufficient information, the informed consent process may not be adequate when carried out with parents of a minor child, given the distress that parents experience (Tamar-Mattis et al., 2013). Many families lack access to psychological services to assist in information processing despite multiple consensus recommendations for such services (Rolston et al., 2017). There are emerging data suggesting that the way information is framed can bias families' decision making. For instance, adopting a position of equipoise and patient-centeredness can unintentionally move families toward the surgeon's recommended course of action (Timmermans et al., 2018), and several studies have suggested that families feel as though their options are "surgery or nothing" (Roen, 2019).

Alternatives to Genital Surgery

There is very little research regarding alternatives to surgical intervention. Some doctors have suggested that gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogs can be used in place of gonadectomy for pubertal suppression in

children whose gender identity or pubertal development is uncertain and that hormonal management of CAH can reduce the size of a clitoris as an alternative to surgery (Mouriquand et al., 2016). Vaginal dilation may be an option in place of vaginoplasty for some. The contours of psychosocial support, including limiting genital exams and engaging patients and families over time to involve them in decision making, are beginning to emerge but as yet have minimal supporting data (Roen, 2019). This approach offers the possibility of helping families and young people learn to cope with and reduce the distress that surgery seeks to, but may not, avert.

In an appraisal of the literature and expert opinion, the Endocrine Society has recommended that parents be counseled on the risks and benefits of surgery and be permitted to make what they feel is the best decision for their child (Speiser et al., 2018). Timmermans and colleagues (2018) found that this approach biases families toward surgery. A growing number of consensus groups and professional medical organizations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians¹⁷ and Physicians for Human Rights,¹⁸ have interpreted the risk-benefit ratio as unfavorable for early genital surgery in instances where the individual is too young to participate in the consent process (Elders, Sacher, and Armona, 2017; Krege et al., 2019; Toler and GLMA Policy and Government Affairs Committee, 2016). These organizations advise the provision of psychosocial support for both parents and children and deferral of early genital surgeries until the child can participate in the decision.

Several international human rights groups have identified early surgery in the absence of informed consent as a violation of the child's human rights to autonomy and an open future, and even as a kind of medical torture (Amnesty International, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2017; United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council, 2013; WHO, 2014). In July 2020, Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, became the first hospital in the nation to publicly acknowledge the harms of early genital surgeries and to adopt a policy that "irreversible genital procedures should not be performed until patients can participate meaningfully in making the decision for themselves, unless medically necessary" (Shanley et al., 2020). Of note, while the statement committed to pausing all genital surgeries that were not medically necessary, it did indicate that there may be a difference in approach for individuals with intersex traits who have CAH relative to people who do not.

Overall, there is mixed evidence that surgery achieves its physical goals and scant evidence that it confers psychosocial benefit. The existing research does provide strong evidence of the risk of irreversible harm from

¹⁷ See <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/genital-surgeries.html>.

¹⁸ See <https://phr.org/news/unnecessary-surgery-on-intersex-children-must-stop/>.

early genital surgery, including immediate postoperative complications and later revisions, as well as the potentially catastrophic risk of incorrect, surgically reinforced gender assignment. The absence of data on alternative affirming pathways means that there is very little evidence of benefit from deferring surgery. It also means, however, that there is very little evidence of harm from deferring surgery. Factoring in the human rights of children and evidence that individuals with diverse sexualities, bodies, and genders can and do thrive with affirmation and support from parents, peers, and communities, there is insufficient evidence of benefit to justify early genital surgery. Therefore, the deferral of surgery until a child can participate in the decision, except in scenarios with urgent medical need, such as urinary obstruction or immediate cancer risk, may optimize the benefits of informed consent, autonomy, and patients' physical, social, and emotional well-being.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Access to comprehensive, affirming, and high-quality health care services is a human right for all people. Ensuring access to care for SGD populations includes building supportive and protective structures at all levels, from the broad societal level to the level of individual provider practices. At the societal level, laws that guarantee access to health care services, health insurance coverage, and public health programs for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, are critical to the health and well-being of SGD people. Laws and policies that provide affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage, such as Medicaid expansion by all states or some form of universal coverage, could combat health risks such as uninsurance and poverty among SGD populations.

CONCLUSION 12-1: Sexual and gender diverse populations need access to a full range of preventive, chronic, and acute health care services delivered in settings that are welcoming, affirming, and both clinically appropriate and culturally responsive.

Health services and procedures that are particularly important for the health and well-being of SGD populations include but are not limited to pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV; HIV treatment and care; abortion, fertility, and other reproductive health services; affirming mental and behavioral health care services; and gender-affirming care for transgender people. Transgender people, as well as lesbians and bisexual women, also need access to timely and anatomically appropriate preventive screenings.

Important aspects of providing culturally responsive and clinically appropriate care for SGD populations include but are not limited to creating affirming health care environments; using forms that are inclusive of diverse

identities and family structures; seeking to address social determinants of health and social needs; and requiring routine, high-quality cultural and clinical training on working with SGD populations for the health care and public health workforce. Efforts to promote quality of care and care coordination may have differential effects on populations experiencing disparities, making it important to assess the effects of these efforts on groups such as LGBT people, people with intersex traits, and intersectional groups such as LGBT people of color and people living with HIV. Entities that provide resources and guidance on affirming health care policies and environments for SGD populations include the Academy of Physician Assistants, GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality, Association of American Medical Colleges, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, National LGBT Health Education Center, and The Joint Commission.

CONCLUSION 12-2: Gender-affirming care, including puberty delay medications, mental health services, hormone therapy, and surgeries, is associated with improved mental and physical health for transgender people.

Gender-affirming care for transgender people, including non-binary and other gender diverse people, is an essential and medically necessary intervention to improve health and well-being. Provision of this care needs to be individualized and conducted in partnership between patients and their providers. Insurance coverage of gender-affirming services and procedures by public and private payers, according to the most updated expert standards in the field and without inappropriate age or other restrictions, is necessary to facilitate access to these services and to avoid discrimination on the basis of sex and gender identity.

CONCLUSION 12-3: Conversion therapy to change sexual orientation or gender identity and elective genital surgeries on children with intersex traits who are too young to participate in consent are dangerous to the health and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people.

Conversion therapy to change sexual orientation or gender identity can cause significant and life-long trauma. Elective genital surgeries on children with intersex traits who cannot participate in consent are similarly detrimental to health and well-being. The American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality, Physicians for Human Rights, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and

the World Health Organization recommend that these procedures not be promoted or performed.

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Part IV

Research Needs

Recommendations

Sexual and gender diverse (SGD) populations are dynamic, rapidly growing, and continually evolving. In recent years, trends in data collection have shifted, creating new opportunities to study sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, and other relevant components of SGD identities, such as sexual attraction and sexual behavior. However, the existing data and the research methodologies behind current study measures are not sufficient to capture and convey the richness of SGD communities or to capture the varied effects that unique and intersecting identities have on health and well-being outcomes for SGD people.

As discussed in Chapter 4, existing sexual orientation and gender identity questions are presented inconsistently across data collection tools, often separated from other demographic measures, and frequently use binary assessments of gender, which do not effectively describe gender diversity. Furthermore, research efforts to date have focused on lesbian women and gay men; although there has been increased attention in recent years to bisexual and transgender people, intersex populations (also known as those with differences of sex development) have been almost wholly ignored. The committee emphasizes that there is an urgent need for robust scientific evidence that includes not just lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, but also intersex people, people with same-sex or same-gender attractions or behaviors, and people who identify as asexual, Two Spirit, queer, or other terms under the SGD umbrella.

In the wake of social change and ongoing legal developments regarding protections for SGD people in employment, health care, military service, family formation, and other key areas of life, it is increasingly important

to understand how the provision or the denial of access to opportunities and resources effects SGD people over the entire life course. There is also a critical need to collect and analyze data that seek to understand how experiences differ within SGD populations according to such factors as gender, race, and ethnicity. A varied, comprehensive, and inclusive research infrastructure for SGD populations is essential in understanding the unique and shared challenges these individuals and communities face and for guiding actions to improve their well-being across all domains of life, including social justice and legal equality, health and health care, employment, education, and housing.

The report of the Institute of Medicine (2011) on the LGBT population noted that LGBT populations are often considered a single monolithic group, which obscures important differences among individuals and communities. While the report did not include specific reference to people with intersex traits and other SGD groups, it noted that an essential step in understanding and addressing the needs of LGBT communities is collecting more and better demographic data about sexual orientation and gender identity. The 2011 report recommended that these data be collected in federally funded surveys administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in other relevant population surveys, as well as in research studies funded by the National Institutes of Health and in electronic health records.

This current committee finds that collecting data on the identities and experiences of SGD people is an essential step toward understanding the ways in which outcomes for SGD groups differ from those of heterosexual and cisgender populations. Effectively addressing disparities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status will require collaborative and coordinated efforts among federal, state, and private stakeholders. In addition, it will be important to involve SGD communities themselves, including SGD people of color, in all aspects of the research process. Meaningful community participation is a critical way that SGD population research can be accountable and accurately reflect the lives and experiences of the communities being studied.

In the past decade there has been significant progress in the development of metrics that measure sexual orientation and gender identity. Validated and standardized versions of questions about sexual orientation, sexual behavior, and sexual attraction are increasingly used in population surveys, but there is much room for improvement. For example, the Census Bureau's American Community Survey and Current Population Survey allow identification of same-sex couples, which is a useful though imperfect proxy for sexual orientation, but the surveys do not ask about gender identity or intersex status. Several important surveys used in research on health, housing, wages, employment, and education outcomes do not include questions on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

Other surveys measure gender identity using a single-item design (e.g., “are you male, female, or transgender?”), which has been shown to substantially undercount transgender and other gender diverse people in comparison with a two-step question that asks about both current gender identity and sex assigned at birth. Intersex status questions still need to be developed, field-tested, and validated for use in population surveys.

The health and well-being of SGD populations across the United States could be improved by the addition of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status measures to publicly and privately sponsored data collection activities at national, state, county, municipal, school district, and tribal levels. Types of data collection activities in which these data could be collected include survey research; nonsurvey research, such as clinical trials and program evaluations; and administrative data systems, including intake forms and applications for federal and state programs. It is also essential to collect these data in electronic health records and other clinical records.

It is important to use a variety of methodological approaches when studying SGD populations, including but not limited to quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal cohort studies, and ethnographic and historical research. Study designs that allow for causal inference about associations between exposures, such as discrimination, and outcomes, such as depression, are also critical. Using context-rich research designs that respect and elevate the multifaceted identities and lived experiences of SGD people is another key component of understanding the needs of these communities. In all research activities, SGD communities should be treated as partners rather than solely as research subjects, and all data need to be collected and analyzed in ways that ensure respondent privacy and confidentiality and provide robust protections from discrimination.

The growing and dynamic nature of SGD populations challenges researchers and policy makers to collect more and better data and to consider the degree to which research reflects the most pressing needs of these populations and the multiple contemporary challenges they face. There are a number of data system reforms that could help advance knowledge related to how laws, political institutions, and public policies shape the well-being of SGD populations. A key need is developing systems and methods that identify geographic indicators for SGD respondents and remove barriers in access to, or use of, such indicators in datasets. Improving research infrastructure will facilitate the generation of high-quality scientific evidence that can inform evidence-based interventions in a variety of sectors to promote the well-being of SGD people; optimize the social, political, and economic determinants of their health; and promote their resilience and well-being.

The committee’s recommendations aim to identify opportunities to advance understanding of how individuals experience sexuality and gender

and how sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status affect SGD people over the life course. Our recommendations are in five categories: (1) population data; (2) measurement challenges related to understanding SGD populations; (3) critical data gaps; (4) improvement of the research community's ability to use these data; and (5) the use of data for the development of high-quality, evidence-based interventions and programs. In each category, the committee makes efforts to identify the specific actors that are best positioned to respond to particular aspects of the research landscape. The committee has concluded that investing in research infrastructure and in a robust and comprehensive program of research in the ways described below will support the development of stronger, evidence-based policies and practices in the areas addressed in this report.

POPULATION DATA

In order to make valid claims about the status of SGD populations in the United States, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners need accurate and representative population-level data that describe SGD populations in all their complexity. Researchers have worked for decades to develop sound approaches for the collection of data about sexual orientation and gender identity, but such data are not collected consistently or completely across surveys, and population-level data for certain groups (e.g., people with intersex traits) do not exist.

Addressing the challenges highlighted in this report will require collaboration by a coalition of actors. In addressing national population data needs, the committee considers the following stakeholders central to implementing these recommendations:

- entities throughout the federal statistical system, particularly the Census Bureau at the Department of Commerce; the Bureau of Labor Statistics at the Department of Labor; the National Center for Education Statistics at the Department of Education; the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economic Research Service at the Department of Agriculture; the National Center for Health Statistics at the Department of Health and Human Services; the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the Department of Justice; the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics at the National Science Foundation; the Statistics of Income Division at the Internal Revenue Service; and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics at the Social Security Administration;
- other federal agencies and entities that collect demographic data on individuals and populations, including but not limited to the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, State, and Veterans Affairs;

- state, local, and tribal statistical agencies, offices, and other entities (e.g., state health departments, school districts); and
- surveys and research conducted or sponsored by universities and private foundations, such as NORC at the University of Chicago, the Gallup Daily Tracking Survey, and the Understanding America Study at the University of Southern California.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Entities throughout the federal statistical system; other federal agencies; state, local, and tribal departments and agencies; private entities; and other relevant stakeholders should consider adding measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status to all data collection efforts and instruments, such as population-based surveys, administrative records, clinical records, and forms used to collect demographic data.

At the national level, a federal interagency working group at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has played a key role in assessing the status of data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity across the federal statistical agencies. OMB has the ability to create standards for demographic data collection that must be used by all entities within the federal statistical system. The absence of that authoritative federal role has had consequences for both the availability and accuracy of LGBTQI+ population-level data in the United States.

As part of implementing Recommendation 1, OMB should reconvene the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys and charge it with developing government-wide standards for the collection of data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. An OMB standard for collecting these data would give the federal agencies necessary guidance while also allowing certain modifications to ensure these data are being collected in an accurate and appropriate manner for different populations and types of data collection activities. These data can be used to identify disparities and evaluate efforts to address them by tracking population-level trends in such areas as employment, educational attainment, health status, and access to care. They can also be used to measure, track, and improve person-level outcomes and to ensure compliance with relevant civil rights and other nondiscrimination laws.

The establishment of measurement standards for sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status could bolster high-priority data col-

lection activities in federal, state, local, and tribal health agencies, and nongovernmental health entities, including but not limited to hospitals, health plan providers, and physician practices. It could also prompt the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to expand important data collection activities to include measures that capture a fuller range of sexual and gender diversity in the population, starting with adding established measures of sexual orientation and gender identity to surveys, especially including the American Community Survey, the Current Population Survey, and the American Time Use Survey. Finally, measurement standards would aid federal statistical agencies in providing support to state and local entities in the collection of population data specific to their local contexts. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics could assist education researchers in collecting data that capture sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status in studies of students and school personnel.

MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

There are considerable challenges in the collection of data that capture diverse, complex characteristics of SGD populations. Because of the complicated ways that race, class, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other factors interact in people's experiences, current measures do not always sufficiently reflect the lived experiences of these populations. Research stakeholders have a role to play in helping to address methodological challenges associated with collecting accurate and complete data about SGD communities.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Federal statistical agencies, state, local, and tribal departments and agencies; private entities; and other relevant stakeholders should fund and conduct methodological research to develop, improve, and expand measures that capture the full range of sexual and gender diversity in the population—including but not limited to intersex status and emerging sexual and gender identities, sexual behaviors, and intersecting identities—as well as determinants of well-being for sexual and gender diverse populations.

OMB's role as a coordinating body would have particular value for this effort by working with the federal statistical agencies to standardize measures for gender identity and sexual orientation identity, behavior, and attraction, as well as to develop and validate measures relevant to people with intersex traits. OMB could support the consistent use of reliable, validated assessment tools with large representative samples of SGD populations, as well as with other important research. The routine inclu-

sion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status questions on federally supported surveys and in other research could also advance the generation and use of measures that help researchers understand how such factors as stigma and disclosure affect the health and well-being of SGD populations across the life course.

As an example of what this kind of investment might look like in one policy sphere, the National Center for Education Statistics and other federal and state agencies would be able to assess their funded surveys and data collection instruments for inclusion of measures that permit analysis of the experiences of SGD students and education personnel in educational settings. Measures that evaluate the implementation of policies and practices known to be associated with positive educational environments for SGD students and staff could also be included in this work. By funding research on priority areas of need based on these assessments, federal agencies would be better able to implement policies that have the potential to improve education environments for SGD students.

CRITICAL DATA GAPS

Not all topics can be explored efficiently or effectively through the use of data drawn from representative samples of a population; when focusing on underrepresented groups, it is sometimes necessary to use different methods that capture adequate samples of the population in question for effective study. In addition to data from representative samples, the committee identified additional needs for data in a variety of topical areas; some gaps could be addressed through observational studies of specific populations, while others might require experimental studies that randomly assign participants to different treatment groups, qualitative explorations of specific topics, or other methods. Data needs of this kind are particularly important for the study of small groups, such as transgender women of color, Native American Two Spirit people, and people with intersex traits. For decades, SGD organizations have published written works that highlight social and cultural advancements within their communities. These works and other ethnographies have shaped contemporary studies and social movements and could also be used to inform the creation of community-based and culturally sensitive qualitative data collection methods.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Public and private funders should support and researchers should conduct studies using a variety of methods and sampling techniques—driven by the questions under study—in order to examine family and other social relationships, community, health, education, economic, and legal issues that will enhance understanding of sexual and gender diverse populations.

DATA USE

Once comprehensive, accurate data are collected, it is critical that researchers have the ability to access these data to address emerging research questions. Currently, many sources of available data across populations and levels of government are not linked. This lack significantly impairs the ability of the researchers to develop scientific evidence to help address critical policy, social, and economic concerns relevant to SGD populations. By improving researchers' ability to access, link, and use existing data, stakeholders could substantially advance the relevance and impact of research.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The U.S. Office of Management and Budget should convene federal, state, and private funders, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to address significant problems in linking data from different datasets to facilitate research on the health status and well-being of sexual and gender diverse people. These stakeholders will differ by content area but could include researchers, legal advocacy groups, research institutions and centers, think tanks, policy-tracking groups, health, and surveillance organizations.

The goal of this recommendation is to allow data that have been housed in only one or a few agencies or industries to be linked in ways that provide the research community a more complete picture of the prevalence, distribution, and lived experiences of SGD populations. The results of the recommended convenings could include the following:

- developing systems and methods that permit the linkage of datasets—such as matching individual Social Security records that capture name and gender marker changes with administrative records of earnings and occupational attainment—to advance understanding of determinants of SGD well-being;
- developing systems and methods that identify geographic indicators for SGD respondents (e.g., state or city of residence) and remove barriers in appropriate access to, and use of, such indicators in datasets; and
- prioritizing individuals' privacy and confidentiality by establishing guidelines for working with and sharing potentially identifiable personal data among researchers and practitioners who are bound by professional and legal obligations to maintain data confidentiality and security.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING AND INTERVENTIONS

The charge for this report was to review available data and assess future data needs for SGD populations, but the committee is cognizant that work does not stop once data are collected or even when they are analyzed. Although the urgent task for the research community at large is to develop metrics that will lead to enhanced understanding of SGD populations, the ultimate goal of collecting more accurate and relevant data should be to enhance understanding of the mediating factors that can highlight the positive differences and close the disparities that exist between SGD and heterosexual or cisgender populations. Comprehensive and accurate population-level data can play a critical role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs, services, and interventions that support the health and well-being of SGD populations. The data deficits described throughout this report have contributed to a relative dearth of programming to address the specific needs of these populations, as well as an absence of evidence-based processes to evaluate programs.

As discussed in Chapter 7, an increase in the prevalence and visibility of SGD populations in recent years prompted community-based health organizations to respond by offering increased support for SGD patients. Reactions such as those to notable shifts in SGD populations could be supported through the timely collection of relevant empirical SGD population data. Placing scientific evidence at the forefront of program planning will allow researchers, policy makers, and public and private stakeholders to develop services and interventions that can benefit SGD communities.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Public and private research funders, together with federal statistical agencies, should prioritize research into the development, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based services, programs, and interventions that promote the well-being of sexual and gender diverse populations.

The recommended activities could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- evaluations of social service programs in federal agencies—such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Education, and Department of Labor—to ensure the absence of bias and other barriers in service acquisition and delivery processes for members of SGD populations;

- evaluations of public and private social service agencies and programs—such as those for food and housing assistance, runaway and homeless youth, family and youth services, and workforce development—to increase inclusivity and reduce disparities for SGD people;
- increased evidence-based support for existing SGD community-based organizations and health centers, including federally qualified community health centers;
- development of programs, policies, and practices relevant to systems in which SGD populations are involved—such as family courts, criminal justice, immigration, and child welfare—that enhance cultural competency and reduce disparities in treatment of SGD populations;
- development of programs, policies, and practices that reduce stigma and discrimination against members of SGD populations in all the domains discussed in this report; and
- implementation of policies, programs, and practices known to be associated with positive environments for SGD populations, including educational, workplace, health care settings, and places of public accommodation.

CONCLUSION

The increase in prevalence and visibility of SGD populations illuminates the need for greater understanding of the ways in which current laws, systems, and programs affect their well-being. Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, non-binary, queer, or intersex and those who express same-sex or same-gender attractions or behaviors will have experiences across their life course that differ from those of cisgender and heterosexual individuals. Characteristics such as age, race and ethnicity, and geographic location intersect to play a distinct role in the challenges and opportunities SGD people face. This report underscores the need for researchers to seek to understand disparities and advance equity both within and across SGD population groups.

REFERENCE

Institute of Medicine. (2011). *The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/13128.

Appendix A

Summary of Prior Related National Academies Reports and Activities

LESBIAN HEALTH: CURRENT ASSESSMENT AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE (1999)

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report *Lesbian Health: Current Assessment and Directions for the Future* was the first IOM report to focus on the health of a sexually diverse population. The committee noted several important reasons for future research to focus on lesbian health issues, and it argued in favor of situating the health of lesbian women within larger social contexts in order to understand the role that discrimination and the stigmatization of homosexuality play in generating health disparities for this population. The report said there was no evidence that lesbian women are at higher risk for any specific health problem as a function of their sexual orientation, although that finding was due in part to the limited amount of available data comparing the health of lesbian women with that of heterosexual women. The report did note, however, that lesbians faced differential risks due to differences in the prevalence of risk and protective factors and because of diminished access to health care services.

The report recommended that researchers routinely consider including questions about sexual orientation on data collection forms in behavioral and biomedical sciences and that significant efforts should be made to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the study population. In addition, the report recommended that federal agencies should make long-term commitments to funding research on lesbian health and to organizing multidisciplinary conferences at which the research could be presented and its findings disseminated to health care providers, researchers, and the public.

***THE HEALTH OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND
TRANSGENDER PEOPLE: BUILDING A FOUNDATION
FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING (2011)***

This IOM report identified three key issues that made studying lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations challenging: difficulties in assessment of sexual orientation and gender identity; reluctance of research participants to identify as LGBT or to answer questions about their sexual orientation or gender identity due to stigma; and the rarity of these populations in the general population. Moreover, much of the limited available research on LGBT populations focused on lesbian women and gay men, with the health of bisexual and transgender persons largely unexamined. The report said little was known about LGBT children, elder LGBT persons, or about racial and ethnic LGBT groups.

The report did describe several key findings about the health of LGBT populations, including that LGBT people are frequently targets of stigma, discrimination, and violence, and that these have negative effects on health. The report recommended that the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the sponsor of the study that produced the report, focus its future research agenda on five key areas to provide better understanding of the health of LGBT populations: studies of demographic issues, social influences on the lives of LGBT people, inequities in the health care system, interventions to improve LGBT health, and transgender-specific health care. The report also recommended that federally funded surveys and electronic health records should collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity. To aid this process, the report recommended that NIH fund research to develop valid, standardized measures of sexual orientation and gender identity.

***SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY
DATA COLLECTION IN ELECTRONIC HEALTH
RECORDS: WORKSHOP SUMMARY (2013)***

At this workshop, presenters described steps that federal agencies had taken to begin collecting sexual orientation information in electronic health records. They noted that the 2010 Affordable Care Act and the 2009 Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act encouraged the federal government to develop and expand sexual orientation and gender identity data collection in federal health surveys and electronic health records as part of an effort to reduce health disparities.

Participants agreed that sexual orientation can be seen as having three facets: sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and sexual identity. Considering

these facets separately may be important in the context of health surveys and medical records. For example, sexual behavior may be more relevant than sexual identity when evaluating a patient's risk for sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV. However, in assessing risk for depression or suicide among adolescents and young adults, sexual attraction or identity may be more relevant than sexual behavior. Thus, assessment procedures should be tailored to fit specific research aims.

Several presenters noted that knowing a transgender person's gender identity is not sufficient for medical providers to provide adequate care. Furthermore, if patients' current gender identity as recorded in their electronic health record does not match their sex at birth, billing systems will often reject requests for sex-specific testing or procedures for these patients. For these reasons, several presenters proposed using a two-step sequence that collects both current gender identity and sex assigned at birth. Participants noted that, in addition to increasing reporting of transgender status, using the two-step method and learning and using patients' preferred name and pronouns help them feel empowered.

PLANNING MEETING ON THE DEMOGRAPHY OF SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES (2018)

This planning meeting, hosted by the Committee on Population (CPOP) and sponsored by NIH, laid the foundation for the consensus study that produced this report. The meeting highlighted data gaps and research opportunities centered around sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations, the term then used. Participants discussed how such characteristics as sexuality and gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic class can affect individuals' outcomes differently across the life course. Experts discussed topics related to family formation and planning, as well as social stratification and mobility. They emphasized the linkages between health, well-being, and policy, noting how structural discrimination can affect the social and behavioral pathways associated with positive health outcomes.

Participants agreed that the well-being of SGM populations spans a broad range of dimensions, including social, civic, economic, and health. Although SGM people are often categorized as a single subpopulation, there is significant diversity among them. Patterns of intersectionality by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics are also complex. While progress is being made with regard to measuring and collecting data on SGM populations, many complex issues have yet to be addressed. Participants identified key measurement needs focused around improved research design and methodological considerations for measuring SGM populations.

EXPERT MEETING ON THE DEMOGRAPHY OF SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES (2019)

Building on knowledge exchanged at the 2018 planning meeting, this meeting, also hosted by CPOP and sponsored by NIH, focused on understanding the effects of intersectionality on sexual and gender minorities and helped to illuminate the less-thought-of nuances that add a unique layer of complexity to collection of data about SGM populations.

Participants discussed how stigmatization occurs at multiple levels—the personal level (perceived racism or homophobia), the service level (lack of cultural sensitivity among health providers), and the system level (state and federal law, health coverage)—and can cause isolation from health resources. They also noted that a person’s needs also do not remain static throughout the life course: for example, there is a different configuration of risks for older SGM populations than for younger SGM populations.

Race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality are some of the intersections that are often considered, but gender expression, which can vary greatly within LGBT subgroups, can affect an individual’s experience in many systems. There is also a significant overrepresentation of certain SGM subgroups in some systems, such as juvenile justice and foster care. Suicide rates vary widely across sexuality and gender identities.

Participants noted that operationalizing intersectionality is difficult, especially in the context of SGM data collection, since the population is small relative to the overall population. Presenters underscored the need to use qualitative work and individuals’ reports of their own experiences to guide quantitative data collection. They also discussed tapping into community resources (not just legal and scientific institutions) to better support the SGM community and learn how to care for the whole person.

Appendix B

Agenda: Public Seminar on Amplifying Visibility and Increasing Capacity for Sexual and Gender Diverse Populations

Monday, August 5, 2019

9 am – 4 pm

Keck Center of the National Academies of Sciences,
Engineering, and Medicine
500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC
Room 100

Amplifying Visibility

- 9:00 am **Welcome and Introduction**
Monica Feit, *Deputy Director, Division of Behavioral
and Social Sciences and Education*
Charlotte Patterson, *Consensus Study Cochair*
- 9:15 am **Culture, Representation, and Community Frameworks**
Two Spirit American Indian/Alaska Native Health
Jane Simoni, *University of Washington*
- Trans Queer Resistance: Building with LGBT Migrant
Communities*
Dagoberto Bailon, *Trans Queer Pueblo*
- Promoting Safe Spaces for Black Transwomen of Color*
Charmaine Eccles, *Casa Ruby*

#MuslimAnd Queer, Young, & Powerful: Lessons from the Muslim Youth Leadership Council
Khadija Khan, *Muslim Youth Leadership Council of Advocates for Youth*

10:30 am **Break**

10:40 am **Intersex Individuals and Families—Panel Discussion**
Moderator – Katharine Dalke, *Committee Member*
Discussants:
Alesdair Ittelson, *interACT Advocates*
Sean Saifa Wall, *Intersex Justice Project*
Eric and Stephani Lohman, authors, “Raising Rosie”
Arlene Baratz, *University of Pittsburgh Medical Center/interACT Advocates*

11:40 am **Non-Binary and Plurisexual Identities**
Is Seeing Believing? The Contradictions of Bisexual In/Visibility
Wendy Bostwick, *University of Illinois at Chicago*

Transgender Health: Disparities and Protective Factors
Jae Sevelius, *University of California, San Francisco*

Two Spirit/Indigenous LGBTQ Healing, Activism, HIV, and Complex Traumas
Gabriel Estrada, *California State University Long Beach*

12:30 pm **Lunch**

Building Capacity

1:30 pm **Sexual and Gender Diversity Law and Policy**
Data and Design: LGBTQ Cyberharassment Case Study
Ari Waldman, *Innovation Center for Law and Technology, New York University Law School (via Zoom)*

Physician Leadership in Support of LGBTQ Health and Health Equity
Jesse Ehrenfeld, *American Medical Association; Vanderbilt University*

Policy Barriers and Solutions for Transgender Patients
Harper Jean Tobin, *National Center for Transgender Equality*

2:30 pm **Break**

2:45 pm **Civic Engagement—Panel Discussion**
Moderator – Andrew Flores, *Committee Member*

Discussants:
Todd Snovel, *Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs*
Earl Fowlkes, *Center for Black Equity, LGBT Chair, Democratic National Committee*
Nancy Bates, *U.S. Census Bureau*
Mary Anne Adams, *Zami NOBLA*

3:45 pm **Wrap-Up; Committee’s Next Steps**
Mark Hatzenbuehler, *Committee Member*

4:00 pm **Adjourn**

Appendix C

Biographical Sketches of Committee Members and Staff

CHARLOTTE J. PATTERSON (*Cochair*) is professor of psychology in the Psychology Department at the University of Virginia. Her research focuses on the role of sexual orientation in human development and family lives, particularly the study of child development in lesbian- and gay-parented families. She is a coeditor of the *Handbook of Psychology and Sexual Orientation*. She is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS). She is the recipient of APA's Distinguished Contributions to Research in Public Policy Award, Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from APA's Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, Outstanding Achievement Award from APA's Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns, and the Carolyn Attneave Diversity Award from APA's Society for Couple and Family Psychology. Patterson's Ph.D. in psychology is from Stanford University.

MARTÍN-JOSÉ SEPÚLVEDA (*Cochair*) is an IBM fellow and serves as a senior executive advisor to IBM and to five health technology start-up companies. He is also CEO of CLARALUZ LLC, a health, data, technology, and analytics consulting firm. He previously served as IBM vice president of integrated health services, and led health policy and strategy, health benefits innovation and purchasing, occupational health, and well-being services for IBM globally. He is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the Florida Academy of Science Engineering and Medicine, and the Connecticut Academy of Science and Technology. He serves on the Council on Health Research for Development, the University of Iowa College of Public Health

Board of Advisors, and the University of Pennsylvania Board of Overseers. He has an M.P.H. and an M.D. from Harvard University and a Doctor of Science from the University of Iowa.

M.V. LEE BADGETT is professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and serves on the faculty of the School of Public Policy. She is also a distinguished scholar at the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her current research focuses on poverty in the LGBT community, employment discrimination against LGBT people in the United States, and the cost of homophobia and transphobia in global economies. She has published many journal articles and reports on economic and policy issues for LGBT people, including her most recent book, *The Economic Case for LGBT Equality: Why Fair and Equal Treatment Benefits Us All*. Her other books analyze the positive U.S. and European experiences with marriage equality for gay couples and debunks economic myths about LGBT people. She has a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

MARLON M. BAILEY is associate professor of women and gender studies, African and African American studies, and faculty coordinator of the LGBT Studies Certificate Program in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. Bailey is a former visiting professor with the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at the University of California, San Francisco. His book, *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit* was awarded the Alan Bray Memorial Book Prize by the GL/Q Caucus of the Modern Language Association. His work has appeared in numerous publications, including *American Quarterly*; *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly*; *Signs*, *Feminist Studies*, *Souls*, *Gender, Place, and Culture*; *The Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*; *AIDS Patient Care & STDs*; *LGBT Health*; and in several book collections. He is also the recipient of the Joan Heller Bernard fellowship from the CLAGS Center for LGBT Studies in New York City. He has a Ph.D. in African American studies with a designated emphasis in women, gender, and sexuality from the University of California, Berkeley.

KELLAN BAKER (*Project Consultant*) is the centennial scholar and a Robert Wood Johnson health policy research scholar in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where his research focuses on evaluation of insurance reforms affecting the transgender population. Previously, he was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., where he worked on health equity and data collection policy. He was also a founding steering committee member of Out2Enroll, a nationwide campaign in

partnership with the White House and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to connect low-income LGBT populations with coverage under the Affordable Care Act. He is the board chair of the Equality Federation, a training and advocacy organization supporting LGBT equality organizations that is active in 44 states, and he has consulted on health equity issues with a range of organizations. He has a B.A. with high honors from Swarthmore College, an M.P.H. from the George Washington University, and an M.A. in international development from the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University.

TARA BECKER is a program officer for the Committee on National Statistics and the Committee on Population in the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education at the National Academies. In addition to this study, she serves as the study director for a study examining the older workforce and employment at older ages and as a program officer for a study investigating the recent rise in midlife mortality in the United States. Previously, she was a senior public administration analyst and senior statistician for the California Health Interview Survey at the Center for Health Policy Research at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she conducted research on disparities in health insurance coverage and access to health care, as well as on survey data quality and methodology. She was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of California, Los Angeles and a biostatistician at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics. She has a B.A. in sociology and mathematics, an M.S. in sociology, an M.S. in statistics, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

KATHARINE B. DALKE is a psychiatrist at the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Harrisburg, with a clinical focus on the psychiatric care and support of LGBTQ and intersex adolescents and adults. Dalke is also an assistant professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health and Humanities, and the director of the Office for Culturally Responsive Health Care Education at Penn State College of Medicine. Her academic efforts center on LGBTQ and intersex mental health, medical education, and cultural competency within an intersectional framework. She is a longtime advocate for people with intersex conditions/differences of sex development, and she has been recognized with an appointment to the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs. She has an M.D. and an M.A. in Bioethics from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She trained in psychiatry at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, with additional clinical training in transgender health at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

KENNE DIBNER is a senior program officer with the Board on Science Education at the National Academies. She has served as study director for *Reopening K-12 Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Prioritizing Health, Equity, and Communities* and *Science Literacy: Concepts, Contexts, and Consequences*, as well as a recently completed assessment of NASA's Science Mission Directorate's education portfolio. Prior to this position, she worked as a research associate at Policy Studies Associates, Inc., where she conducted evaluations of education policies and programs for government agencies, foundations, and school districts, and as a research consultant with the Center on Education Policy. She has a B.A. in English literature from Skidmore College and a Ph.D. in education policy from Michigan State University.

ANDREW R. FLORES is assistant professor of government in the School of Public Affairs at American University and affiliated scholar at the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on attitude formation and change about marginalized groups, particularly LGBT and the implementation of LGBTQ-related policies as a result of such attitudes. He also studies the political behavior of LGBT people with a central focus on the role of linked fate in LGBTQ politics. His work has also examined the demography of LGBT people, and he has published estimates of the number of adults who identify as transgender in the United States. He has also documented the experiences of LGBT people when interacting with state institutions and the effect of LGBTQ-related public policies and elections on LGBTQ people and the general public. His research has been published widely, including in *Science Advances*; *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*; *American Journal of Public Health*; *Public Opinion Quarterly*; and *Political Psychology*. He has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Riverside.

GARY J. GATES was the Blachford-Cooper distinguished scholar and research director at the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. He also previously served as a senior researcher at Gallup and as a research associate at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. He has published extensively on the demographic and economic characteristics of the LGBT population, and he coauthored *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*. As a recognized expert on the geography and demography of the LGBT population, he provided expert witness testimony in one of the four cases challenging state bans on marriage for same-gender couples heard by the U.S. Supreme Court as part of the case that led to the decision that same-gender couples have a constitutional right to marriage. He has a Ph.D. in public policy and management from the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University.

MARY GHITELMAN is a senior program assistant for the Committee on Population in the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. She has been with the National Academies since 2015, working on reports including *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*; *Valuing Climate Damages*; *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*; and *The Promise of Adolescence*. She received her B.A. in psychology from Beloit College and studied abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark, with a focus in cross-cultural psychology.

ANGELIQUE C. HARRIS is the director of faculty development at Boston University Medical Campus and director of faculty development and diversity in the Department of Medicine at the Boston University School of Medicine. Harris works to design, implement, and lead innovative programs and initiatives aimed at providing and promoting more equitable learning and working environments for faculty, staff, and students. An applied medical sociologist, her research examines health, wellness, and resilience within marginalized communities and her areas of research expertise are in race and ethnicity, gender and sexualities, health and illness, social movements, cultural studies, and urban studies. More specifically, her research studies how groups construct health issues and how the marginalization and stigmatization they experience impact their access to resources. Harris has authored and co-authored dozens of books, articles, and essays, including the books *Queer People of Color: Connected but Not Comfortable* and the *Intersections of Race and Sexuality* book series. She has a Ph.D. in sociology from the Graduate Center at the City University of New York.

MARK L. HATZENBUEHLER is the John L. Loeb associate professor of the social sciences in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. His research examines the role of stigma in shaping population health inequalities, with a particular focus on the mental health consequences of structural and systemic forms of stigma. He has published widely, including in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*; *Psychological Bulletin*; *American Psychologist*; *American Journal of Public Health*; *JAMA Pediatrics*; and *JAMA Psychiatry*. He is a recipient of the Louise Kidder Early Career Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the Early Career Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest from the American Psychological Association (APA), the Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformational Early Career Contributions from the Association for Psychological Science, and the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from APA's Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. He is an elected fellow of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research, the premier hon-

orary organization for scientists working at the interface of behavior and medicine. He has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Yale University.

NAN D. HUNTER is the Scott K. Ginsburg professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. Her scholarship spans multiple fields, including sexuality and gender law; social movements and law; feminist legal theory; and health law. She is coauthor of *Sexuality, Gender, and the Law* (4th ed.), the first law school textbook to conceptualize sexuality and gender as a mutually dynamic relationship for purposes of state regulation. Her current project is a book on civil rights movements, law, and culture. Prior to teaching, she specialized in constitutional and civil rights law for the American Civil Liberties Union, where she founded the LGBT Rights Project. She also previously served as deputy general counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and as associate dean at Georgetown University Law Center. She is a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine. Her awards include the Pioneer of Courage award from the American Foundation for AIDS Research, the inaugural Dan Bradley award from the LGBT Bar Association, and the Edie Windsor Lifetime Achievement Award from Equality Florida. She has a B.A. from Northwestern University and a J.D. from Georgetown University.

MALAY K. MAJMUNDAR directs the Committee on Population (CPOP). He is currently overseeing projects on mid-life mortality and socioeconomic disparities, forced migration and refugee movements, sexual and gender diverse populations, the workplace and aging, and family planning and women's empowerment. He is also developing a future research portfolio for CPOP. While at the National Academies, he has worked on studies on demography, criminal justice, immigration enforcement and statistics, and the federal budget. He has a B.A. in political science from Duke University, a J.D. from Yale University, and a Ph.D. in public policy from the University of Chicago.

TONIA C. POTEAT is assistant professor in the Department of Social Medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and a core faculty member in the university's Center for Health Equity Research. She is also a certified physician assistant who provides care for people living with HIV at the university's Infectious Disease Clinic. Her research, teaching, and clinical practice focus on LGBTQ health and HIV, with particular attention to the role of stigma in driving health disparities. She has published widely on the health of transgender adults and serves as associate editor for the journal *LGBT Health*. She recently served on the Sexual and Gender Minority Working Group for the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office of the National Institutes of Health. She has a Ph.D. in international

health/social and behavioral interventions from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

SARI L. REISNER is assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, based in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Hypertension at Brigham and Women's Hospital. He is also assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and director of transgender health research at the Fenway Institute at Fenway Health. His research addresses health disparities in sexual and gender minority populations, with specialization in transgender health and in adolescent and young adult health. Reisner is an investigator of multiple LGBTQ health studies funded domestically and internationally, including a project to enroll and follow physical and mental health outcomes in a cohort of 4,500 transgender and gender diverse patients in Boston and New York City. He has coauthored many articles in LGBTQ health and was profiled in *The Lancet* as a global leader in transgender health. He has a Sc.D. in social and psychiatric epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

STEPHEN T. RUSSELL is the Priscilla Pond Flawn regents professor in child development in the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences and a faculty member in the Population Research Center, both at the University of Texas at Austin. He studies adolescent development, with an emphasis on adolescent sexuality, LGBT youth, and parent-adolescent relationships. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, he published a series of papers that were the first to document significant health risks among sexual minority adolescents. He also studies health risk and resilience among this population, with an emphasis on gender and cultural differences, and he serves as an expert in the role of school policies, programs, and practices in supporting adolescent adjustment, achievement, and health. His community work has included serving as human relations commissioner in Durham, North Carolina; Davis, California; and Tucson, Arizona. He has served as president of the Society for Research on Adolescence, and on the governing boards of the Society for Research in Child Development, the National Council on Family Relations, and SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change. He has a Ph.D. in sociology from Duke University.

DEBRA J. UMBERSON is Centennial professor of liberal arts and director of the Center on Aging and Population Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on social determinants of health across the life course, with attention to social ties, health disparities, and the use of blended research methods. Much of her recent work considers how spouses

influence each other's health-related behavior, mental health, and health care, and how these processes vary across gay, lesbian, and heterosexual unions. Her work also documents racial and ethnic differences in exposure to the death of family members over the life course and implications for health. She is an elected fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Her awards from the American Sociological Association include the 2015 Matilda White Riley Distinguished Scholar Award for research on aging, the 2016 Leonard I. Pearlin Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Sociological Study of Mental Health, the 2020 Leo G. Reeder Award for career contributions to medical sociology, and the 2020 Distinguished Career Award for research on families. She has a Ph.D. in sociology from Vanderbilt University.

JORDYN WHITE (*Study Director*) is a program officer in the Division on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. In addition to this study, she is directing a study on sustainability partnerships in the U.S.–Mexico Drylands Region, which is a binational collaboration between the U.S. National Academies and the Mexican Academy of Sciences, Academy of Engineering, and National Academy of Medicine. Her previous projects include a study on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and workshops on estimating human trafficking in the United States and on principles and practices of federal program evaluation. Previously, at the U.S. Census Bureau, she worked on methodology, implementation, and nonresponse follow-up design for the American Community Survey and the 2020 census. She is a member of the D.C. Mayor's Advisory Committee to the Office of LGBTQ Affairs. She has a B.S. in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.S. in criminal justice from St. Joseph's University.

21-2875

IN THE
United States Court of Appeals
FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT

DYLAN BRANDT, et al.,
Plaintiffs-Appellees,
—v.—

LESLIE RUTLEDGE,
in her official capacity as the Arkansas Attorney General, et al.,
Defendants-Appellants.

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS

**BRIEF FOR *AMICI CURIAE* STONEWALL UK, ET AL.
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS-APPELLEES**

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CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Fed. R. App. P. 26.1 and 29(c), *amici curiae* (1) Stonewall UK, (2) the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights, (3) the Australian Professional Association for Trans Health, (4) the Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa New Zealand, (5) LGBT+ Denmark, (6) Bundesverband Trans* e.V., (7) the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y más, (8) Fundación Colectivo Hombres XX, AC, and (9) the Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity each state that they have no parent corporation and that no publicly-held corporation owns 10% or more of their stock.

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IDENTITY OF AMICI CURIAE AND STATEMENT OF INTEREST¹

Amici curiae (1) Stonewall UK, (2) the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights, (3) the Australian Professional Association for Trans Health, (4) the Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa New Zealand, (5) LGBT+ Denmark, (6) Bundesverband Trans* e.V., (7) the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y más, (8) Fundación Colectivo Hombres XX, AC, and (9) the Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity (together, the “*Amici Organizations*”) are non-profit organizations dedicated in whole or in part to securing and protecting the rights of transgender people. The *Amici Organizations* respectfully submit this *amicus curiae* brief to assist the Court in understanding the availability of gender-affirming healthcare for adolescents in each of the *Amici Organizations*’ respective home countries.

A more detailed statement of interest for each of the *Amici Organizations* is included in Appendix A.

¹ All parties consented to the filing of this brief. Pursuant to Fed. R. App. P. 29(a)(4)(E), *amici* state that no party’s counsel authored this brief in whole or in part, and that no party or person other than *amici*, their members, and their counsel contributed money towards the preparation or filing of this brief.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Arkansas law, 2021 Ark. Acts 626 (the “Arkansas Healthcare Ban”), prohibits gender-affirming healthcare for adolescents in the State of Arkansas. This Court should affirm the district court’s order preliminarily enjoining this damaging act of legislative overreach.

Arkansas seeks to defend the Arkansas Healthcare Ban as an appropriate reaction to what it describes as a “worldwide controversy surrounding gender-transition procedures.” Brief for Appellant (“Appellant’s Br.”) at 16–17, 46. Arkansas and its *Amici* States² even suggest that the Arkansas Healthcare Ban is consistent with and supported by the approach adopted by developed nations, including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Australia, and New Zealand. *Id.* at 16–17, 46; Br. of *Amici Curiae* State of Alabama, *et al.* (“*Amici* States Br.”) at 3–5, 10–15, 19–22. It assuredly is not.

The *Amici* Organizations submit this brief to correct the record, so that this Court has the benefit of accurate information about the gender-affirming healthcare that is available to adolescents in the five countries that Arkansas and its *Amici* States have referenced. This brief also provides information about the availability of

² The term “*Amici* States” refers to the States of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia, each of which joined an *amicus curiae* brief filed on November 23, 2021, in support of the State of Arkansas.

gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents in several other developed countries: Denmark, Germany, Spain, Mexico, and Norway.

As shown in this brief, the Arkansas Healthcare Ban is an outlier. In all of the countries surveyed, adolescent patients, together with their physicians and parents and/or legal guardians, make decisions about what gender-affirming healthcare is appropriate. In all of those countries, when it is deemed medically appropriate, adolescent patients have access to treatment that is prohibited under the Arkansas Healthcare Ban. Unlike Arkansas, these sovereigns leave these important decisions principally to the medical community. The district court's order preliminarily enjoining the Arkansas Healthcare Ban should be affirmed.

ARGUMENT

I. Adolescents Have Access to Appropriate Gender-Affirming Healthcare in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Australia, and New Zealand

Arkansas and its *Amici* States cite to materials referencing the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Australia, and New Zealand, in support of the argument that there is an international controversy surrounding the issue of allowing adolescents to access critical gender-affirming healthcare. Appellant's Br. at 11–15, 46; *Amici* States Br. at 4–5, 10–16, 20–21. What Arkansas and its *Amici* States neglect to say, however, is that whatever debates may exist over how best to care for transgender adolescents, the governments in these countries—unlike the State of Arkansas—have not sought to prohibit clinicians from treating their patients.

Therefore, in all of those countries, adolescents have access to appropriate gender-affirming healthcare, including forms of care that the Arkansas Healthcare Ban prohibits.

A. United Kingdom

Arkansas and the *Amici* States create a misleading impression of adolescents' access to gender-affirming healthcare in the United Kingdom with citations to publications from the United Kingdom that they characterize as "skeptical of gender-transition procedures" or "not inspir[ing] much confidence in the procedures." Appellant's Br. at 12–14; *Amici* States Br. at 10–12. The State of Arkansas equally misplaces its reliance on a decision from a trial court in the United Kingdom that has since been reversed, in which the court concluded that judicial approval was required prior to the use of puberty blockers to treat gender dysphoria in individuals under the age of sixteen. Appellant's Br. at 16–17 (discussing *Bell v. Tavistock & Portman NHS Found. Tr.*, [2020] EWHC 3274 (Admin.)). Arkansas emphasizes the trial court's statements about uncertainties and complexities associated with gender-affirming healthcare, *id.*, which is what Arkansas claims motivated its enactment of the Arkansas Healthcare Ban. Arkansas, however, ignores the fact that, notwithstanding the publications and decision it cites, where medically indicated, gender-affirming healthcare is available to adolescents in the United Kingdom.

First, Arkansas and its *Amici* States misconstrue the review by the U.K. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (“NICE”), from which they selectively quote. Appellant’s Br. at 13; *Amici* States Br. at 10-12. Although NICE concluded that the evidence of the effectiveness of treatment with puberty blockers was of “very low certainty,”³ it nevertheless recommended that gender dysphoria should be treated with “management plans [that] are tailored to the individual.”⁴ According to NICE, treatment plans may include “psychological support and exploration and, for some individuals, the use of GnRH analogues [*i.e.*, puberty blockers] in adolescence to suppress puberty; this may be followed later with gender-affirming hormones of the desired sex.”⁵ In any event, NICE’s review is just one of many inputs that will be considered as part of an ongoing study commissioned by

³ NICE, *Evidence review: Gonadotrophin releasing hormone analogues for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria* (Mar. 11, 2021) at 4-6 (2021), <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/document?id=2334888&returnUrl=search%3Fq%3Dtransgender%26s%3DDate> (follow link to review) (“NICE Evidence Review”).

⁴ *Id.* at 3.

⁵ *Id.*

the publicly-funded National Health Service,⁶ which, notably, provides gender-affirming healthcare free of charge to adolescents.⁷

Second, contrary to what Arkansas and the *Amici* States imply, the *Bell* case in the United Kingdom was not about whether gender-affirming healthcare should be available to minors; it was about whether minors can independently consent to such care without their parents or guardians. In the United Kingdom, minors can validly consent to a medical procedure, provided they have so-called *Gillick* competence.⁸ Under *Gillick*, a minor's capacity to make medical decisions depends on their having sufficient intelligence and understanding to make a decision regarding medical treatment, without regard to a judicially-fixed age limit.⁹ It is not

⁶ NICE Evidence Review at 1; *see also* The Independent Review of Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People (The Cass Review), Terms of Reference, <https://cass.independent-review.uk/about-the-review/terms-of-reference/> (last visited Jan. 14, 2022).

⁷ *See generally* NHS Standard Contract for Gender Identity Service for Children and Adolescents (Dec. 30, 2019), <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/gender-development-service-children-adolescents.pdf>, as amended, Amendments to Service Specification for Gender Identity Development Service for Children and Adolescents (Oct. 6, 2021), <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/amendment-to-cyp-gender-dysphoria-service-specification.pdf>.

⁸ *See Gillick v. West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority* [1986] 1 AC 112 (HL).

⁹ *Id.* ¶ 188B (“[A] minor’s capacity to make his or her own decision depends upon the minor having sufficient understanding and intelligence to make the decision and is not to be determined by reference to any judicially fixed age limit.”).

the role of the court to intercede into the authority of a clinician in determining whether to recommend treatment, or of a competent minor in determining whether to undergo such treatment.¹⁰

Applying these principles, the Court of Appeal for England and Wales reversed the trial court decision that Arkansas references, establishing that an adolescent’s ability to consent to gender-affirming healthcare—like other healthcare—is a matter for adolescents and their clinicians and parents/legal guardians, not the government.¹¹ To clarify what Arkansas does not, the trial court’s decision was never about the *availability* of gender-affirming healthcare; the “sole legal issue” in the case was the circumstances in which an adolescent could *consent* to such care.¹²

The Court of Appeal roundly rejected the trial court’s conclusion that adolescents under the age of sixteen were generally incapable of providing such consent, and that judicial involvement in the medical decision-making process was therefore needed.¹³ The Court of Appeal acknowledged that the provision of gender-

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Bell v. Tavistock & Portman NHS Found. Tr.*, [2021] EWCA 1363 (Civ) ¶¶ 86-87.

¹² *Bell v. Tavistock & Portman NHS Found Tr.*, [2020] EWHC 3274 (Admin.) ¶ 9.

¹³ *Id.* ¶¶ 147, 151.

affirming healthcare is a complex topic, noting that clinicians should take “great care” before recommending gender-affirming treatment to an adolescent,¹⁴ but concluded that, as far as a minor’s *Gillick* competence to consent to such care is concerned, “[n]othing about the nature or implications of the treatment with puberty blockers allows for a real distinction to be made” between that and any other medical treatment.¹⁵ In the Court of Appeal’s judgment, “the [trial] court was not in a position to generalise about the capability of persons of different ages to understand what is necessary for them to be competent to consent to the administration of puberty blockers.”¹⁶ The State of Arkansas is likewise in no such position.

In short, despite the picture Arkansas attempts to paint, gender-affirming healthcare is available to any adolescent in the United Kingdom whose clinician recommends it, as long as the required clinical, patient, and parental consents are obtained.

B. Sweden

Arkansas and its *Amici* States also cite to a review article from Sweden and a Swedish hospital’s decision to stop providing gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents under the age of sixteen outside of the clinical trial setting. Appellant’s

¹⁴ *Bell v. Tavistock & Portman NHS Found. Tr.*, [2021] EWCA 1363 (Civ) ¶ 92.

¹⁵ *Id.* ¶ 76.

¹⁶ *Id.* ¶ 85.

Br. at 11–12; *Amici* States Br. at 13–14. In the *Amici* States’ view, these events in Sweden support the Arkansas Healthcare Ban by showing that there is not enough evidence regarding the outcomes of gender-affirming healthcare. Arkansas and the *Amici* States again fail to inform the Court that gender-affirming healthcare is available to adolescents in Sweden, and that the Swedish government has not inserted itself into this medical decision-making in the way that the State of Arkansas has done through the Arkansas Healthcare Ban.

In Sweden, access to healthcare is governed by the Health and Medical Services Act.¹⁷ Under the framework of that law, medical treatment is valid so long as it comprises treatment that can relieve or alleviate pain or illness. Gender-affirming healthcare, as with all medical practice, needs to be performed within the framework of the law, based on medical evidence and well-known practice. Sweden also follows the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, which recognizes a child’s right to have a say in their medical treatment, and that this right increases with age.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hälso- och sjukvårdslag (Health and Medical Services Act (2017)) [SFS] 2017:30 (Swed.), https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/halso--och-sjukvardslag-201730_sfs-2017-30.

¹⁸ *Convention on the Rights of the Child will become Swedish law*, Government Offices of Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (June 14, 2018), <https://www.government.se/articles/2018/03/new-legislative-proposal-on-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/>.

For over twenty years, adolescent patients in Sweden have had access to gender-affirming healthcare. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare promulgates national guidelines to support clinicians in making decisions concerning the healthcare needs of their patients.¹⁹ Since 2015, the guidelines have addressed hormone treatment for gender dysphoria. The guidelines state that if adolescent patients suffer due to their gender dysphoria, clinicians may prescribe both puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones.

Ultimately, in Sweden, a clinician's professional judgment provides the basis on which treatment is or is not recommended. In Sweden, the decision to undergo gender-affirming healthcare is made between patients, their parents, and their clinicians. For example, some medical providers in Sweden have recently reconsidered the decision to administer hormones or hormone blockers to patients that have not already started them, but other medical providers continue to provide gender-affirming treatment based on the national guidelines and their own professional judgment. Critically, any decision regarding whether to prescribe gender-affirming treatment remains between clinicians and their patients. The government is not involved in that decision-making process.

¹⁹ God vård av barn och ungdomar med könsdysfori (Good care of children with gender dysphoria) (April 2015), <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/kunskapsstod/2015-4-6.pdf>.

C. Finland²⁰

Arkansas and the *Amici* States cite to recommendations promulgated by the Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (“COHERE Finland”) in support of their position that uncertainty regarding treatment outcomes justifies Arkansas’ actions here. Appellant’s Br. at 12; *Amici* States Br. at 14-15. But Arkansas seeks to do something Finland has never done—ban treatment—and Arkansas and its *Amici* States misconstrue the contours of the COHERE Finland recommendations they cite.

COHERE Finland is a permanent body appointed by the Finnish government that works in conjunction with Finland’s Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.²¹ In 2011, Finland created an avenue for adolescents to seek treatment for trauma caused by gender dysphoria. Although adolescents cannot access surgical treatment for gender dysphoria until age eighteen, they can begin the diagnostic process at age thirteen.²² COHERE Finland’s recommendations recognize a treatment protocol for transgender adolescents as part of the Finnish healthcare system.

Patients whose puberty has not started and who experience long term or severe gender dysphoria-related anxiety can be sent for consultation at the university

²⁰ The *Amici* Organizations thank Seta ry / Seta rf / Seta Lgbtiq Rights in Finland for its assistance with this section.

²¹ See Background Memorandum and Recommendations, COHERE Finland, <https://palveluvalikoima.fi/sukupuolidysforia-alaikaiset> (last visited Jan. 5, 2022).

²² See *id.*

hospitals in Helsinki or Tampere.²³ There, after conducting diagnostics to confirm medical necessity with no contraindications, clinicians can treat a patient with puberty blockers upon the onset of puberty.²⁴ It is also possible to access medication to block menstruation.²⁵

COHERE Finland's recommendations also state that an adolescent who has already begun puberty can be referred to a university hospital for gender-identity examinations and treatment if the patient's gender identity variation and related dysphoria appear stable over the long term.²⁶ Gender-affirming hormonal interventions can be prescribed for patients commencing at age sixteen, absent contraindications, if the patient's gender dysphoria is considered permanent and severe and the patient has the capacity to understand the impact of the non-reversible aspects of treatment and the pros and cons of hormonal treatment.²⁷

D. Australia & New Zealand

The *Amici* States briefly reference a statement by the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists in support of their assertion that there is a lack of evidence regarding the outcomes of gender-affirming healthcare. *Amici* States Br. at

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

5. But nowhere does the statement say that gender-affirming healthcare should not be made available to adolescents, as Arkansas seeks to do here. In fact, the statement makes recommendations on how to “support the mental health needs of people experiencing Gender Dysphoria/Gender Incongruence,” including assessment and treatment “based on the best available evidence.”²⁸ In any event, both Australia and New Zealand allow adolescents to access gender-affirming healthcare, where medically appropriate.

In Australia, a parent generally has power to consent to medical treatment, but the parental power to consent diminishes as the patient’s capacities and maturities grow.²⁹ The Australian High Court has adopted *Gillick* competence, *supra* at 6, holding that a minor is capable of giving informed consent, and a parent is no longer capable of consenting on the minor’s behalf, when the minor achieves *Gillick* competence—a sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable them to understand fully what treatment is proposed.³⁰

²⁸ Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Recognising and addressing the mental health needs of people experiencing Gender Dysphoria / Gender Incongruence (Aug. 2021), <https://www.ranzcp.org/news-policy/policy-and-advocacy/position-statements/gender-dysphoria>.

²⁹ *Secretary, Department of Health and Community Services v. JWB & SMB* (“*Marion’s case*”), (1992) 175 CLR 218 (Austl.).

³⁰ *Id.* at 237 (Mason CJ, Dawson, Toohey and Gaudron JJ) (citing *Gillick v West Norfolk & Wisbech Area Health Authority*, [1986] AC 112).

The Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents (“ASOCT Guidelines”), promulgated by AusPATH, recommend that clinicians prescribe puberty blockers, hormone treatment, and psychological support where, following a diagnosis of adolescent gender dysphoria and a medical assessment, the patient agrees that hormone therapy or puberty blockers is in their best interest.³¹ The ASOCT Guidelines rely on empirical evidence and clinical consensus, and were developed in consultation with professionals working with transgender and gender diverse communities across Australia and New Zealand.³²

Legal access to gender-affirming healthcare for patients under eighteen was most recently clarified in 2020 by the Australian Family Court in *Re Imogen*.³³

³¹ *Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents*, AusPATH, <https://auspath.org.au/2018/02/01/australian-standards-of-care-and-treatment-guidelines-for-trans-and-gender-diverse-children-and-adolescents/> (last visited Jan. 14, 2022).

³² *Id.* Australia is also home to clinical research affirming the medical benefit of puberty blockers for transgender youth. One published Australian study identified that, although limited, available evidence points to the safety of puberty blockers and the psychological benefits of suppressing puberty before the possible future commencement of hormone therapy. See Simone Mahfouda et al., *Puberty suppression in transgender children and adolescents*, 5 *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* 816 (2017), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2213858717300992?via%3Dihub#!>.

³³ *Re Imogen* (No. 6), [2020] FamCA 761 (Austl.).

Adolescent patients can legally receive hormone treatment, but there must be no dispute between parents (or those with parental responsibility), the medical practitioner, and the patient with regard to the patient's *Gillick* competence, diagnosis of gender dysphoria, or the proposed treatment for alleviating the suffering caused by the gender dysphoria.³⁴ Any dispute requires an application to the Family Court.³⁵ But where the adolescent, their parents, and their clinician are all in agreement about the need for treatment, care is available and there are no governmental barriers.

In New Zealand, the Care of Children Act 2004 empowers adolescents aged sixteen and older to consent to medical care.³⁶ With respect to medical care generally, including gender-affirming care, adolescents under sixteen years of age may consent to treatment on their own provided they meet the standard for competence in *Gillick, supra* at 6, which the New Zealand Court of Appeal has cited with approval.³⁷ Family support is however considered an important aspect of

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Care of Children Act 2004, Public Act 2004 No. 90, <https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2004/0090/latest/DLM317233.html>.

³⁷ *Re J (An Infant): B and B v Director-General of Social Welfare*, [1996] 2 NZLR 134 (N.Z.).

gender-affirming care for all adolescents in New Zealand, with families involved in care wherever possible.

New Zealand has provided gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents for over fourteen years. Clinicians in New Zealand also consider the ASOCT Guidelines, the promulgation of which, as noted, involved a review by New Zealand adolescent health clinicians. In addition, in 2018, the University of Waikato published guidelines for gender-affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender patients.³⁸ These guidelines allow for puberty blockers to be prescribed depending on the stage of puberty, and also allow for hormone treatment.³⁹

II. Gender-Affirming Healthcare Is Available to Adolescents in Other Developed Countries As Well

A review of the status of gender-affirming healthcare access in other countries reveals a common thread. With appropriate consultation and diagnoses, adolescents can access various forms of gender-affirming care, including treatment that the Arkansas Healthcare Ban prohibits.

³⁸ J. Oliphant et al., *Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa, New Zealand*, Transgender Health Research Lab, University of Waikato (2018), <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12160>.

³⁹ *Id.* at 29–31.

A. Denmark

In Denmark, hormone therapy for adolescents is available through the Danish public healthcare system, after consultation with a multidisciplinary team of doctors including pediatric, psychiatric, and endocrinology specialists.⁴⁰ For patients under the age of fifteen, parental consent is required for treatment in the Danish healthcare system.

B. Germany

Gender-affirming healthcare for patients under the age eighteen is available in various forms throughout Germany. Medical associations in Germany are in the process of developing guidelines for gender-affirming healthcare relating to teenage patients.

In February 2020, the German Ethics Council addressed healthcare for transgender teenagers.⁴¹ The Council's statement acknowledged the tension created by the potentially irreversible consequences of both administering treatment and withholding treatment.⁴² The Council's statement declared that it is not an option to

⁴⁰ See Guidelines on healthcare concerning gender identity matters, part 9 (2018), <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/retsinfo/2019/9060>.

⁴¹ Press Release, German Ethics Council, *Ethics Council publishes ad hoc recommendation on transgender identity in children and adolescents* (Feb. 2020), <https://www.ethikrat.org/mitteilungen/mitteilungen/2020/deutscher-ethikrat-veroeffentlicht-ad-hoc-empfehlung-zu-trans-identitaet-bei-kindern-und-jugendlichen/>.

⁴² *Id.*

limit access to gender-affirming healthcare for adolescents who understand the consequences of their decision to undergo treatment.⁴³ The Council noted that where “the child is sufficiently capable of insight and judgement to understand the scope and significance of the planned treatment, to form his own judgement and to decide accordingly, his will must be decisively taken into account.”⁴⁴

C. Spain

In Spain, patients over the age of sixteen can validly consent to medical care, including gender-affirming healthcare.⁴⁵ Access to gender-affirming healthcare is generally available throughout the country for patients under the age of sixteen, and specific laws governing availability vary among the seventeen autonomous regions in the country. For example, in the Community of Madrid, adolescent patients have the right to treatment by pediatric physicians and to receive puberty blockers and hormone therapy upon the onset of puberty.⁴⁶ In the Region of Murcia, patients over twelve can access gender-affirming healthcare with consent of the minor’s legal

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Access to Transgender Hormone Therapy, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/content/access-transgender-hormone-therapy> (last visited Jan. 18, 2022).

⁴⁶ Law 2/2016 (July 1, 2016) (Community of Madrid, Spain).

representative.⁴⁷ Throughout Spain, gender-reassignment surgery is prohibited before the age of majority.

D. Mexico

Transgender healthcare in Mexico is guided by the Protocol for Access without Discrimination to Health Care Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transvestite, Transgender and Intersex Persons and Specific Care Guidelines.⁴⁸ The Protocol is observed in healthcare facilities administered by the Mexican federal government. The Protocol acknowledges that the process of defining one's sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression may occur at early ages.⁴⁹ The Protocol therefore advises that medical facilities err in favor of providing medical care,⁵⁰ and recommends that the use of puberty blockers and hormone treatment be considered.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Law 8/2016 (May 27, 2016) (Region of Murcia, Spain).

⁴⁸ Protocolo para el Acceso sin Discriminación a la Prestación de Servicios de Atención Médica de las Personas Lésbico, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Travesti, Transgénero e Intersexual y Guías de Atención Específicas, Government of Mexico, Secretary of Health (2020), https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/558167/Versi_n_15_DE_JUNIO_2020_Protocolo_Comunidad_LGBTTI_DT_Versi_n_V_20.pdf.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 35.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 36.

⁵¹ *Id.*

In addition to the Protocol, various Mexican states have reformed their civil codes to recognize the right to gender-affirming healthcare for patients under eighteen.

E. Norway

In Norway, both puberty blockers and hormone therapy are available to adolescent patients, although surgical treatment is generally not available before the age of majority. Access to gender-affirming healthcare, including hormone therapy and mental health support, for adolescent patients is defined in the National Guidelines on the Treatment of Gender Incongruence, promulgated by the Norwegian Directorate of Health.⁵² Puberty blockers are administered to patients based on their pubertal development stage. Any patient over the age of sixteen may access puberty blockers and hormone therapy upon prescription by a clinician; parental consent is not required.

For adolescents under sixteen, puberty blockers are available with parental consent on a case-by-case basis after an evaluation by medical experts, either through the clinician specialist team at Oslo University Hospital or via a health

⁵² Helsedirektoratet, <https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/retningslinjer/kjonnsinkongruens> (last visited Jan. 14, 2022).

service organized under the Municipality of Oslo which specializes in services for gender non-confirming and LGBTQI youth.⁵³

* * *

The Arkansas Healthcare Ban finds no support in the practices of other developed nations—either those identified by the State of Arkansas and its *Amici* States, or the additional developed nations whose practices are described above. In all of those jurisdictions, adolescents have access to gender-affirming healthcare, when medically indicated. As with many forms of medicine, debate exists over how to improve the quality of care and over the need for more evidence of long-term efficacy and impact. That debate has prompted other developed nations to study the care and improve conditions for its delivery, not to ban it.

⁵³ Oslo universitetssykehus, <https://oslo-universitetssykehus.no/behandlinger/kjonnsinkongruens-utredning-og-behandling-av-barn-og-unge-under-18-ar> (last visited Jan. 14, 2022); Oslo kommune, <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/helse-og-omsorg/helsetjenester/helsestasjon-og-vaksine/helsestasjon-for-ungdom-hfu/helsestasjon-for-kjonn-og-seksualitet-hks/#gref> (last visited Jan. 14, 2022).

CONCLUSION

For all of these reasons, the district court's order preliminarily enjoining the Arkansas Healthcare Ban should be affirmed.

Dated: January 19, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX A

Stonewall UK has fought since 1989 to create transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people across communities in the United Kingdom and around the world. Stonewall UK seeks to drive positive change in public attitudes and public policy, and to ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout their lives by building deep, sustained change programs with the institutions that have the biggest impact on them. Stonewall UK's work includes supporting legal efforts to ensure that trans young people have access to gender-affirming medical treatment.

The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (“RFSL”) is a non-profit community organization that has been advocating for the rights of LGBTQIA persons in Sweden and internationally since its founding in 1950. RFSL engages support and educational services, political advocacy, lobbying initiatives, and community space in furtherance of its mission supporting LGBTQIA persons. Since 2001, RFSL has formally included transgender people within the communities it serves. RFSL's key initiatives today include transgender rights advocacy, asylum rights, and family law.

The Australian Professional Association for Trans Health (“AusPATH”) is Australia's principal body representing, supporting, and connecting those working to strengthen the health, rights, and wellbeing of all transgender people—binary and non-binary.

The AusPATH membership comprises over 350 experienced professionals working across Australia. AusPATH firmly believes that all young people who desire puberty suppression should be able to access such care in a timely manner under appropriate supervision and assessment by a multidisciplinary team. AusPATH advocates for access to timely, culturally-safe and person-centered gender-affirming healthcare as critical to protect transgender children, adolescents, and adults from negative health and well-being implications.

The Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa New Zealand (“PATHA NZ”) is an incorporated society established in May 2019 to be an interdisciplinary professional organization working to promote the health, well-being, and rights of transgender people. PATHA NZ comprises over 200 members who work professionally for transgender health in clinical, academic, community, legal, and other settings.

As a society committed to supporting gender-affirming care, PATHA NZ’s role includes advocacy both within New Zealand and internationally. PATHA NZ views gender-affirming care for children and adolescents as an essential part of healthcare and views the denial of access to care until the age of eighteen in any country or state as a violation of human rights.

LGBT+ Denmark is Denmark’s largest and oldest political organization for LGBT+ people in Denmark. LGBT+ Denmark fights for everyone to be able to live

their life in full compliance with their own identity through rights, safe communities, and social change—locally, nationally and globally.

Bundesverband Trans* e.V. (BVT*) is the largest transgender association in Germany. The association’s common endeavor is the commitment to gender diversity and self-determination. BVT* is committed to human rights and to the respect, recognition, equality, social participation and health of transgender and non-binary people.

The Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y más (“FELGBTI+”) is the largest LGBTI+ organization in Spain and one of the largest in Europe, with fifty-seven nongovernmental organizations and associations collaborating as member entities. It is one of only eight LGBTI+ organizations in the world that has consultative status with the United Nations. With thirty years of history, FELGBTI+ is one of the reference organizations in the promotion and defense of rights for LGBTI+ people.

FELGBTI+’s mission is to defend and promote human rights and equality for lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and intersex people and their families in all areas of life (social, health, work, educational, cultural, etc.). In addition, FELGBTI+ works to strengthen and unify the LGBTI associative movement in the Spanish territory from a networking approach and a secular, feminist, nonpartisan, and non-unionist perspective.

Fundación Colectivo Hombres XX, AC (the “Fundación”) is a non-profit community LGBTI organization with a particular focus on men in Mexico who were assigned a female gender at birth. The Fundación has operated since 2012 as a collective and since 2018 as a Civil Association, and has extensive lobbying experience. The Fundación participated in the drafting of the Protocol for Access without Discrimination to Health Care Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transvestite, Transgender and Intersex Persons and Specific Care Guidelines, which provides guidance for the administration of healthcare to transgender individuals in Mexico.

The Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity (“FRI”) is a membership-based nongovernmental organization with local chapters throughout Norway. FRI’s vision is a society free from harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. FRI’s key activities include national-level advocacy for the rights of LGBTI people, building competency of government institutions and employees within different sectors (education, health, social welfare, justice) to include LGBTI people in a non-discriminatory way, and engaging in international solidarity by partnering with LGBTI organizations in Europe, Asia and Africa.

As a membership and community-based organization, FRI has firsthand experience of the impact that gender-affirming healthcare—or the lack thereof—has

on transgender people. FRI is deeply concerned that a law seeking to restrict access to gender-affirming care will be detrimental to the lives of transgender people in Arkansas.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

1. This document complies with the type-volume limit of Fed. R. App. P. 29(a)(5) because, excluding the parts of the document exempted by Fed. R. App. P. 32(f), this brief contains 4,920 words.
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Dated: January 19, 2022

/s/ Andrew Rhys Davies

Andrew Rhys Davies

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this day the foregoing brief was served electronically on all parties via CM/ECF.

Dated: January 19, 2022

/s/ Andrew Rhys Davies

Andrew Rhys Davies