



DEPARTMENT OF
TRANS MEDICINE

NEW PATIENT GUIDE



We offer comprehensive trans health services in a safe and welcoming environment where you are free to be yourself. This includes services for non-binary, genderqueer, bigender, agender, and related individuals, as well as transgender men and women.

Our department was recently designated the region's first and only Center of Excellence for Transgender Health by the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP).

Our growing collaborative network helps ensure that you can keep existing providers and choose the best specialists for your specific needs.

This is possible through comprehensive on-site care, telemedicine, and telehealth, as well as coordinating care with outside providers that you already use.

Borrego Health is committed to ensuring that:

- You have choices about your providers
- You can see a provider near you
- You have access to the best possible care
- You are comfortable being yourself

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ABOUT US

Borrego Health operates primary, specialty and dental clinics in San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. We provide quality, comprehensive, and compassionate care to individuals and families in our communities, regardless of their ability to pay.

Borrego Health welcomes patients of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. We serve these communities with respect, dignity, and cultural sensitivity as a medical home and safety net for essential healthcare and social services.

Borrego Health is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and a Federal Tort Claims Act Deemed (FTCA) organization.

Visit us at borregohealthspecialty.org for details about our Specialty services and locations.

OUR TEAM

PATRIC SCHINE, DNP, FNP
(HE/HIM)

DIRECTOR OF TRANS MEDICINE

Borrego Health's Trans Medicine team, led by Dr. Schine, brings leading-edge efforts in transgender medicine to our regions, improving the overall health and wellbeing of the transgender population in our service areas.



ANTONIA "TONI" D'ORSAY, PHD
(SHE/HER)

DIRECTOR OF TRANS SERVICES

Our providers have received training from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and have met internal standards in cultural competence designed by Dr. D'orsay, an expert on trans lives.



C. MICHAEL WOODWARD, MPH
(HE/HIM)

TRANS COMMUNITY HEALTH MANAGER

A trans man with many years of advocacy experience, Mr. Woodward handles expanding our collaborations with other community providers and services, ensuring the depth, breadth, and quality of your experience as a Borrego Health patient.



One of our TRANS NAVIGATORS will be your main point of contact once you enroll with Borrego Health.

A Navigator will meet with you before each appointment to answer your questions, help you resolve insurance issues, check on your care experience, and give general support for your gender journey.

AVAILABLE SERVICES

Our Center of Excellence regional trans care hubs each serve a group of two to four other clinics and provide a core group of expert providers and support tools for that area.

Note: Extension of available services may be limited by your health insurance.

ADULTS & TEENS

PRIMARY CARE

Our providers do not only provide transgender specific care, but the full extension of services to you and your family. This means fewer medical visits and none of the potential conflicts that can arise when using different providers. Among these care services include: annual physicals; updates on immunizations; surgical pre-op clearance and post-op follow-up care; prescription of medications for all medical issues; screenings for cancer, diabetes, depression and much more.

CROSS-HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Barrego Health uses informed consent for cross-hormone replacement therapy (HRT). We check your progress following the most current international standards for testing, levels, and needs of our patients.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Our services include routine STI testing and treatment, breast health, and reproductive organ health. We offer twilight anesthesia for personal exams, if needed. We can also provide or refer for wellness exams for all genders—anal and cervical exams, mammograms, high-resolution anoscopy, colonoscopy, and more. Complete testing and treatment services for hepatitis A, B, and C, as well as a full range of HIV services, including PrEP and PEP, are available.

SURGICAL EVALUATIONS

Our medical team can provide the core evaluations and necessary Letters of Support for patients seeking surgeries in alignment with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care, v7.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our team of Behavioral Health providers are dedicated to the needs of the trans community, and our approach follows the advanced practice of dysphoria/incongruence being a result of social challenges.

URGENT CARE

Borrego Health has several urgent care clinics that treat issues that are serious but that might not need emergency services.

IN-HOUSE PRIVATE PHARMACY

We offer full-service pharmacies at many clinic locations as well as free prescription delivery options.

REFERRAL COORDINATION

If you need services beyond our scope, we can refer you to specialists of various medical fields, including plastic and reconstructive surgery, who are sensitive to your needs.

YOUTH/PEDIATRICS

Understanding the goals and concerns of the patient is important to support the individual and the family, or larger support system.

Whether and when any gender affirming medical interventions are recommended or started depends on the patient's specific situation and needs.

We are also aware that family includes parent(s) and sibling(s) as well as the extended family and friends. Gender affirming treatment for transgender and gender-diverse youth within Borrego Health is handled through your primary care provider. Youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s) work together with the medical providers and behavioral health providers to develop a treatment plan based on the goals of treatment and any care needs based on age, development, medical, and mental health conditions.

Our criteria for puberty suppression and hormone therapy are informed by the WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) Standards of Care (2011), UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health Guidelines, and Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines, employing the most reliable and factual information available in pediatric care.



ESTABLISHING CARE

Our approach is that we should meet you where you live, work, or play, offering a full range of medical and behavioral health services. We are bringing leading-edge efforts in transgender medicine to our regions, improving the overall health and wellbeing of the transgender population in our service areas, especially rural and underserved areas. This is made possible through comprehensive on-site care, telemedicine, and telehealth (when needed), as well as coordinating care with outside providers you already use.

SETTING YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT

When making your first appointment, be sure to mention that you are interested in working with the Transgender Medicine department. This will ensure that you get scheduled with the right providers and that one of our trans navigators can be on hand for your visit.

The clinics on the next page are designated as our Transgender Medicine specialty clinics. You may, however, call or visit any Borrego Health clinic to set up an appointment with our providers. Walk-ins are also welcome.

LOCATIONS

We have hub locations in several regions that serve a group of two to four other clinics and employ a core group of expert providers and support tools for that area. (There is more to come, so watch us grow!)

CENTRO MEDICO ESCONDIDO

1121 E. Washington Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 871-0606

SAN JACINTO HEALTH CENTER

651 North State Street
San Jacinto, CA 92583
(951) 487-8506

CENTRO MEDICO COACHELLA

55497 Van Buren Street
Thermal, CA 92274
(760) 399-4526

EASTSIDE HEALTH CENTER BUILDING A

1970 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 213-3450

STONEWALL MEDICAL CENTER

68555 Ramon Road, Ste. D103
Cathedral City, CA 92234
(760) 507-3310

BARSTOW COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

750 E. Main Street
Barstow, CA 92311
(442) 347-2800

To make an appointment at one of our
Specialty Care clinics, please call us at

(760) 507-3310
— OR —
(760) 676-5800

For additional Borrego Health clinic locations, visit
our website at www.borregohealth.org.

WHAT TO EXPECT

ALL PATIENTS

Depending on your insurance, you may need to assign one of Borrego Health Specialty Clinic providers as your primary care provider (PCP). Let the trans navigator know when you meet with them.

ADULTS

FIRST APPOINTMENT

First, you will meet with a trans navigator so they can answer your questions, explain our services, and gather information about you and your gender journey. Your medical provider will then meet you and get to know you. We will review your plan for gender-affirming treatment and discuss your expectations and concerns. Together, you will review the hormone therapy process that is right for you (if any) gather your medical history discuss the impact of hormone therapy on fertility and other health aspects, and review consent forms. You may need to have a physical exam and lab work done.

SECOND APPOINTMENT

Once we receive relevant past medical information and a letter of support from your therapist, we will ask you to come in to review and sign the treatment consent forms. You will meet with a trans navigator again at the start of your next appointment. Your provider will continue getting to know you. You might be able to start hormone therapy treatment at this visit, if this is one of your goals. In some cases, the hormone process may take more than two visits to get started. From this point, your care team will review your information and help you schedule necessary follow-up visits. A trans navigator may contact you between visits to follow up on your last visit. You may also connect with them if you have problems or questions.

THIRD & SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENTS

We will continue watching your progress, regularly checking your hormone levels and other health indicators. You may also see the provider for your primary care needs (prevention screenings, illness, etc.)

ALL PATIENTS

Remember to Bring to Your First Appointment:

- Contact information for any outside care providers (name, fax, and phone number)
- Copies of your last physical and medical records
- A list of any questions you may have about the treatment process
- Insurance information

YOUTH

FIRST APPOINTMENT

First, you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) will meet with a trans navigator so they can answer your questions, explain our services, and gather information about you, your family, and your gender journey. Your medical provider will then meet you and get to know you and your parent(s) or guardian(s). Together you will review the hormone therapy process that is right for you (if any); gather your medical history discuss the impact of hormone therapy on fertility and other health aspects, and review consent forms. A trans navigator may contact you between visits to follow up on your last visit. You may also connect with them if you have problems or questions.

SECOND APPOINTMENT

Your provider will continue getting to know you and your family. We will review your plan for gender-affirming treatment and discuss your expectations and concerns. You may need to have a physical exam and lab work done. You will meet with a trans navigator again at the start of your next appointment, and your care team will work with you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) to make a care plan for the rest of the process.

THIRD & SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENTS

Once we receive relevant past medical information and a letter of support from your therapist, we will ask you to come in with your parent(s)/guardian(s) to review and sign the treatment consent forms. You will meet with a trans navigator again at the start of your next appointment, and your care team will work with you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) to make a care plan for the rest of the process. You might be able to start treatment at this visit. In some cases, the hormone process may take more than three visits to get started. We will continue watching your progress, regularly checking your hormone levels and other health indicators. You may also see the provider for your primary care needs (prevention screenings, illness, etc.)

USEFUL INFORMATION

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

For those who experience gender dysphoria or discomfort around physical appearance or gender presentation, hormone replacement therapy is quite effective in relieving the feelings of conflict or distress. Testosterone is used for individuals who were assigned female at birth (transgender men); estrogen is used for those assigned male at birth (transgender women). It is important to note that many, but not all, of the changes to your body will be permanent, and treatment is a lifelong commitment in most cases.

RISKS OF HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Treatment is considered safe when administered and monitored under the care of a medical provider. Most people do not have any major problems. Like all medications, however, there are some potential side effects or adverse reactions you should be aware of before beginning treatment.

If you have questions or concerns about hormone therapy, talk with your provider so that you can make fully informed decisions about your treatment. Also, it is important to attend your recommended follow-up appointments and exams so that your provider can check your health, detect any concerns, and adjust your treatment regimen if necessary.

GENDER-AFFIRMING SURGICAL PROCEDURES

If you are seeking a referral for gender-affirming surgery, talk with a trans navigator. They will aid you in getting your paperwork in order and help you determine which surgeon is best for you and your situation. Note that surgery approval can be a long, frustrating process, depending on several factors (type of insurance, type of procedure, available providers, health history, etc.).

While the State of California prohibits insurance carriers from discriminating against patients based on gender identity, some procedures are easier to get approved than others, and some are rarely (if ever) approved by insurance and must be financed out-of-pocket. Depending on the procedure, you may or may not need to consult one or more mental health care providers as well. A trans navigator from Borrego Health can help you sort out the details when/if you decide surgery is a necessary step for you.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Even the healthiest people can find the process of transition to be challenging, especially the social aspects. Studies show that people who express the most satisfaction with their transition have strong support systems in place. For this reason, we typically encourage patients to establish care with a behavioral health provider to help navigate, process, and celebrate the changes that will occur along the way—at work or school with friends, family, and loved ones and even within yourself.

In some communities, Borrego Health and/or other organizations also offer peer support groups, where you can meet folks in similar situations, share experiences, and get more information about local resources. A trans navigator will help you, your parents, and/or family members connect with mental health counselors and support groups in your area.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Assuming your insurance policy is based in California, most treatments provided by Borrego Health's Transgender Medicine department is covered by insurance under California state nondiscrimination laws.

We accept most insurance plans, including many commercial insurances, as well as Medi-Cal, Medicare, and IEHP. If you do not have insurance, we will help you enroll—we have staff at each of our clinics who can help determine your eligibility. We serve all people regardless of their ability to pay, including undocumented patients.

Does your insurance plan require you to choose a primary care provider (PCP)? If so, you may need to assign one of Borrego Health Specialty Care providers. Our staff is happy to help you make the change, if needed.

MEDICATION AUTHORIZATIONS

Depending on your insurance carrier, you may need prior authorization (PA) to refill your medications, including hormones. This is especially true if you are using Medi-Cal insurance. A Trans Navigator can connect you with the right resources to get the necessary authorizations. Note that it may take a week or more to process your request, so be sure to contact us at least two weeks before your prescription needs to be refilled to contact us at least two weeks before your prescription needs to be refilled.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") provides better health security by implementing comprehensive health insurance reforms that serve to enhance quality of care.

Additionally, California's Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) assures residents that all Medi-Cal beneficiaries can access transgender services, including hormone therapy, labs, and non-cosmetic gender confirmation surgeries.

If you have problems with your insurance carrier, talk to one of our trans navigators for help with resolving the issue.

COMMON TERMINOLOGY

Gender Dysphoria: The emotional distress that results from one's gender identity differing from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: The way a person expresses their gender through behavior, clothes, mannerisms, and other characteristics.

Gender Identity: An individual's inner sense of being masculine, feminine, both, or neither, which develops between the ages of three and six and is part of their sense of self, or self-identity. Gender identity is not necessarily the same as the sex someone is assigned at birth. Every person has a gender identity.

Gender Incongruence: A term for being someone who is not aligned with the way society describes their sex and how they live in the world.

Gender Nonconforming: A term used to refer to people who do not follow other people's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the sex assigned at birth.

Transgender: A term used to describe a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity different from the sex assigned at birth. Often, the term "trans" is used in its place.

Borrego Health recognizes that language is a key component of culturally appropriate care. We use "trans" or "transgender" as an umbrella term intended to include a diverse group of genders, identities, and expressions.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Borrego Health looks forward to being your health partner and meeting your unique needs. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us!

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