



## Supporting Gender Variant & Transgender Youth

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### 2017 PEDIATRICS ANNUAL REPORT



*L to R: Candace Bedard, Martina Drawdy, MD, Theresa Emery*

About seven years ago, Pediatric Endocrinologist Martina Drawdy, MD, began to notice a growing need in the population she treats. Families would come to her with questions about gender expression and identity, sometimes asking about hormone therapy or other treatment options. With few resources available in Vermont, she'd often refer these patients to medical centers in Boston. But the years ticked on, and more families continued to seek help and advice. She finally decided it was time to provide care closer to home for children who are questioning their gender identity.

In February of 2016, UVM Children's Hospital launched the Transgender Youth Program with a goal to support gender variant and transgender youth and their families through a multidisciplinary approach. Drawdy, along with Jamie Mehringer, MD, Social Worker Theresa Emery and Nurse Coordinator Candace Bedard form the core of the program. But roughly 65 health care providers from across the UVM Health Network are involved. About 70 patients, from about 5-years-old through the late teen years, now seek care through the program. That's up from about 10 when the program first launched. At the heart of their work is an understanding that every child's experience is unique.

"This is much bigger than endocrinology," says Drawdy, emphasizing that the program based in the Children's Specialty Center provides wrap-around care for children and families. *(continued on page 2)*

## Supporting Gender Variant & Transgender Youth (continued)

Some patients who are questioning their gender identity may need support. Others may feel extreme discomfort with the sex they were born into or have been assigned. These patients may benefit from hormone therapy or surgery to bring their physical body in line with how they see themselves. Beyond those two examples are a spectrum of treatment options that the team is equipped to handle.

The program has pulled together a network of specialists well-versed in the needs of gender variant and transgender youth. The group meets twice annually to share new knowledge and best practices. Mehringer and Erica Gibson, MD, are leading a workshop at a national conference this year to educate providers about how to provide gender affirming services for trans youth in rural and under-resourced areas.

The Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council is an all-volunteer group comprised of patients, families, and children's hospital staff. This council has been key to the program's success. Members have provided leadership in an effort to allow patients to designate their preferred name and identified gender in their electronic health record.

This council work is leading to national recognition: an abstract on creating opportunities for collaborative care for transgender youth and families has been accepted for presentation at an international meeting in June.

In the future, the Transgender Youth Program hopes to offer on-site support groups or half-day events for families, says Emery.

"The visibility of the program helps families, and especially the youth population, know that they can get the services they need in a safe way," she says. "I like to think we create some hope."

*(excerpted from the 2017 Pediatrics Annual Report)*

## International Conference on Patient- and Family-Centered Care

Greetings from the Transgender Youth Program Advisory Council (TYPAC)! We are thrilled to share with you all that our work will be presented at the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care's International Conference in Baltimore, MD in June! The title of the conference is *Promoting Equity and Reducing Disparities*. Our abstract was selected because of the authentic collaboration that has been built within our Transgender Youth Program between patients, families and providers. Charlotte Safran, the Patient- and Family-Centered Care coordinator for UVM Children's Hospital, will be presenting along with two patient/family advisors from TYPAC. The title of the presentation is *Light and Joy: Creating Opportunities for Intersectional, Collaborative Care for Transgender Youth and Their Families*.

**For more information about the conference, please visit:**

[Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care's International Conference](#)

### BECOME A FOSTER PARENT FOR TRANS YOUTH IN DCF CUSTODY

The Department for Children and Families is currently seeking trans and queer affirming families throughout Vermont for youth of all ages. Many of these LGBTQ youth have experienced significant trauma and need safe, stable homes with caring adults to help them heal. Might that adult be you? Consider becoming a foster parent. You will be supported through trainings and education, peer support, stipends, and professional services. To learn more please visit [fostercare.vt.gov](http://fostercare.vt.gov) and complete the Foster Care Inquiry form. You can also call your local [Family Services District Office](#) and ask to speak with a resource coordinator.



## A letter from Dr. Drawdy

**Dear Patient, Parents/Caregiver and Community Member,**

This letter is to inform you that I will be leaving The University of Vermont Children's Hospital at the end of July, 2018.

It has been a great pleasure providing care for you/your child over the years.

You will remain a patient of the UVM Children's Hospital unless otherwise arranged. Your subsequent care will be transferred to Erica Gibson, MD, an adolescent specialist. She will continue seeing patients at the Transgender Youth Program after my departure. I feel confident that you and your child will be in excellent hands.

For the time being, clinics will be held at the same location at the Children's Specialty Center and all current staff, including social workers, nurse coordinators and child psychologists, will continue to be a part of the team.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact the office at (802) 847-3811 or (802) 847-6200.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your medical care and lives. Working at the Children's Specialty Center at UVM Children's Hospital has been a wonderful experience for me. I will surely miss seeing you and all of my patients on a regular basis but look forward to seeing you as needed until my departure in late July.

Best wishes,

Martina Drawdy, MD



## Welcome Dr. Gibson

The Transgender Youth Program is excited to share that Erica Gibson, MD will be taking over care of our patients. Dr. Gibson specializes in adolescent medicine and is well versed in a variety of areas, including LGBT health care, sexual and reproductive health care, eating disorders and primary care.

Dr. Gibson attended medical school at the University of Vermont College of Medicine and completed her residency and fellowship at the Oregon Health & Science University and Children's Hospital at Montefiore respectively. Dr. Gibson uses she/her pronouns.



## Patient Family Advisor Perspective

By Timna Dulmer

I became a patient family advisor because I knew I could do more to help.

My family started coming to the Transgender Youth Program (TYP) a few years ago after we determined our daughter would need the special care only they could provide. From a young age, our daughter told us in different ways that she was going to need something special to grow into the person she was destined to be. It took time for us all to develop the language we needed to understand what that journey was going to be. As I learned new words, new terms, and new ways to listen, I gained a greater understanding of the depth and variety that make people what they are. It is a complicated landscape. I quickly discovered I needed help to navigate it.

The TYP has been a wonderful resource and has helped my family in so many ways. I asked myself, “How can I do more to help?” My daughter always says that “questions are inevitable” and she is right. But what if you don’t know how to ask? What if you don’t know that you should ask? Being a patient/family advisor lets me help with that. I can draw from my experience and share what I have learned. It allows me to explain things from the patient’s perspective. I can be a resource to help make patient care better. Someone has to go first. Someone has to be willing to put themselves out there. For my daughter, I can do that.

When you see a doctor you should be able to be yourself, your true self. As part of the advisory committee, I want to help find an easier way to record and reference a patient’s preferred pronoun and name. I also want to help providers better understand the importance of using that information. For families beginning their journey with the TYP, their emotions are running every which way. I want to help them arrive for their appointment knowing more about what to expect. We have a great opportunity to leverage video to share information and help first time visitors feel comfortable and supported so they can focus on learning. I look forward to working on these and other projects as a member of the advisory committee.

If I can help one person understand something new, think of something in a way they haven’t before, or bring comfort through greater compassion, I have made a difference. My kids need someone to stand up for them and make the way a little easier, even if it is only for a little while. That’s why I am a patient/family advisor - because I know I can do more to help.

### BECOME A PATIENT FAMILY ADVISOR

Want to make a difference in the development of the Transgender Youth Program? The Transgender Youth Program is seeking [patient/family advisors](#) to bring the patient and family voice and perspective to all aspects of planning and decision making at UVM Medical Center. Our patient/family advisors become part of our team on committees and workgroups designed to improve patient care. If you are interested in learning more or to become a patient/family advisor please email [theresa.emery@uvmhealth.org](mailto:theresa.emery@uvmhealth.org) or [charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org](mailto:charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org)

## Upcoming Events in the Community

Dr. Nancy Gauvin, speech language pathologist, will be offering a voice training workshop for trans folks at the Pride Center of Vermont on April 20 at 6 pm. The event is free, although donations are always appreciated. Contact Sunshine at [sunshine@pridecentervt.org](mailto:sunshine@pridecentervt.org) for more information.

Save the date for The Gayla, hosted by OutrightVT, on June 21 at 6 pm at the UVM Alumni House! An evening of beautiful celebration welcoming community supporters in gratitude for their support of our youth. [www.outrightvt.org/gayla/](http://www.outrightvt.org/gayla/)

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Working Together: UVMCH, School Nurses and Community Partners

On August 21, Transgender Youth Program staff Theresa Emery and Candy Bedard, along with Patient/Family Advisor Timna Dulmer, will be presenting at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Working Together: UVMCH, School Nurses and Community Partners Conference. The conference will focus on bringing together school nurses from across the state and UVM Children's Hospital providers. The Transgender Youth Program workshop will include an overview of transgender health care, including puberty suppression, gender affirming hormones, names, pronouns and other important things for school nurses to consider when supporting transgender students.

## Leadership Day

OutrightVT held a very successful Leadership Day for youth across the state, who met in Montpelier for a day of meeting legislators and the Governor and lobbying for issues that interest them, including testifying on a bill to make all single-stall bathrooms gender-free. Check out this great *Seven Days* article to learn about the amazing work that Vermont youth are doing: <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/OffMessage/archives/2018/03/15/walters-queer-youth-meet-the-governor>

## Camp Outright

**August 19-25, 2018**

**Starksboro VT**

**Apply on April 16** [www.campoutright.org](http://www.campoutright.org)

Join in on Camp Outright, a residential summer camp program for queer, trans, questioning, and allied youth from across the US and beyond. We're stationed at Camp Common Ground in Starksboro, Vermont. As a camper, you'll join other 13- to 17-year-olds for a traditional summer camp experience with a queer twist! Activities are based on your interests and may include things like sports, visual and performing arts, nature exposure activities, and workshops to address social justice issues within the queer, trans, and questioning community. As we grow into 2018 and beyond, Camp Outright is making a commitment to queer youth of color and trans femme youth, making sure that these groups are highly represented among our leadership and camper body. While many sleep-away summer camps cost upwards of \$2,000, families at Camp Outright are invited to pay on a sliding scale of \$650 - \$1,300, depending on what is financially possible. We offer a flexible payment schedule, and all extra funds will be used to provide scholarships. If you need a scholarship, you can apply for one during the application process! Questions? Email [sabrina@outrightvt.org](mailto:sabrina@outrightvt.org).

### Mentor Queer Youth at Camp Outright

**August 17-25, 2018**

Accepting applications for camp counselors and staff ages 20+ for our week-long residential summer camp for queer and allied youth, ages 13-17. QTPOC and trans femmes strongly encouraged to apply! Under 20? Apply for our L.I.T. (Leaders-In-Training) program. Please contact [noa@outrightvt.org](mailto:noa@outrightvt.org).

Apply ASAP: [www.campoutright.org](http://www.campoutright.org)

## TRANSGENDER YOUTH PROGRAM

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To find health information, or for convenient and secure access to your medical record through MyHealth Online, please visit [UVMHealth.org](http://UVMHealth.org) or call us at (844) 886-4325.

If you are interested in learning more or to become a Patient/Family Advisor please email [Theresa.Emery@UVMHealth.org](mailto:Theresa.Emery@UVMHealth.org) or [Charlotte.Safran@UVMHealth.org](mailto:Charlotte.Safran@UVMHealth.org)

**TRANSGENDER YOUTH PROGRAM**

111 Colchester Avenue  
Main Campus  
East Pavilion, Level 4  
Burlington, VT 05401

**CLINIC HOURS**

First Monday afternoon of each month and  
Second Wednesday morning of each month.

**PHONE**

(802) 847-3811

**FAX**

(802) 847-5364

## Support Groups

- Trans Parent Group meets the first Monday of each month at Outright, 6:30 - 8 pm  
<http://www.outrightvt.org/trans-parents/>
- Queer Care Group meets the second Monday of each month at Outright, 6:30 - 8 pm  
<http://www.outrightvt.org/queer-care/>
- Trans Group meets the last Tuesday of each month at Outright, 4:30 - 6 pm  
<http://www.outrightvt.org/trans-group/>
- Gender Creative Kids Group meets the second Sunday of each month at Outright, 2 - 4 pm  
<http://www.outrightvt.org/gender-creative-kids/>
- Check out the OutrightVT [event calendar](#) for ongoing events like Trans Parent Group and Queer Care Group (for parents/caregivers of trans and queer youth).

