



# Black Lives Matter

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## 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

Pediatric Primary Care  
 1 South Prospect Street  
 Level 3  
 Burlington, VT 05401

### CLINIC HOURS

1st Monday of each month, 1-5 pm  
 3rd Wednesday of each month, 9-12 am

### PHONE

(802) 847-3811

### FAX

(802) 847-4812

We have written and rewritten this article several times, trying to come up with the right words to address what is going on in our community, across the nation and throughout the world from our position at the Transgender Youth Program. I want to directly address the continued violence and racism against Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in this country. Racism and transphobia allow violence to be increasingly perpetrated against Black and Brown transgender people, especially Black transgender women. When I hear the names of Nina Pop and Tony McDade, I can't help but worry about all of the youth that we serve, but especially our youth of color. I worry that one day the name in the headlines may be one of our youth. I lay awake thinking about how to keep our youth, their families and our community members safe from the violence in this world.

It can be easy to feel like Vermont is separated from what is going on in the rest of the country, but I know that the people of color in Vermont are also experiencing violence and are deeply impacted by the events across the nation. It is increasingly apparent that there is still so much work to be done to end violence and discrimination in our community and across the nation.

The Coronavirus epidemic has once again shed light on the health disparities experienced by the Black community, with Black people dying at three times the rate of white people. We cannot be fooled that these health disparities only exist within the Coronavirus epidemic. Black, Indigenous and People of Color are continually at higher risk for negative health outcomes. This is not an accident, the medical system is designed to serve white, cis-gendered people and continues to oppress BIPOC. We recognize that, as care providers in the Transgender Youth Program we are part of that medical system.

During this Pride Month, it is important that as service providers, we recognize the role we can play in lifting the voices of our community members and supporting efforts to address racism and end violence.

If you are wondering what steps you can take in the fight for racial equity and to support our BIPOC community members, the following is a list of actionable steps:

**Educate Yourself:** NPR's Code Switch provides a great starting list of books, films and podcasts about racism:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/06/06/871023438/this-list-of-books-films-and-podcasts-about-racism-is-a-start-not-a-panacea>

## Black Lives Matter *(continued from page 1)*

**Attend Trainings:** The Peace and Justice Center of Vermont's Community Calendar lists events and trainings going on across the state of Vermont.

<https://www.pjcv.org/community-calendar/>

**Donate to Black Led Organizations:** Below is a list of some of the Black LGBTQ+ organizations that I have personally researched; however I encourage you to also research and donate to Black LGBTQ+ organizations that resonate with you.

- Black Visions Collective - <https://www.blackvisionsmn.org/>
- Marsha P. Johnson Institute - <https://marshap.org/>
- National Black Justice Coalition - <http://nbjc.org/get-involved>
- Center for Black Equity - <https://centerforblackequity.org/>

**If you are white, use your platform and privilege as a white person** to uplift the voices of Black and Brown people in your community. Critically look at the systems that you work in to start to dismantle systemic racism and oppression. Listen to what the Black, Indigenous and People of Color are saying is important to them and amplify their voices.

**Talk to your kids about racism:** Check out the collection of resources on the website *Anti-Racism Resources for All Ages* (<https://padlet.com/nicolethelibrarian/nbasekqoazt336co>), created by Dr. Nicole Cooke at the University of South Carolina.

We stand with the #BlackLivesMatter movement and will continue to work to fight racism in our lives and our work here at the Transgender Youth Program.

### PRIVATE CAREGIVERS FACEBOOK GROUP



## Caregivers of Trans Youth Facebook Page

Want to get connected to other caregivers of trans youth? Consider joining the Trans Youth Program Advisory Council's closed Facebook group for caregivers. It is our hope that this social media platform supports parents and caregivers of trans youth in connecting with one another: we encourage you to ask questions, share stories, and revel in the successes and challenges that come with all the light and joy of raising children. (Please speak to the youth in your care about joining this group to honor their confidentiality!) Please [click on this link](#) to request to join the group.

## The Transgender Youth Program Stands Against LGBTQ+ Discrimination in Health Care

My heart sank when I first saw the news that the federal government has finalized a ruling that actively allows discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in health care. The new rule (<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/06/12/hhs-finalizes-rule-section-1557-protecting-civil-rights-healthcare.html>)

defines sex as either male or female, unchangeable and only to be determined based on chromosomes and perceived genitalia at the time of birth. This definition denies transgender and intersex people their existence within our society and denies that gender and sex are not binary, but are based on a multitude of factors regardless of someone's chromosomes or genitalia. This policy will make it easier for medical providers, hospitals and insurance companies to deny care or coverage to transgender and nonbinary patients. This rule serves to systematically oppress and prevent LGBTQ+ people accessing their health care rights.

The ruling comes at a critical time when so many in America are fighting to save their lives and against oppression through racial justice work. It also comes on the anniversary of the horrific Orlando Florida Pulse Massacre. The timing further highlights for me the need to continue to protect LGBTQ rights and health care. LGBTQ+ people, and particularly LGBTQ+ people of color, experience increased health disparities, and already have decreased access to health care. This new rule would further increase these disparities and issues regarding access and would allow for insurance companies and health care agencies to actively discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

The Transgender Youth Program is founded on creating a place of acceptance, education and support for each of our patients and their families. We commit to continuing to provide supportive and excellent care to our transgender youth. We commit to fighting for access to care for our patients and community members. We will continue to provide and protect care for LGBTQ+ people.

We understand that this federal government rule and other political actions have negatively impacted and continue to impact our community. If you are experiencing crisis, please call [The Trevor Project's](#) lifeline at 1-866-488-7386 or visit their website to connect through other forms of media (text, chat room, social networking).

Each individual patient is important and their story is unique and valid. We will always work to assist our youth to live their authentic lives and thrive in our community. We are committed to making sure that your voices, your personhood and the brightness that you bring to this world will not be erased.

Health care leaders across Vermont, including UVM Medical Center, have affirmed their commitment to providing care without discrimination to members of the LGBTQ+ community. [Read the full statement on page 7.](#)

## Supreme Court Ruling Protects LGBTQ+ People in the Workforce

On Monday, June 15, the Supreme Court ruled ([https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618\\_hfci.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618_hfci.pdf)) employers are prohibited from firing LGBTQ+ workers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is a huge victory for LGBTQ+ employees across the nation.

Protecting LGBTQ+ people in the workforce is a bright light in the continued fight for equality. This ruling will serve to protect employees across the nation, a protection that until Monday was not guaranteed by almost half of the states.

It is comforting to know that our youth can enter the workforce and be protected from discrimination based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. There is still work to be done to obtain equal rights for LGBTQ+ people, however this is an important step towards achieving equality and acceptance throughout the nation.



If you wish to send Dr. Mehringer a farewell message, please email Theresa at:

[Theresa.emery@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Theresa.emery@uvmhealth.org)

## Farewell from Jamie Mehringer, MD

Dear TYP Youth and Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and well during this time of great stress and upheaval in the world. As you may have heard, I've had to step down from my position at the UVM TYP. I unfortunately didn't know this would be the case until quite recently so regretfully I never had the chance to share this news with you in person nor to tell you how much our work together has meant to me.

Some of you may know that I have been completing a fellowship in adolescent medicine at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for the past several years while continuing to work per-diem at TYP. This fellowship gave me the opportunity to develop even further skills and expertise in gender-affirming care of trans youth. I'll be completing my fellowship this summer and, unfortunately, as much as I would love to return to UVM Children's Hospital, there is not an available position for me. I've recently accepted a faculty position at the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY, where I'll be seeing patients at the Golisano Children's Hospital/ University of Rochester Medical Center.

I want you to know that it has truly been an honor to work with you and to serve as your provider these past several years. As a member of the trans community myself, one of my missions has been to try to help make life a little easier for the next generations of trans folks. Around 2014, Dr. Drawdy and I began meeting to discuss a wild idea of developing Vermont's first clinic dedicated to serving the needs of trans and gender-diverse children and adolescents. We went out into the community, heard the need, and forged ahead. I am so glad that we did, as the program that grew gave me the opportunity to work with YOU: some of the most thoughtful, driven, insightful, and resilient young people I have ever met, and families who demonstrate the power of unconditional love and support. Thank you so much for trusting me in your care, and for all you have taught me in our work together. Please believe in your strength and resilience! I wish you well, and truly hope that our paths will cross again someday.



## Welcome Wendy Bliss, RN

The Transgender Youth Program is excited to announce the hiring of our new Nurse Coordinator, Wendy Bliss, RN. Wendy joined the TYP team in March at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and has been working with the rest of the team closely to ensure that the needs of our youth continue to be met throughout the pandemic.

A little about Wendy: "I received my BSN degree from University of Vermont in May of 1994. I worked as a registered nurse at a home health agency outside of Boston MA before moving back to Vermont and joining the VNA here in Colchester. I look forward to my work at the Transgender Youth Program, where I will be working part time. I live in Williston with my husband and three children. On my off time, I enjoy knitting, reading and watching my kids' sports teams."

## COVID-19 Statement

By Libby McDonald

Like the rest of the world, the Transgender Youth Program had to quickly pivot the way we provide care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We swiftly learned to provide care in new ways. We were able to transition our patient visits to all Telehealth for March, April and much of May. It has been a learning curve, but we have found it very rewarding to be able to virtually connect with our patients and to meet the many new patients and families. Although we've had to do some creative care, we are happy to say that we have not had to delay this important care due to the pandemic. We greatly appreciate the flexibility our families have had while we've adjusted. Our clinic has worked hard to ensure that our office continues to be a safe place for patients to visit, and we are seeing patients both in office and through telehealth. If you have any questions about the specific measures we are taking, don't hesitate to give our office a call!

## Become a Patient and Family Advisor for the Transgender Youth Program

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: [charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org](mailto:charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org)

## Become a Foster Parent

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.





## Staying Connected with Outright Vermont

### Physical Distancing Programs Directory

It's no secret that these are strange times. In a matter of weeks, our lives - and this world as we know it - have shifted radically. The ways we can show up for each other have changed, but the focus of Outright remains the same: **to build hope, equity, and power for Vermont's LGBTQ+ youth, and to nurture families and communities where they can thrive.** We've even learned some new tricks along the way. We're using the power of this new technological landscape to connect with more youth in rural areas of Vermont and to try new ways of celebrating and connecting with one another.

**Below is a list of our regular programming and how you can join in.** We're so excited to see you in person again and offer a high five. Until then, Zoom it is! We can't wait to see you there. **Heck Yeah!**

#### Drop-in

*Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-3:00*

Our weekly drop-in hours have changed to be accessible to more youth. Drop-in activities change each week: sometimes we're having a DIY spa day, sometimes we're doodling, sometimes it's trivia. Drop us a line to learn the theme - or just show up for a surprise!

**On Zoom** - email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org) for a link!

#### Friday Night Group

*Fridays 6:30-8:00*

Friday Night Group has gone Zoom! FNG is a weekly peer support group. All LGBTQ-identified youth between the ages of 13 and 22 are welcome to join Friday Night Group anytime - no need to sign up in advance.

**On Zoom** - email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org) for a link!

#### Trans Group

*Last Tuesday of every month, 4:30-6:00*

Trans Group is open to anyone who is trans identified, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or questioning their gender identity and looking for a space to be in community with others who share this identity.

**On Zoom** - email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org) for a link!

#### Trans Parent Group

*First Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00*

This support group, facilitated by a local therapist, is for adult caregivers and family members of trans, gender queer, gender non-conforming, or gender creative youth.

**On Zoom** - email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org) for a link!

#### Panorama

*Second Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00*

Panorama is a group for parents, caregivers and adult family members of queer and/or questioning youth to ask questions, talk about your experiences and get support. Panorama is facilitated by a clinical mental health professional.

**On Zoom** - email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org) for a link!

#### Gender Creative Kids

*Temporarily on hold*

This is a social group for kids under 13 and their parents/caregivers. Unfortunately, because of the difficulty of translating this format to an online space, Gender Creative Kids is temporarily on hold. For more information, email [info@outrightvt.org](mailto:info@outrightvt.org)!

*For more information on these groups, please click on the underlined links above.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 22, 2020  
CONTACT: Mike Fisher | Chief Health Care Advocate  
Vermont Legal Aid  
mfisher@vtlegalaid.org | (802) 989-9806



## Health Care Leaders: LGBTQ Discrimination has no place in Vermont

As leaders in Vermont's health care system, we are committed to providing care and services without discrimination, regardless of who you are and who you love. Vermont's hospitals, providers, health care professionals, and insurers will not change our practices based on new federal guidance that attempts to strip protections from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people.

Every LGBTQ Vermonter must be able to access health care without fear of discrimination. Vermont law protects LGBTQ people from discrimination in health care today, and Vermont's health care community stands united against this discrimination.

Along with our continued commitment to provide care and services without discrimination, we recommit to improving the ways we serve the LGBTQ community.

If you do experience health care discrimination or other issues accessing care, you have resources:

- You can contact the Pride Center of Vermont's SafeSpace Anti-Violence Program during office hours at 802-863-0003 or by emailing [safespace@pridecentervt.org](mailto:safespace@pridecentervt.org). The SafeSpace Anti-Violence Program's mission is to end violence and discrimination in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected (LGBTQ+) people in Vermont.
- You can contact the Department of Financial Regulation by phone at 833-DFR-HOTLINE or by email at [dfr.insuranceinfo@vermont.gov](mailto:dfr.insuranceinfo@vermont.gov). DFR is committed to ensuring Vermonters, especially those in marginalized and vulnerable communities, have access to medically necessary care.
- You can contact the Health Care Advocate HelpLine by phone at 800-917-778 or by email at [HCA@vtlegalaid.org](mailto:HCA@vtlegalaid.org). The Office of the Health Care Advocate is a free resource available to help everyone in Vermont solve problems related to health care, including health insurance and health care access.

Signed,

**AIDS Project of Southern Vermont**

Karen Peterson | Executive Director  
apsv@sover.net | 802-254-8263

**Bi-State Primary Care Association**

Georgia Maheras | VP Policy & Strategy

gmaheras@bistatepca.org | 857-234-5171

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont**

Sara Teachout | Director of Government and Media Relations  
teachouts@bcbsvt.com | 802-371-3254

**Department of Financial Regulation**

Michael S. Pieciak | Commissioner  
Michael.Pieciak@Vermont.Gov | 802-828-2380

**HealthFirst Independent Practice Association**

Susan Ridzon | Executive Director  
contact@vermonthealthfirst.org, 802-878-8811

**HIV/HCV Resource Center**

Laura Byrne | Executive Director

**Office of the Health Care Advocate**

Mike Fisher | Chief Health Care Advocate  
mfisher@vtlegalaid.org | 800-917-7787

**Planned Parenthood of Northern New England**

Lucy Leriche | VP Vermont Public Affairs, PPNNE  
Lucy.Leriche@ppnne.org | 802-598-4182

**Recovery House, Inc.**

Chadd Viger | CEO

**The University of Vermont Medical Center**

Stephen Leffler, MD | President & Chief Operating Officer  
Stephen.Leffler@uvmhealth.org

**Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems**

Jeff Tieman | President and Chief Executive Officer  
Jocelyn@VAHHS.org | 802-355-0915

**Vermont Association of Naturopathic Physicians**

Dr Joshua Green | President  
DrJoshuaDGreen@Gmail.com

**Vermont Care Partners**

Julie Tessler | Co-Executive Director  
julie@vermontcarepartners.org | 802-279-0464

**Vermont CARES**

Peter Jacobsen | Executive Director



peter@vtcares.org | 802-863-2437

**Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics**

Steven Maier | Executive Director  
director@vtfreeclinics.org | 802-448-4280

**Vermont Long-Term Care Ombudsman Project**

Sean Londergan | State Long-Term Care Ombudsman  
slondergan@vtlegalaid.org | 802-383-2227

**Vermont Medical Society**

Jessa Barnard | Executive Director  
jbarnard@vtmd.org

**Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.**

Catherine E. Fulton | Executive Director  
catherinef@vpqhc.org | 802-229-2449

**VNAs of Vermont**

Jill Mazza Olson | Executive Director  
jill@vnavt.org | 802-249-8491