

Greater support needed for pregnant transgender men

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Many transgender men who have the capacity to bear children are faced with barriers in the healthcare system as a result of a lack of training, argue Juno Obedin-Maliver and Harvey Makadon in a commentary published in SAGE journal *Obstetric Medicine*.

In recent years, transgender people have experienced significant advances in [social acceptance](#) which has led many organizations to look at their policies, programs, and [educational materials](#) to ensure that work with their sphere is both affirmative and inclusive. While programs that provide [health care](#) for transgender people have grown in recent years, the healthcare system has failed to adapt to address this need, as the researchers explain:

"This leaves many health professionals unprepared to provide quality care, with many needing to "catch up" or refer (possibly delaying care) to someone else, when a transgender person presents for care."

Many transgender men have the capacity to bear children but medicine as a whole has not incorporated [gender diversity](#) into routine care. This, coupled with news reports covering the pregnancies of transgender men sensationalizing what should be a personal experience, results in a harmful experience, one that can lead to increased [experiences](#) of gender dysphoria. As the researchers note:

"What becomes clear from qualitative study and more generalized experience caring for transgender people, is that a positive psychological

outcome will depend on the experience someone has from the moment they first present for care and depends on the total experience from beginning to end being inclusive and affirmative."

Healthcare providers and staff are often unaccustomed to caring for any transgender people, let alone ones who may be pregnant, which results in obstructions in the vital care transgender men need during pregnancy.

The researchers conclude that:

"All staff from the front line receptionists to clinicians will need training to understand why gender affirming policies and behaviors are important. [...] Every health care system needs to introspectively examine how they can comprehensively meet the needs of the gender diversity we have amongst our patients and community."

More information: "Transgender men and Pregnancy", *Obstetric Medicine*, 2015.

Provided by SAGE Publications

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