

Improving healthcare for transgender immigrants and refugees

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: Oral Presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: OPHA attendees, health care managers and providers, community advocates, professional health educators

ABSTRACT:

Background: Transgender Immigrants and refugees have sometimes experienced violent persecution in their native countries and now face discrimination in Oregon due to their gender identity. This struggle is in addition to the numerous barriers to health common for many refugees and immigrants including the stress of language barriers, uncertain employment and housing, and social isolation. Studies show high rates of suicidality, depression and anxiety amongst transgender people. And while peer support is shown to be a significant protective factor, this may be unavailable to newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Transgender immigrants and refugees may struggle from a dual marginalization, as immigrant and refugee spaces are not necessarily responsive to transgender issues, just as transgender spaces do not necessarily address the needs of immigrants and refugees. Goals: Define high-quality transgender care, explore the care at clinics that primarily serve immigrants and refugees, and identify areas for improvement. Methods: In addition to extensive literature search, we conducted key informant interviews with transgender healthcare experts, community activists, service agencies, and transgender refugees. Conclusions: Our recommendations involve inclusive practices at primary care clinics, changes in the electronic medical records, education for medical clinic and social service agency staff, education about testosterone therapy, improved practice in assignment of interpreters, trans inclusive environments and developing tool kits in multiple languages to inform transgender refugees and immigrants of their rights and resources.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Participants will identify multiple barriers to achieving health and well being for transgender immigrants and refugees.
- Participants will identify multiple opportunities to improve the health care and health care experience of transgender immigrants and refugees.
- Participants will discuss the social justice and public health impact involved with this issue.

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