



# TGHC Module 1

## Introduction to Policy Guidance and Concepts in Transgender Healthcare

**Presented by members of the Transgender  
Education and Training Work Group**

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# Learning Objectives



- Describe current DoD policy guidance related to transgender healthcare
- Define key terms and concepts related to sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and transgender
- Describe common medical treatments for the treatment of gender dysphoria



# Transgender Policy



On June 30, 2016, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced that transgender individuals will now be able to openly serve in the U.S. armed forces.



# DoD Policies Related to Transgender Healthcare



- Directive-type Memorandum (DTM) 16-005, “Military Service of Transgender Service members,” June 30, 2016
- Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1300.28, In-Service Transition for Transgender Service Members
- Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD (HA)) Memorandum, “Guidance for Treatment of Gender Dysphoria for Active Duty Service Members,” July 29, 2016
- Interim Procedures Memorandum (IPM) 16-00x, Guidance for Medical Care of Transgender Active Duty Service Members with a Diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria (pending)
- TRICARE Policy Manual, Chapter 7, Section 1.2, “Gender Dysphoria”, September 6, 2016



# DTM 16-005 Military Service of Transgender (TG) Service Members



- ❑ Allows transgender individuals to serve in the military if they meet standards for military service and readiness
- ❑ Allows open service by transgender Service members while being subject to the same standards and procedures as other members with regard to their medical fitness for duty, physical fitness, uniform and grooming, deployability, and retention
- ❑ Establishes policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for the standards for retention, separation, in-service transition, and medical coverage for transgender personnel serving in the Military Services



# DoDI 1300.28 In-Service Transition for Transgender Service Members



- Establishes a construct by which transgender Service members may transition gender while serving
- Enumerates prerequisites and prescribes procedures for changing a Service member's gender marker in DEERS
- *Specifies medical treatment provisions for Active Component and Reserve Component transgender Service members*
- Implements policies and procedures in Directive-type Memorandum 16-005

*“Gender transition begins when a Service member receives a diagnosis from a military medical provider indicating that gender transition is medically necessary, and concludes when the Service member’s gender marker in DEERS is changed and the member is recognized in the preferred gender.”*



# ASD (HA) Memo Guidance for Treatment of Gender Dysphoria for Active Duty Service Members



- ❑ MHS will provide medically necessary care for Service members on active duty for a period of more than 30 days
- ❑ MHS is to provide an interdisciplinary team approach to transition care in accordance with evidence-based guidelines and practices
- ❑ HA memo outlines the medical care requirements and the medical training and education requirements



# Interim Procedures Memorandum (IPM) 16-00x Guidance for Medical Care of Transgender Active Duty Service Members with a Diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria



- Establishes a singular Military Health System (MHS) guidance for the provision of medically necessary care for transgender (TG) Service members.
  
- Requires that quality TG care incorporates an interdisciplinary approach by a skilled team or Transgender Care Team (TGCT) with expertise in TG care that is located in Service-designated medical treatment facilities (MTFs)
  - Establish or validate the formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria for a Service member, and
  - Develop or validate an individual transition plan.





# TRICARE Policy Manual, Chapter 7

## Section 1.2 Gender Dysphoria



- TRICARE will cover hormone therapy and psychological counseling for gender dysphoria.
  
- Surgery remains prohibited by statute and is not a covered benefit for dependent beneficiaries.
  - Active Duty Service member (ADSM) Supplemental Health Care Program waiver is required for ADSM surgical treatment.



# Definition of Terms: Sex and Sexual Orientation



- **Sex** refers to a person's biological status assigned at birth, also referred to as natal sex, and is categorized as male, female, or intersex (i.e., combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female). There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and primary and secondary sex characteristics.
  - In the past, sex was primarily viewed in a strictly binary fashion (i.e., male or female). Intersex is a variation.
  - In everyday language sex and gender are often used interchangeably; however, there are differences which become important when discussing transgender healthcare.
  
- **Sexual orientation** describes sexual attraction. It is NOT directly related to gender identity.
  - For transgender individuals, sexual orientation may be described based on the lived gender (e.g., a transgender woman attracted to another woman may describe herself as a lesbian).



# Definition of Terms: Gender and Gender Identity



- **Gender** refers to the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits that a society associates with male and female sex
  - Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations for the assigned natal sex is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity
  
- **Gender expression** refers to the outward manner in which a person expresses their gender. This may include choices in hairstyle, clothing, speech or mannerisms.
  - Gender identity and gender expression may differ (e.g. a woman [transgender or non-transgender], may have an androgynous appearance, or a man may have a feminine appearance). (UCSF Guideline, 2016)
  
- **Gender identity** refers to how a person feels inside regarding the assigned gender at birth. Gender identity refers to “one’s sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender.” (American Psychological Association, 2006)



# Definition of Terms: Transgender



- **Transgender** is a person whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned at birth; also known as natal sex.
  - May be abbreviated as “trans”
- **Transgender man** is a person with a male gender identity and a female birth assigned sex/natal sex.
- **Transgender woman** is a person with a female gender identity and a male birth assigned sex/natal sex.
- **Transexual** is an older term for transgender people who sought medical treatment. This term is used less frequently today.
- **Non-transgender person** is a person whose gender identity is congruent with their birth assigned sex/natal sex. Also known as “cisgender”, which in Latin means same side.



# Common Treatments and Procedures



- Medical/Surgical interventions
  - It should be noted that some individuals may not engage in any sort of medical intervention and instead opt solely for “social transition” without medical intervention
  - Hormone therapy is currently the primary medical intervention sought by transgender individuals
  - Sex reassignment surgery (also known as gender confirming surgery) is a selected intervention for some and is usually done at Centers of Excellence in TG healthcare.
- Mental health care
  - Gender-affirming psychotherapy is recommended by the American Psychological Association and is primarily composed of the provision of support and specific cognitive behavioral skills to manage social transition
  - Co-occurring disorders such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, or substance use disorders may also be addressed, as appropriate, via evidence based treatment modalities.
- Real Life Experience (RLE)
  - RLE is a component of the transition process that involves living and interacting with others in a variety of settings, in the gender role that is congruent with the person’s gender identity. RLE is important to psychological adjustment and support from a mental health professional can be useful.



# In Conclusion



- Knowledge of DoD instructional and interim policy guidance will help promote high quality transgender healthcare services
- Knowledge and use of the proper terminology for caring for transgender individuals promotes patient centered care
- Common treatments and procedures include supportive psychotherapy and gender affirming hormone therapy



# Questions?





# References



- Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People. Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, University of California, San Francisco, 17 June 2016.
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