



News & Views

*Parents, Families, Friends, Allies & Members of the
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Gender
Non-conforming Community*

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2016 Trans* Health Conference Conference educates about trans* health care



The Brown Daily Herald (Brown University), RI, USA— Rhode Island College hosted the 2016 Trans* Health Conference Jan. 30, offering presentations throughout the day to over 350 physicians, nurses, mental health care providers, medical students and trans* attendees.

Within the doctor's office and in greater society, people who are trans* — a term that encompasses people who identify as transgender, transsexual, non-binary, agender and other identities — are sometimes perceived as "zoo animals," said Dr. Scout, who delivered the keynote address. As the director of LGBT HealthLink at CenterLink, he oversees more than 180 LGBTQ community centers. Often, the largest issues arise for trans* people before they enter the health care system, he added.

He spoke about the state of trans* health care in Rhode Island and around the country, covering topics including suicide hotline protocols, gendered bathroom policies and the understanding and treatment of the trans* population.

"We know that stigma and discrimination take a really active toll on your health, and so (does) the level of social exclusion," Scout told The Herald.

The suicide rate within the trans* community is especially high — more than half of transgender youths will attempt suicide before age 20, according to the Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

Early on in their lives, many trans* people face a "live-or-die scenario," Scout added.

Doctor visits can be a particularly stressful experience for trans* people — if they can even find a local doctor welcoming trans* patients. "Most of us literally have to educate our doctors around trans* care," Scout told The Herald.

The conference followed the creation of a Trans* Health Access Team in 2015 at Rhode Island's Thundermist Health Center that doubled the number of trans* health care providers in the state, said Jayeson Watts, manager of the program.

This year's event, the second annual trans* health conference, featured three tracks for participants: one for medical providers, one for mental health providers and one for community members.

Medical providers attended presentations like "Legal Transitions and Advocacy" and "Gender Expressive Youth," among other seminars which taught sensitive treatment of trans* patients.

The conference aimed to "improve the health and well-being of transgender folks by increasing capacity on the mental health and health care level," said Fadya El Rayess, assistant professor of family medicine and member of the planning committee for the conference. "What we hope is that by having many providers become comfortable taking care of transgender people, it would just be a routine part of primary care," she added.

"Having learned a little bit more about gender care helped me take care of everybody," said Michelle Forcier, associate professor of pediatrics. "It's our ethical obligation to make sure kids know they can get help and support."

Doctors, like many members of the public, may not be aware of the number of trans* people around them. "We all know people who are trans, they just may not be identifying themselves to us," said Tim Cavanaugh, medical director of the transgender health program at Fenway Health.

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Parents, Families, Friends and Allies United with LGBT People to Move Equality Forward

Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To support parents on their journey to understand and accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children; and to help children, of whatever age, to understand and come out into loving relationships with their families;

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public,

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

PFLAG is a volunteer grass-roots, tax-exempt, non-profit organization, not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of all members of the LGBTQ community, but we are much more than that. Those who identify as gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender, or gender non-conforming are also encouraged to attend our meetings., with or without their family members. Parents and friends may come with or without their loved ones who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Confidentiality is assured.

PFLAG/Greater Providence

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**WE'RE
HERE
FOR YOU!**

news from our chapter



Chapter Membership Renewal Reminder

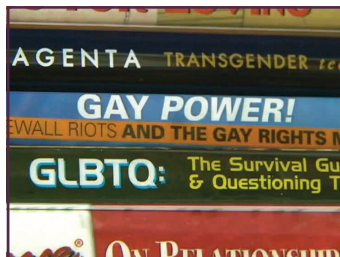
It is members like you who keep our Chapter operating. We wouldn't be able to hold our monthly support meetings without your continuing membership in our Chapter. Our primary source of revenue is from your annual tax-deductible memberships and donations at our monthly meetings. So for that, we are truly grateful!

As a reminder, we have changed how our membership renewals are processed. We are now renewing memberships on a single date, May 1st of every year, regardless of the date that you first joined our Chapter. So be aware that you will be receiving a renewal notice some time prior to May 1 to renew your membership. PLEASE DO NOT RENEW THROUGH PFLAG NATIONAL as that is NOT renewing your membership with the Greater Providence Chapter. We receive no dues from PFLAG National; however, we do send them a portion of the dues you send to our Chapter to maintain our affiliation with the national PFLAG organization. Please note that we have also slightly increased our dues from last year. The amounts effective January 1, 2016 are \$40 for a household membership, \$30 for an individual membership, and \$20 for a student/limited income membership.

If you have any questions about your membership or donating to our Greater Providence Chapter, please contact us at pflagprovidence@gmail.com or by phone at (401) 307-1802.

Read Any Good Books Lately?

Our Chapter's lending library is in need of replenishment. If you have borrowed any of our books



over the last few months, we hope you will return them soon. If you still need to finish reading them, just let us know you still have the book and intend to return it soon. You can do that by sending us an email at pflagprovidence@gmail.com. Just tell us the title and author of the book along with your name so we can make note of who has the book.

Also if you have read a good book about LGBTQ issues and no longer need it, you can donate it to our PFLAG Chapter as a tax-deductible donation. It's a Win-Win situation! You get a tax deduction and less clutter; and we get to lend your book to someone who may greatly benefit from reading it! Again, contact us at the email address above if you have any books you would like to donate. You can either bring them to one of our monthly meetings or we can discuss other arrangements via email.

Can't Make Our PFLAG Meetings at The MET School? You Now Have Options!

As much as we love having everyone attend our **PFLAG Greater Providence Chapter** meetings at The MET School the first Wednesday of the month, we know that sometimes life interferes and that date just does not work for you. However, we have two other fledgling PFLAG groups whose meeting dates and times may work for you.

We are also testing a 2nd meeting location for our PFLAG chapter in West Warwick that meets on the **third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at St. Therese Old Catholic Church, 1500 Main Street, West Warwick, RI**. Our chapter is working jointly with Rev. David Martins, pastor of St. Therese Old Catholic Church and Damascus LGBT Ministeries to serve families needing support in Kent County. Their next meeting will be on **February 18th**.

There is also a new **Attleboro PFLAG** group that meets on the **third Wednesday of the month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.** It is lead

by two of our Providence chapter's board members: **Joe and Dianne Ordog**. They meet at the **Second Congregational Church, UCC, 50 Park Street Attleboro, MA** to provide support to families living in that area.



Dianne and Joe Ordog, PFLAG

If you have any questions about these two groups, please contact us at pflagprovidence@gmail.com or at (401) 307-1802.



Providence Receives Perfect Score in Equality Survey

PROVIDENCE, RI - The Human Rights Campaign recognized the City of Providence for its commitment to equality by awarding a perfect score in its Municipal Equality Index on December 17, 2015.

"I am proud of the work that our City has done to become a leader on LGBT issues," said Mayor Jorge Elorza. "From designating all-gender restrooms in city buildings to making our healthcare policy more inclusive, I am committed to sending a strong message that Providence welcomes and values all of its employees and residents, regardless of who they love or how they identify."

Providence is among 47 cities nationally and the only city in Rhode Island receiving a perfect score. Scores are based upon a number of criteria including: non-discrimination laws, municipal services, practices as an employer, law enforcement, and the relationship between the LGBT community and city.

"This Administration embraces its lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender residents and I am proud of all that Providence has done to support them," said Deputy Chief of Staff Marisa O'Gara, whom Mayor Elorza appointed the Administration LGBT Community Liaison earlier in 2015.

"It's a true privilege to work alongside a Mayor who has been an incredible advocate and leader for the LGBT community, a community of which I am proud to be a member. We have more work in front of us, but today is a day to celebrate our City," continued O'Gara.

The decision recognized several initiatives the Administration has implemented in the past year including instituting more inclusive healthcare policies for City employees and designating all-gender restrooms in City buildings.

Credit: www.providenceri.com, December 17, 2015

Transgender Youth Family Health Study

A research study is being conducted to understand more about the experiences of transgender youth and their families. Participants in this study will complete a one-time survey and audio-recorded interview about family relationships, stress, social support, and transgender youths' health and health behaviors.



You are eligible to participate in this study if you live in New England and are:

- *Age 13-17 years and identify with a different gender from your assigned sex at birth (transgender)

- *A sibling, age 13 years or older, of a transgender youth

- *A parent/caregiver, age 18 years or older, of a transgender youth

- *A person, age 13 years or older, who is nominated to participate in the study by a transgender youth

To be included, transgender youth must participate with at least one other family member or a nominated individual. Family members and nominated individuals must participate with a transgender youth. Study sessions will take place at Boston Children's Hospital, at the participant's home, or at another location where the participant feels comfortable participating.

For study sessions at Boston Children's Hospital, participants will be reimbursed for transportation and parking. Each participant will receive a \$20 gift card for completing the study.

For more information, please contact the research team at: youthfamilystudy@childrens.harvard.edu or by phone at (617) 919-4594.

This research study has been approved by the Boston Children's Hospital IRB.

Transgender Oral History Project

URI Providence Campus Arts and Culture is continuing to gather

Oral Histories, stories from young and old in our community exploring issues around gender identity to become an archive of information and also to share the stories in a full realized performance. Our hope is to continue the education and dialogue about the issues and experiences of people in our Trans* community.

Fifteen stories were gathered last year from which several stories were shared in a work-in-progress performance last July. The plan is to gather more interviews from people in the local Trans Community. The stories shared will be audio recorded. The information can be open or kept anonymous (if the individual wishes it to be), they will be transcribed and become an available resource for education and understanding. The creator of this project, Steven Pennell, will then create a performance work (a play) to share some of these stories at the URI Providence Campus where he curates exhibits and creates performances on topics of diversity and social justice. It is his hope to have members of the Trans* community present the stories in performance and potentially to tour the play in the community to



increase awareness and understanding.

This is the 10th such project he has undertaken on various topics over the last 20 years, including the Rhode Island LGBTQ Oral History Project in 2010-2012 which culminated in more than 100 taped and transcribed interviews and the play, *THE JOURNEY OUT* by Frank V. Toti, Jr. which was presented with great success at URI Providence Campus and then toured around the region including high school performances seen by hundreds of people.

Please contact Steven Pennell at uri.artsandculture@gmail.com if you would like more information or would like to share your story.



Become a PFLAG Volunteer!

"We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give."—Winston Churchill

Our PFLAG chapter operates with an all-volunteer Board of Directors who are dedicated to fulfilling the mission of PFLAG for its members.

We hope to grow and expand our outreach in Rhode Island, but we need your help to do so. Some forms of help are short and simple—like signing up to bring refreshments to one of our support meetings, picking up some of our new brochures to distribute in businesses and doctors' offices you frequent, or helping us plan for Pride Fest and the Pride parade in June.

Other types of volunteering may involve a longer commitment, such as serving on a committee or serve as a speaker as part of our education and outreach efforts.

We are also looking for someone to take over the design and production of this newsletter. Right now we publish every other month. If anyone is interested in taking on this task or volunteering for any of the above needs, please contact us at pflagprovidence@gmail.com.

Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook www.Facebook.com/PFLAGGreaterProvidence, RI and "Follow" us on Twitter [@PFLAGProvRI](https://twitter.com/PFLAGProvRI).

Federal Agency Urges Court To Include Sexual Orientation Under Sex Discrimination Ban

The federal agency charged with enforcing existing civil rights laws has urged a federal appeals court to rule that sexual orientation discrimination is a form of sex discrimination and therefore illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

In a filing at the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals on January 6th, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission wrote that "sexual orientation discrimination is sex discrimination, and such sex discrimination violates Title VII."

In supporting the appeal of Barbara Burrows, whose lawsuit against the College of Central Florida was tossed out by a trial court judge, the EEOC wrote, "The district court's treatment of sexual orientation discrimination as distinct from sex discrimination is untenable and based on a fundamentally flawed premise."

The move is the latest step from the EEOC and advocates in an effort to protect LGBT people from discrimination under existing civil rights law.

A series of EEOC rulings and court cases have aimed to provide protection to transgender people through rulings that gender identity is covered under Title VII, as well as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. A second set of rulings and cases, including Burrows's case, has focused on providing protection to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people through rulings that sexual orientation is covered under Title VII and Title IX.

The EEOC ruled in July 2015 that "allegations of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation necessarily state a claim of discrimination on the basis of sex" barred by Title VII. That ruling, while applicable to federal agencies and in the EEOC's own work, is not binding on federal courts. The move in Burrows's case is an attempt to get federal courts to affirm its interpretation of the law.

In explaining its argument in Burrows's case, the commission wrote Wednesday that there are three reasons that sexual orientation discrimination should be covered by existing laws against sex discrimination.

First, the EEOC argues, sexual orientation discrimination necessarily involves gender stereotyping, which the Supreme Court has repeatedly said is banned under Title VII. "[A]n employer who discriminates because of an employee's homosexuality necessarily discriminates because of that employee's failure to conform to a gender-based stereotype: the stereotype of opposite-sex attraction," the EEOC's lawyers write.

Second, it argues, sexual orientation discrimination is a type of associational discrimination, which also violates Title VII. "If a plain-

tiff is in a relationship with someone of the same sex, and an adverse employment consequence results from that relationship, discrimination has occurred 'because of [the plaintiff's] ... sex,' in violation of Title VII," the EEOC lawyers argue in the brief.

Finally, and most basically, the EEOC argues that sexual orientation discrimination is, definitionally, a type of sex discrimination. "[S]exual orientation discrimination is also inherently sex-based discrimination because sexual orientation cannot be understood without reference to an individual's sex (in conjunction with the sex of those to whom the individual is physically and/or emotionally attracted)."

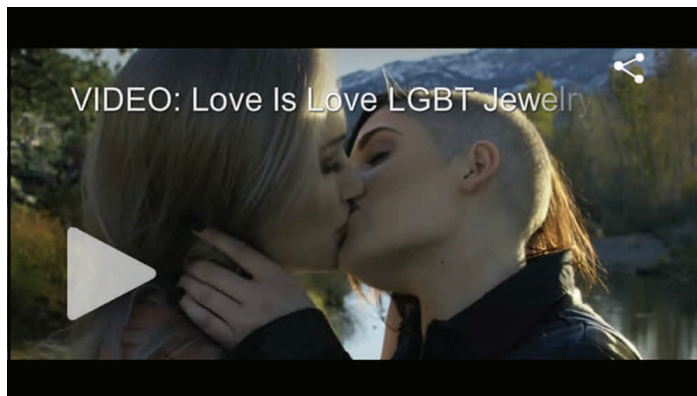
As the commission lawyers conclude, "[S]exual orientation discrimination necessarily requires impermissible consideration of sex. It should therefore be held illegal under Title VII."

In December, a federal judge in California agreed with the EEOC's interpretation of the issue, finding that sexual orientation discrimination is covered under the sex discrimination ban in Title IX.

The Justice Department formally supported the EEOC's position as to gender identity at the end of 2014. Since then, Justice has taken that position in a handful of court cases, through the filing of statements of interest or amicus curiae briefs in cases from Texas to Virginia.

The Justice Department has not, however, weighed in yet on the sexual orientation question at issue in Burrows's case.

Credit: Chris Geidner, www.buzzfeed.com, January 6, 2016.



Jeweler's commercial features same-sex couple

Reno local jeweler BVW Jewelers' new commercial depicting two women getting engaged has been playing on local TV stations and in movie theaters and drawing great attention.

The commercial shows a same-sex couple riding through Reno in a Mercedes-Benz. Then one woman proposes to another on the Crystal Peak Toll Bridge overlooking the Truckee River.

The ad mostly airs during commercial breaks during broadcasts of Ellen DeGeneres' talk show.

BVW Jewelers owner Britten Van Wolf said that he's proud to support LGBT causes and said that his company believes in equal rights for all.

"If anything, it was a risk on me being a small business in Nevada," BVW owner Britten Wolf said. "I love our state but you don't know

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Jeweler's commercial features same-sex couple

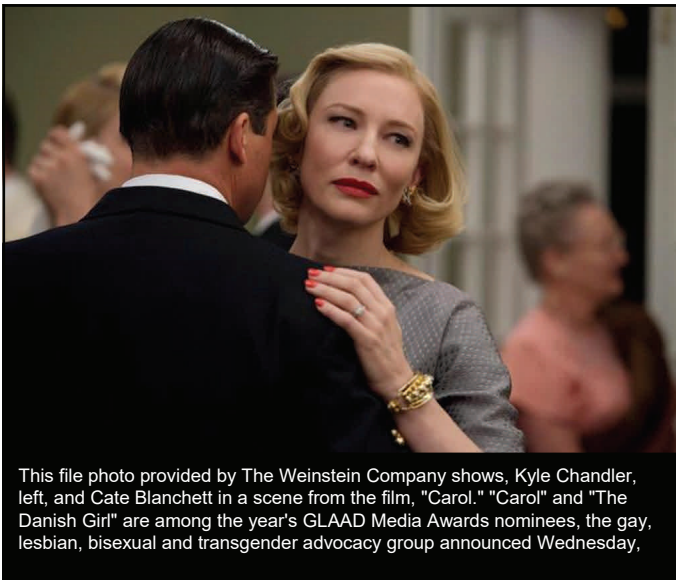
(Continued from Page 4.)

how that's going to hit people here. Being a small business, it takes a few people here and there and you could have some adverse effects."

The jeweler was ranked fourth nationally as one of America's coolest jewelry stores. It also sells the work of local artists with a percentage of proceeds going to the Food Bank.

A National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce report released in June 2015 estimates the combined buying power of the LGBT population to be worth more than \$880 billion. According to the Pew Research Center, 35 percent of Americans opposed same-sex marriage in 2001. Today, 55 percent support it.

Credit: www.LGBTNews.com, January 10, 2016.



This file photo provided by The Weinstein Company shows, Kyle Chandler, left, and Cate Blanchett in a scene from the film, "Carol." "Carol" and "The Danish Girl" are among the year's GLAAD Media Awards nominees, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy group announced Wednesday,

'Carol' and 'The Danish Girl' are among this year's GLAAD Media Awards nominees

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "The Danish Girl" is up for a GLAAD Media Award in a year where a record number of nominees feature transgender characters and subject matter.

The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy group announced the 101 nominees for its 27th annual honors on Wednesday.

Academy Award contenders "The Danish Girl" and "Carol" are up for outstanding wide-release film alongside "Dope," "Freeheld" and "Grandma." The awards honor outstanding images of the LGBT community in music, movies, TV and journalism.

Netflix earned the most nods in the TV categories. The streaming service's "Orange Is the New Black," "Master of None" and "Grace and Frankie" are nominated for outstanding comedy series with "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," "Faking It," "Looking," "Modern Family," "Please Like Me," "Transparent" and "Vicious."

In the TV drama category, Netflix's "Sense8" will face off against "Arrow," "Black Sails," "Empire," "The Fosters," "Grey's Anatomy," "How to Get Away with Murder," "Nashville," "Orphan Black" and "Shameless."

The organization said that for the first time over 50 percent of the English-language nominations featured transgender characters and subject matter, including series such as Amazon's

"Transparent" and E!'s "I Am Cait."

"This year's nominees have raised the bar for creating thoughtful and diverse LGBT images and story lines, deepening audiences' understanding of LGBT people and accelerating acceptance across the world," said GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis in a statement.

The awards will be presented this spring in Los Angeles and New York. The ceremonies will be televised in a one-hour special airing on Logo in April.

Credit: *Derrick J. Lang, AP Entertainment Writer, Associated Press, January 27, 2016*

This Stunning Image Captures The Beauty & Grace Of India's "Third Gender"

For years, the *hijras* of India — people who identify as belonging to a "third gender" — held a special place in society.

"*Hijras* were both revered and feared as powerful entities who lived between the sexes," according to photographer Jill Peters. "They were believed to bestow good fortune and fertility by dancing at weddings and the births of children."

But discrimination and a lack of understanding chipped away at that stature, Peters said, leaving the *hijra* minority "on the margins of society."

That was the case when Peters came across a group of *hijras* at a Delhi marketplace in 2007. She asked her guide about them. His answer? "Just stay away from them."

But Peters, whose work focuses on gender identity and sexuality, persisted. Soon after, in Mumbai, she said she approached a beautiful *hijra* on the street and asked if she could take her photograph. That shoot inspired a series of portraits of *hijras* in a studio and, later, on the beach.

Peters quickly learned of the heartbreaking discrimination faced by her subjects, some of whom had been shunned by their families and rejected by mainstream employers, forced instead to rely on begging or sex work to raise money to cover medical and other expenses. Her goal, as she writes in the project's introduction, became to "portray them as the subjects of beauty and grace they so desperately wish to be, as if their path to nirvana had not been impeded by a century-and-a-half of prejudice and intolerance."

Peters told Refinery29 that she has come to believe that "a lot of *hijras* put on a fierce act out of necessity."

"They have a reputation as being provocative. Getting to know my subjects one-on-one provided me with a special insight: Do not believe the stereotype," she said. "I was struck by how naturally graceful and feminine they are. I think that quiet dignity comes through in the portraits."

Credit: *Torey Van Oot, The Refinery, January 5, 2016.*
<http://www.refinery29.com/>



Photo: Jill Peters.



(Photo: Brittany Tovar, Facebook)

Mom sues employer for not covering son's gender reassignment treatment

A woman from northwest Minnesota is suing her employer and health insurance provider for denying coverage for her teenage child's gender reassignment surgery.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court this week, Brittany Tovar of Halstad, Minnesota, accuses her employer – Duluth-based Essentia Health – of discrimination for “categorically excluding any coverage” for gender reassignment services/surgery in the employee medical plan run by insurer HealthPartners.

Tovar, who has worked for Essentia as a nurse and family nurse practitioner since September 2010, has a son who in November 2014 was diagnosed with gender dysphoria, identifying as a male, according to the suit. Since treatment for gender reassignment was excluded under the Essentia health plan, Tovar faces paying the full cost out of her own pocket, or the prospect of her son's condition going untreated, the lawsuit says.

She wrote to her employer explaining the “serious repercussions” for her son if he was not able to access necessary care to medically transition from a female to a male, with gender dysphoria associated with high instances of anxiety, distress and depression (more on the condition below).

Essentia Health told BringMeTheNews it has not yet received the lawsuit, and that it “does not comment on pending litigation.”

Mother told medication would cost \$9,000

According to the suit, the plan denied coverage for a medication called Lupron, designed to temporarily suspend menstruation, meaning Tovar would have had to pay \$9,000 out of pocket. She could not afford this, so her son did not receive the prescribed treatment.

He was then prescribed Androderm, which Tovar paid for after again Essentia denied coverage. It later agreed as a one-off to reimburse her, though it has not changed its policy denying coverage for gender reassignment treatment, the suit says. She also sought pre-authorization from HealthPartners for her son to have gender reassignment surgery, but was once again told it would not be covered.

Tovar is suing Essentia Health for what she argues is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and HealthPartners for a violation of the Affordable Care

Act.

The Star Tribune reports that Tovar's son, Reid Tovar Olson, had his name changed three weeks ago from Madison Olson as part of his gender transition.

His mother told the newspaper she was “disappointed” with Essentia Health, adding: “It's hard coming to work, and my employer considers my son a second-class citizen.”

Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is a recognized condition where someone's physical gender traits is in conflict with the gender they identify with – you can read more about it here.

It is generally treated with mental health counseling, hormone therapy and eventually – if it is determined “medically necessary” – gender reassignment surgery, which coverage for was denied in the Essentia health plan, according to the lawsuit.

Last month we reported how the state of Minnesota is being sued by the American Civil Liberties Union because its public health insurance programs don't cover gender reassignment surgery.

This coverage is denied even though the federal Medicare program covers all medically necessary gender reassignment surgery, while the ACLU says that private insurance plans regulated by Minnesota also offer coverage.

The Huffington Post reported in September that new federal regulations are being pushed that would forbid health insurance companies from excluding gender transition treatments.

They would give transgender people the legal right to make civil rights claims against insurers, doctors and hospitals who deny coverage or necessary care.

Credit: Adam Uren, January 27, 2016, <http://bringmethenews.com>



Photo credit: (iStock)

Sorry, grammar nerds. The singular ‘they’ has been declared Word of the Year.

Singular “they,” the gender-neutral pronoun, has been named the Word of the Year by a crowd of over 200 linguists at the American Dialect Society's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on January 8, 2016.

In a landslide vote, the language experts chose singular they over “thanks, Obama,” ammosexual, “on fleek,” and other contenders for

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“They”—Word of the Year

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this annual award given to the most significant term or word in the past year.

Singular they, which The Washington Post officially adopted in its Style guide in 2015, is already a common habit in American speech. An example: “Everyone wants their cat to succeed.” Earlier, the so-called proper way to say it would have been, “Everyone wants *his or her* cat to succeed.”

But what gave this word new prominence was its usefulness as a way to refer to people who don’t want to be called “he” or “she.”

“We know about singular they already — we use it everyday without thinking about it, so this is bringing it to the fore in a more conscious way, and also playing into emerging ideas about gender identity,” said linguist Ben Zimmer, language columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, who presided over the voting this Friday afternoon.

Old-fashioned grammarians will be disappointed. But others will be shouting: **YAAAS-SSSS!** (*intj. “expression of excitement, approval or strong agreement”*)

Earlier Friday, Zimmer said a win for singular they would also symbolize how mainstream culture has come to recognize and accept transgender and gender fluid people, some of whom reject traditional pronouns.

“It encapsulates different trends that are going on in the language,” he says. “It’s a way of identifying something that’s going on in the language which ties to issues of gender identity and speaks to other ways that people are using language to express themselves and present their identity.”

The Post’s style guide ratified this usage last month, which caused some grammar pedants to shriek. But as Post copy editor Bill Walsh explained, the singular they is “the only sensible solution to English’s lack of a gender-neutral third-person singular personal pronoun.”

Zimmer nominated **CRISPR** (n. “gene-editing technology allowing biologists to alter and control DNA sequences”), a scientific breakthrough that promises amazing — or terrifying — consequences for society.

Past winners have often carried special political or social significance. Last year, for instance, the linguists chose #blacklivesmatter, and in 2011, it was “occupy,” in reference to the Wall Street protests.

On Friday morning, January 8th, the American Dialect Society had released its candidates for Word of the Year, recognizing the most significant developments in the way we spoke, texted and tweeted in 2015.

Later that day, a crowd of **on fleek** (*adj.*

“excellent, impeccable”) linguists voted to determine which of the 35 words, phrases, hashtags — or even emoji — deserved the definitive honor, which the ADS has bestowed annually since 1990.

“We’re ultimately looking for words that say something about the way we’re living now, about the way we use words to express our shared experiences,” said Zimmer.

Notably this year, **schlong** (v. “to defeat soundly”), was in the running, made famous after escaping the lips of Donald Trump. It was nominated for the Most Outrageous category, along with **fish gape** (n. “posed expression with cheeks sucked in and lips slightly apart”) and **sharewashing** (n. “deceptive marketing by companies treating services as ‘sharing’”).

Another contender in that category was a derogatory term for men that is not family friendly. That word launched a thousand thinkpieces when it was featured in a Vanity Fair article about Tinder bros.

Some of the words, like **dadbod** (n. “flabby physique of a typical dad”) or **shade** (n. “insult, criticism or disrespect, shown in a subtle or clever manner”) have been so red-hot in mainstream culture that they may have already overstayed their welcome.

Youth slang is well-represented on these sorts of lists, but the terms rarely have staying power. “As the usage becomes broader, they lose their cachet — they lose their coolness,” Zimmer says. That’s how the ecosystem of American language works.

“Like ‘on fleek,’ has that already peaked? When we met a year ago, ‘on fleek’ was still a little too new, but it really caught on in the first half of 2015. And now it’s the type of thing that a lot of people are sick and tired of hearing,” he says.

The process can be controversial **af** (“intensifier after an adjective”). Live tweeting from the nomination room Thursday evening, linguist Gretchen McCulloch reported that there was some argument over the spelling of a popular, fabulous way to express joy:

Several of the nominees arose out of the digital dating scene. These days, relationships often begin with an invitation to **Netflix and chill** (“sexual come-on masked as a suggestion to watch Netflix and relax”) and they end when a person **ghosts** (v. “abruptly end a relationship by cutting off communication”). And sometimes, the flame is rekindled when someone sends over the **eggplant emoji** 🍆 (“male genitalia, sexual innuendo”).

This is the first year that the Dialect Society has allowed emoji to compete for the WOTY title. In addition to the **hundred emoji** 🍌 (“keep it 100,” “keep it real”), linguists

also recognized the **information desk person emoji** 🧑🏻💻 (“sassy, sarcastic”), which apparently everyone has been using wrong. But emoji are what you make of them, Zimmer says, which is the beauty of online communication. People are free to appropriate and remix these icons with **ZFG** (“indication of supreme indifference”).

There is a fine line between correcting grammar and usage and being a language snob. Leave it to Washington Post copy editor Bill Walsh to know the difference, and put it in a book that starts with the title “Yes, I Could Care Less ...” Walsh offers counsel in how to wrangle words. (The Washington Post)

Jeff Guo is a reporter covering economics, domestic policy, and everything empirical. He’s from Maryland, but outside the Beltway. Follow him on Twitter: @_jeffguo.

Credit: Jeff Guo, *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2016.

2016 Trans* Health Conference

(Continued from Page 1)

In the Mental Health Providers track, which was newly differentiated from the medical track in this year’s conference, presenters offered seminars discussing clinical skills and how to address their patients’ hormonal changes. Mental health providers made up the majority of attendants at the conference, said El Rayess. “There are lots of mental health providers who want to get that training,” she added.

Community members heard from speakers about topics including social identities, intersectionality, communication and legal aspects of health care. This part of the conference featured trans* speakers — rather than professionals — in order to provide a “transgender-friendly and safe space,” El Rayess said.

“We need to start teaching about this much earlier,” said Alexis Drutcas, a physician at Fenway Health, who started the conference during her residency. The conference has increased in size since last year, and the organizers recognize the need to continue expanding and offering the program annually, she added.

The conference enables health care providers not only to reconsider how they treat their patients, but also about “the systems around them and how those need to change,” Scout told The Herald.

“We rely on the goodwill of allies standing up to say ‘this needs to change,’” Scout said. “Trans* people alone — there’s not enough of us. We’re too busy surviving to create the change, so it’s the allies in this life — the ones in this room — who will change our world for us.”

Credit: Elena Renken, Senior Staff Writer
The Brown Daily Herald (Brown University), RI, USA
February 1, 2016

Chapter Meetings

PFLAG/Greater Providence meets the first Wednesday of each month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.:

The MET School (Unity Building)
325 Public Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Upcoming Meetings

March 2, 2016
April 6, 2016
May 4, 2016

Also:

February 18, 2016
March 17, 2016
April 21, 2016
at 7:00 p.m.

St. Therese Old Catholic Church,
1500 Main Street, West Warwick, RI

Contact Us

PFLAG/Greater Providence
PO Box 41344, Providence, RI 02940
Phone/Text: (401) 307-1802

www.pflagprovidence.org
pflagprovidence@gmail.com



Ideas for Topics/Speakers?

Do you have a specific topic you would like to have addressed by a speaker or know of anyone whom you would like to recommend as a speaker for our Chapter? If so, please contact **Scott** at scmpmr33@gmail.com.

Member Resources

Rhode Island Bi Resource Network

<http://www.ribinetwork.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/TheOtherBWord>

SAGE Rhode Island

235 Promenade Street, Suite 500, Box 18
Providence, RI 02908
401-528-3259
sagerinfo@gmail.com

TGI Network of Rhode Island

PO Box 40365, Providence, RI 02940
info@tginetwork.org
(401) 441-5058 (voicemail)
Family Support Group meets 2nd Monday each month from 6:30-8:30 pm at Bell Street Parish House, Bell Street, Providence

Youth Pride, Inc.

743 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 421-5626
info@youthprideri.org
<http://www.youthprideri.org>

LGBT Caregiver Support Group

Child & Family Elder Care
Calvary United Methodist Church
200 Turner Road, Middletown, RI 02842
jgrapentine@childandfamilyri.com
(401) 848-4119
1st & 3rd Tuesdays each month from 10:00—11:00 a.m.

Options Magazine

www.optionsri.org

GLAD (LGBT Legal Advocates)

www.glad.org

Blogs of Interest

Faith Topics

Susan Cottrell

<http://www.FreedHearts.org>

Kathy Baldock

<http://www.canyonwalkerconnections.com>

LGBTQ Issues

Think Progress

<http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/issue/>

The Huffington Post

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/lgbt-blogs>

Parenting a Transgender Child

Gender Mom

<http://gendermom.wordpress.com/>

Raising My Rainbow

<http://raisingmyrainbow.com/>

Facebook Groups of Interest

Interweave Channing

Parents of Transgender Children
(Closed Support Group)

The Facebook Transgender Alliance
(Closed Support Group)

The Rhode Island LGBT Center



Check us out on Facebook at
www.Facebook.com/PFLAG
Greater Providence, RI



**Greater
Providence
Chapter**

Membership Application

Yes! I want to be a supporting member of PFLAG.

Please provide the information requested below and make your check payable to: **PFLAG/Greater Providence**. You may bring this form with your payment to the next chapter meeting or mail to: **PFLAG, P. O. Box 41344, Providence, RI 02940**. You can also join or donate on-line by visiting our website at www.pflagprovidence.org.

☐

Household \$40

☐

Individual \$30

☐

Student/Limited Income \$20

☐

Additional Contribution \$_____ in ☐ Honor or ☐ Memory of: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-mail _____

☐

I'll do my part to help save a tree. Please send me the newsletter via email only (.pdf format).



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