

# Tales from the 2SLGBTQ+ family medicine community and supporters

The following short pieces were submitted in support of a collaboration between *Canadian Family Physician* and the 2SLGBTQ+ Health Member Interest Group as part of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Pride project. The CFPC Pride project was launched in 2022 to, among other goals, support family doctors in providing care to 2SLGBTQ+ communities and to celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ family medicine community across Canada and within the CFPC.

## À mes collègues et alliés résidents et à mes pairs de la promotion 2019 de l'Université de Moncton

En ce mois de juin, je fête mes huit ans d'hormonothérapie. J'ai commencé le 2 juin 2016, lors de ma première année de médecine. On me demande quand même assez souvent comment être un bon allié, mais aussi comment soutenir ses collègues en début de transition. Il n'y a pas de recette miracle pour soutenir ses collègues. De simples gestes peuvent parfois paraître banals, mais pour une personne en transition, ils peuvent avoir une grande signification.

Je profite donc du mois de la Fierté pour remercier mes collègues et souligner leurs gestes qui ont marqué ma transition et fait d'eux de précieux alliés.

Merci à ma collègue qui, au total, a fait quatre heures de route pour interpréter (de l'anglais au français) lors de ma consultation médicale pour débiter l'hormonothérapie.

Merci à mes collègues qui :

- Ont gentiment accepté d'administrer mes injections durant les premières semaines d'hormonothérapie
- Ont accepté de faire des compromis pour éviter que je doive utiliser des douches communes genrées lors d'une sortie scolaire obligatoire en médecine alors que je n'en étais qu'à ma première année de transition hormonale
- Étaient les premiers à corriger ceux qui utilisaient les mauvais pronoms
- Ont milité et persévéré, malgré de multiples échecs, pour obtenir un programme d'enseignement médical plus inclusif
- Ont créé des capsules et des pamphlets éducatifs en lien avec la santé des communautés 2SLGBTQIA+
- M'ont offert leur soutien lorsque des enseignants passaient des commentaires désobligeants à propos de ma voix changeante sous testostérone
- M'ont offert leur écoute quand mes amis de transition s'enlevaient la vie
- M'ont accepté comme je suis et ont ainsi aidé mon vrai moi à se développer pleinement
- Offrent maintenant des soins aux personnes trans du Nouveau-Brunswick et d'ailleurs au Canada

—Pier-Maude Lanteigne MD CCMF (iel)  
Iqaluit (Nunavut)

**Intérêts concurrents**  
Aucun déclaré

## To my resident colleagues and allies and my University of Moncton 2019 classmates

This June, I am celebrating 8 years of hormone therapy. I began on June 2, 2016, during my first year of medical school. I am still asked quite often about how to be a good ally as well as how to support colleagues as they start transitioning. There is no magic formula for supporting one's colleagues. Simple actions may sometimes seem trivial, but for a person in transition they can be very meaningful.

I am therefore taking this opportunity, during Pride month, to thank my colleagues and to highlight their actions, which have had a lasting impact on my transition and made them invaluable allies.

Thank you to my colleague who travelled a total of 4 hours to translate (from English to French) my medical checkup to start hormone therapy.

Thank you to my colleagues who:

- kindly agreed to administer my injections during the first weeks of hormone therapy;
- agreed to make compromises to ensure that I would not have to use gender-specific communal showers during a compulsory medical school field trip when I was in my first year of hormonal transition;
- were the first to correct those who used the wrong pronouns;
- advocated for a more inclusive medical curriculum and persevered, despite multiple setbacks;
- created capsules and educational pamphlets related to the health of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities;
- supported me when teachers made derogatory comments about testosterone-induced changes in my voice;
- listened to me when my friends in transition took their own lives;
- accepted me as I am, thus helping my "true self" to develop fully; and
- now provide care to trans people in New Brunswick and elsewhere in Canada.

—Pier-Maude Lanteigne MD CCFP (they/them)  
Iqaluit, NU

**Competing interests**  
None declared

## Intentional and explicit commitment

I was about 1 year into practice as a family doctor, 5 years ago now, when a patient first asked me for hormones. I learned they were facing a 3-year wait for this basic service in Edmonton, Alta, at the time. Entering this new area of medicine was intimidating, but the thought of turning my patient away distressed me even more, so I started to learn and practise gender-affirming care.

Five years later, I have had the privilege of meeting hundreds of trans and gender-diverse patients, and I have come to truly believe that family practice, where mental and physical health can be managed holistically and flexibly, is where most nonsurgical gender-affirming care can best be delivered.

When restrictions to adolescent care were floated by the Alberta premier in January 2024, I pivoted my practice to youth, hoping to make sure that none remain on a waiting list when any potential legislation takes effect. This proposed intrusion into the delicate decisions that trans and gender-diverse youth and their families face is incredibly reckless. It enrages me as a physician and as a person, and it should be chilling to doctors in all areas of practice.

In Edmonton there is a colourful weekly counter-demonstration at Pride Corner, an intersection frequented by a hateful street preacher. The burden of maintaining pride in the face of hatred is borne mostly by our patients, but as doctors we too should remind ourselves not to let political discourse undermine our pride in the care we provide. That is why I now wear

a pin that says “Protect Trans Kids.” It is a reminder to myself as much as to others. When misinformation and discrimination are rising, our commitment to our values needs to become more intentional and explicit. We can look to our patients, like those bearing witness at Pride Corner, for inspiration.

—Adam Burgess MD CCFP (he/him)  
Edmonton, Alta

Competing interests  
None declared

## Using my power

When I see trans and gender-diverse patients in clinic, I occasionally suffer from empathic distress. It is difficult hearing their stories where they are forced to leave transphobic workplaces, they have too much dysphoria to go out in public spaces, or they are dealing with toxic, unsupportive family members.

However, more frequently, I feel a glow of satisfaction when I help them use hormones to safely transition. It is unlike most other medical visits, as I am helping them achieve their long-sought-after goals. After the initial laboratory work and physical examination are done and I finally give out a prescription for hormones, they are so excited and happy. It's like I'm a genie released from a lamp, using my power to grant a wish!

—Claire Nowlan MD CCFP(COE) (she/her)  
Halifax, NS

Competing interests  
None declared

Can Fam Physician 2024;70:405-6. DOI: 10.46747/cfp.7006405

Canadian Family Physician (CFP) thanks the 2SLGBTQ+ Health Member Interest Group of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), led by **Dr Andrew Organek** (he/him) and **Dr Thea Weisdorf** (she/her), for their idea to establish Pride Pages and for collecting these submissions for the first edition of CFPC Pride Stories. CFP hopes to make **Pride Pages** a yearly part of CFP's June issue.