



Provider Forum on Gender-Affirming Care for Transgender and Nonbinary Youth and Young Adults

On June 7, 2022, the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership in conjunction with the Connecticut Hospital Association organized a professional forum focusing on gender affirming care for transgender and nonbinary youth and young adults. It featured leading experts in the field of gender identity and expression, and their intersectionality with areas such as race, mental health, environment, and family acceptance.

Robin P. McHaelen, MSW (she/her), Founder & Former Executive Director of True Colors, Inc., presented on the differences among the terms, sexual orientation, assigned sex, gender identity, and gender expression. Christy Olezeski, PhD (she/her), Pediatric Psychologist, Associate Professor Yale School of Medicine, Director of Yale Pediatric Gender Program, spoke on evidence-based protective factors impacting health among the gender diverse, and options to make any healthcare setting more affirming. Susan Boulware, MD (she/her), Pediatric Endocrinologist, Associate Professor Yale School of Medicine, Medical Director explored gender transition from a medical perspective including both surgical and hormonal interventions.

The clinical presentations were followed by a panel of three guests who discussed their unique gender journeys:

- Jennifer X. Lopez (she/her), a student at Capitol Community College, speaker, and mentor for trans youth
- Cal Benitex, (he/him) a student at UConn, team leader for the Rainbow Center Major Programs, and a Peer Advisor
- Ryan “Jay” Palica, MA, LPC (he/him), Director of Quality Analytics and Data Visualization, Beacon Health Options, and a trainer in trans and gender identity

The latest in a series of provider-focused forums, “Gender-Affirming Care” attracted 820 registered participants, most of whom earned CME or CEU credits for the training. The forum received an average survey score of nearly 5 (on a 5 point scale for excellence) in terms of meeting its educational objectives.

You can view the “Gender-Affirming Care” forum [here](#).

On September 21, 2022, the Partnership will present its next forum, *Prevention and Treatment: Substance Use Disorder Services for Youth and Young Adults*. Registration for the forum will be available in August.