

## March 31, 2022 is Transgender Day of Visibility.

"On Transgender Day of Visibility, we must acknowledge that many transgender health disparities are directly related to a need for increased knowledge and awareness. As a nurse practitioner and nurse researcher, I'm proud to be part of the movement to promote quality and affirming transgender care at Southcoast Health. We have the power to make a difference for the South Coast transgender community," says Shannon Avery-Desmarais, PhD, NP-C.

Southcoast has taken steps over the past year to serve the transgender community better, and we strive to expand our efforts. Through our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, we have collaborated with Fenway Health to provide eLearning modules for providers and employees that create knowledge and awareness of the transgender community of patients as well as other members of the LGBTQ community. We are enrolled in a very comprehensive project to update our electronic medical record to better meet the specific needs of our transgender patients and other patients who are members of the LGBTQ community. We are also creating guidelines to support employees and their managers when an employee is transitioning. We are continually improving our efforts to ensure all individuals feel safe and welcome while seeking care.

Aileen Souza, MD adds, "As both a physician and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I recognize the importance of care for this unique community as a provider and a patient."

"There is an indescribable feeling that comes with the privilege of giving someone a safe space to share their inner most vision of themselves - who they'd like the world to see and how they'd prefer to be addressed. Whether through medicine, or simple reassurances, helping someone be who they were always meant to be is one of the most positive differences we can make as medical providers."

Southcoast Health sees you, hears you and recognizes you – and today and every day, we celebrate your authentic self.

Learn More about our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council at <http://www.southcoast.org/diversity-and-inclusion-at>

