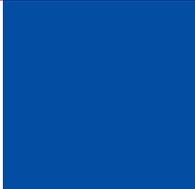
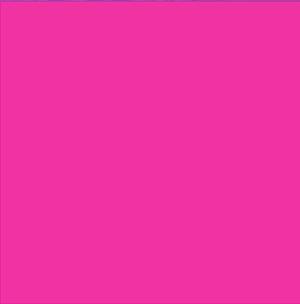




Southcoast Health
**LGBTQIA+ Welcoming
& Knowledgeable**



We ask because we care



You Are Welcome Here

Southcoast Health actively supports and embraces a welcoming and inclusive environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

We Value a diverse, ethical, and equitable culture, critical to ensuring our healthy and just organization.

We Celebrate & Honor the rich cultural backgrounds and unique attributes of one another, and the patients and communities we are privileged to serve.

We Strictly Prohibit and do not tolerate unlawful discrimination of any kind. Non-compliance is subject to immediate corrective action.

In support of Southcoast Health's mission to provide *exceptional care from people who care*, we are proud to announce the official launch of the LGBTQIA+ Welcoming & Knowledgeable initiative.

The LGBTQIA+ Welcoming & Knowledgeable initiative is one part of Southcoast's multi-faceted Health Equity program, focused on ensuring full access to high-quality care for all patients. The Health Equity program emphasizes the collection of patient-provided demographic information plus clinical data so that we can gain a greater understanding of our patients' individual treatment needs while strengthening our service excellence.

As part of the effort to improve the care of current Southcoast Health LGBTQIA+ patients and to welcome new LGBTQIA+ patients in our community to Southcoast Health, new fields have been added to our electronic medical record, Epic. Some of those fields include Preferred Name, Pronouns, "X" to Legal Sex Choices, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Sex Assigned at Birth, and Affirmation steps.

Patients may complete most of these fields themselves in MyChart, a patient's personal health records portal, and/or patients will be able to provide the information during an office visit.

Knowing a patient's sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) helps clinicians identify individual health needs, address disparities, and deliver appropriate care. It also helps patients feel welcomed, recognized, understood, and supported.



Why Am I Being Asked About My Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity?

At Southcoast Health, we believe that learning about the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) of our patients helps us better understand our patients.

It also allows us to offer culturally responsive care that focuses on each patient's specific needs. Storing SOGI data in Epic, the Southcoast electronic medical record (EMR), is essential to providing high-quality, patient-centered care wherever a patient seeks care within the Southcoast Health system.

In MyChart, the patient portal, you can answer most of the SOGI questions yourself and then discuss them with the provider.

What Is Gender Identity?

Gender identity is a person's inner sense of being a girl/woman/female, a boy/man/male, having no gender, gender fluidity, or any other identity one determines for oneself.

Transgender

An umbrella term used to refer to people who have a different gender identity than their sex assigned at birth. A **transgender man/male** has a male gender identity. A **transgender woman/female** has a female gender identity.

This also includes gender identities outside the gender binary structure. Additional gender identities include, but are not limited to:

- **Gender fluid:** someone whose gender identity is not fixed. They may feel like a mix of more than one gender but may feel more aligned with a certain gender some of the time, another gender at other times, both genders sometimes, and sometimes no gender at all.
- **Genderqueer/non-binary:** describe people whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary of male and female.





What Is Sexual Orientation?

Sexual orientation is how people describe their emotional and physical attraction to others.

- **Heterosexual** (straight) describes women who are primarily attracted to men, and men who are primarily attracted to women.
- **Gay** describes people who are primarily attracted to the same gender as themselves.
- **Lesbian** describes women who are primarily attracted to other women.
- **Bisexual** describes people who are emotionally and physically attracted to women/females and men/males.

Some people use other terms, such as **queer**, to describe their sexual orientation.



What if I'm Not Sure How to Answer?

You can select "Don't know" if you are not sure, or you can talk with your provider.

What if None of the Categories Describes Me?

There are many sexual orientations and gender identities. It is not possible to list them all. If your sexual orientation is not included in the choices provided, you can select "Something else." If your gender identity is not included in the choices provided, you can select "Other."

What if I Don't Want to Share This Information?

You can select "Choose not to disclose." Later, your provider may ask you these questions privately, and you can ask your provider questions. You do not have to answer these questions if you don't want to.

Who Will See This Information?

Your health care providers will see this information, and it will become part of your electronic medical record. If a staff member enters the information into your medical record, that person will also see your answers. If you have concerns, talk to your provider.

How Will My Information Be Protected?

Your sexual orientation and gender identity information is confidential and protected by law, just like all of your other health information. If you are under 18 years old, your parent/guardian may have access to this information. Talk to your provider if you have any concerns.

How Will This Information Be Used?

Your provider(s) will use this information to better understand and meet your health care needs. In addition, gathering this information from all patients allows health centers to see if there are gaps in care or services across different groups of patients.

Why Is There a Question About Pronouns?

Pronouns are the words people use when they are referring to you, but not using your name.

Examples of pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. Knowing pronouns helps staff correctly refer to patients. Otherwise, staff need to make assumptions, which can lead to embarrassing and disrespectful situations.

What Is a Preferred Name?

A Preferred Name is the name you prefer to have Southcoast Health staff call you when we are caring for you. (Examples: your preferred name is "Tim," while your full or legal name is "Timothy," or your preferred named is "Ren" while your full or legal name is "Roberta.")

What Does Sex Assigned at Birth Mean?

Sex assigned at birth is the sex that was listed on your first birth certificate. We ask this question so that we can follow appropriate clinical pathways for your anatomy.

What Is Legal Sex?

Legal Sex is the sex documented on your license and other legal forms. Choices for legal sex are Male, Female, or X (non-binary).



What are Affirmation Steps?

Gender Affirmation is the process of making social, legal, and/or medical changes to recognize, accept, and express one's gender identity. Social changes can include changing one's pronouns, name, clothing, and hairstyle. Legal changes can include changing one's name, sex designation, and gender markers on legal documents. Medical changes can include receiving gender-affirming hormones and/or surgeries.

What Is an Organ Inventory?

We may ask questions relating to organ inventory to ensure that we identify any needs for routine screening to ensure that we are caring for you most appropriately. Questions may include "Have you had any surgical procedures, or been prescribed any hormonal treatments in order to affirm your gender or start the process?"

Can I Do This on My Own?

MyChart offers patients personalized and secure online access to portions of their medical records. It enables you to securely use the internet to help manage and receive information about your health. You can take such actions as: view your health summary, request appointments, request prescriptions, pay bills online, and communicate electronically and securely with your medical care team.

Additional Info

Southcoast Health Patient & Family Advisory Council

We want you to receive exceptional care and service from Southcoast Health. To learn more about your experience, we partner with NRC Health to conduct patient surveys for all our service areas. Based on your feedback, we work closely with leaders across the system to identify opportunities and work together on process improvement.

We also conduct an LGBTQIA+ Patient Family Advisory Committee (LGBTQIA+ PFAC), a forum for patients and families to share with Southcoast Health their concerns, ideas and perspectives, including access to care and quality of care and service specific to the LGBTQIA+ patient community. Fundamentally, LGBTQIA+ PFAC is a "consumer advisory group" and a link between Southcoast Health and the communities it serves.

*To offer some feedback or to reach out to LGBTQIA+ PFAC, contact us at the Southcoast Health Feedback Line: 1-877-264-7244 (toll free) or by email at patientexperience@southcoast.org. To submit your questions or feedback via our Patient Feedback Form, **click here** or visit www.southcoast.org/patient-experience.*



Additional Resources

Southcoast is providing this list as a resource only. Southcoast is making no referrals or recommendations by providing this list. Southcoast is not affiliated with any of the listed contacts. If you have a medical or healthcare related question or concern, please contact your healthcare provider.

The South Coast LGBTQ+ Network

A nonprofit organization whose mission is to create and support a thriving LGBTQ+ community where individuals can freely, safely, and joyously celebrate their true selves and realize their full potential. www.sclgbtqnetwork.org

The Trevor Project

Reach out to a counselor if you're struggling, find answers and information, and get the tools you need to help someone else. www.thetrevorproject.org

PFLAG Cape Cod

Providing Support, Education & Advocacy to Parents, Families, Friends, Allies & Members of the LGBTQ+ Community. www.pflagcapecod.org

Youth Pride RI

Youth Pride, Inc. is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of youth and young adults – 23 and under – impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity/ expression. www.youthprideri.org

SAYFTEE

A socially conscious group practice offering family therapy, individual therapy, couple/relationship therapy, groups, workshops, training, consultation, supervision, and more. www.sayftee.com

Gender Spectrum

A national organization committed to the health and well-being of gender-diverse children and teens through education and support for families, and training and guidance for educators, medical and mental health providers, and other professionals. <https://genderspectrum.org>

Family Acceptance Project

Key information from our research on how families can help support their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) children. <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications>

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition

Information about legislation, publications, guides for name changes, and more resources. www.masstpc.org

BAGLY: The Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth

A youth-led, adult-supported social support organization, committed to social justice and creating, sustaining, and advocating for programs, policies, and services for the LGBTQ+ youth community. www.bagly.org

Out Metrowest

Free programs connect LGBTQ+ youth with supportive peers and LGBTQ+ adult role models. <https://outmetrowest.org>

Trans Youth Equality Foundation

Our mission is to share information about the unique needs of this community, partnering with families, educators, and service providers to help foster a healthy, caring, and safe environment for all transgender children. www.transyouthequality.org

Trans Lifeline

A grassroots hotline and microgrants 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community. <https://translifeline.org/about/>



Additional Resources (continued)

Fenway Health

Fenway is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse communities. They currently host a variety of support groups for trans and gender diverse people and their loved ones.

<https://fenwayhealth.org/care/medical/transgender-health>

Boston Children's Hospital Center for Gender Surgery

Offers gender affirmation surgery services to eligible adolescents and young adults who are ready to take this step in their journey.

www.childrenshospital.org/programs/center-gender-surgery-program

Transhealth Northampton

Offers a variety of services & educational resources to empower trans and gender-diverse adults, children, and families. <https://transhealth.org/resources>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council

The Southcoast Health Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Council was formed during the summer of 2019 by Southcoast Health employees and meets monthly to provide oversight to the work groups and employee resource groups that carry out the DE&I Council's initiatives to accomplish its mission.

Mission

Southcoast Health is committed to embracing and fostering a diverse and welcoming environment for all.

We strive for a culture of health that recognizes, respects, and celebrates the rich diversity of one another and the communities we serve.

To accomplish the mission, the DE&I Council is focused on several initiatives. The Council creates greater understanding of the diverse members of the workforce and patient population through celebration of diversity events, signage, and multiple ongoing educational offerings. It enhances understanding through public facing communication channels including social media and the internet as well as internal newsletters and emails. It reviews organizational policies and procedures with a diversity lens. The DE&I Council is also working closely with the Health Equity initiatives that Southcoast Health is pursuing, including helping lead the LGBTQIA+ Welcoming & Knowledgeable initiative.

www.southcoast.org/diversity

