

Welcome!

On behalf of the Department of Gender-Affirming Care at Whitman-Walker Health (WWH), we are excited you are interested in connecting with us. Wherever you (or a loved one) are in your gender experience, WWH aims to provide culturally humble, affirming, and accessible health and wellness support. At a time when trans and gender expansive people across the country face threats and very real barriers to accessing life-saving, medically necessary care, we are humbled to share our available services and offer our support.

WWH is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and primary care provider dedicated to treating the whole person; as such, our providers spend time with each patient to address a continuum of primary healthcare needs. Within our team-based approach, you may receive support from staff in a variety of roles - Nursing and other clinical teams, Care Navigation, Behavioral Health - to address your goals and needs. To better support people leaving states with bans or seeking alternative options for safe, affirming care, we are extending this letter in hopes of answering introductory questions about access to care, billing/insurance concerns, telehealth capacities, and more. This letter does not create any provider-patient relationship but rather walks through the steps ahead should you choose to initiate the process to become a new patient, as described at the end of the letter.

- **Who can enter care at WWH?**

- We care for people ages 10+ who can attend in-person, both initial medical visits and their necessary follow-up appointments. Follow-up appointments may be conducted via telehealth if medically appropriate and you are physically located in Washington DC, Maryland, or Virginia (the DMV area) during your appointment, as these are the jurisdictions where our providers are licensed to practice. Guardians must register on behalf of anyone under 18 years old, and the guardian must attend the appointment(s) with the patient. All patients seeking gender-affirming care must enter as a medical patient.

- **What will my first visit be like?**

- Initial medical visits take place at our Max Robinson Center in the Congress Heights neighborhood of Washington, DC, and will last 20-40 minutes. You'll have vital signs taken by a Medical Assistant and then meet with your medical provider. That provider will approach the visit much like any primary care appointment: they'll collect your health history, social history, and ask what your goals are for care with us. At the end of your appointment, your provider will ask you to complete some blood work and suggest a timeframe to follow-

- up for a 2nd visit. Most follow-up visits (to review labs) take place within 3-4 weeks of the initial visit.
- **Can I see a WWH provider via telehealth?**
 - All initial medical visits must be in-person; follow-up appointments are often able to be scheduled via telehealth so long as the patient can attend from the DMV area. You do not have to live in the DMV area, but you will have to be physically present in the DMV area at the time of the appointment due to licensure requirements. Not all of our providers are licensed in Maryland and Virginia, so talk with our Client Services Representatives about scheduling your initial appointment with a provider who is licensed in the area you're most easily able to attend appointments from.
 - Important Note: Per WWH policy, our provider will ask the patient (or guardian if patient is a minor) to attest to your physical location at the time of any telehealth appointment and will cancel appointments where patients are not physically located in the DMV area for the appointment. In that case, you will need to reschedule for an in-person or telehealth appointment when you will be physically present in the DMV area.
- **What are my options for lab work?**
 - Bloodwork may be completed on site at one of our locations, often immediately after a medical visit, or scheduled at a time of your choosing during our open hours. You can also request that your medical provider electronically transmit a lab order to LabCorp and you can self-schedule a phlebotomy appointment at a LabCorp location of your choosing. Please note, even if WWH does not accept your insurance, it is possible that a LabCorp facility will. We encourage all patients to consider this option if you are self-pay or not using insurance. All lab work completed in a LabCorp facility is accessible to our medical providers via the LabCorp patient portal. Our medical providers cannot order labs for someone they have not met, and we cannot enter a lab order before your initial medical visit.
- **What if I have labs from a recent medical visit?**
 - If you completed bloodwork with an outside provider *in the last 6 months*, bring the results to your initial medical visit with your WWH provider. The provider will determine, based on the totality of the information in the medical record accessible to them, whether they can use those results when considering starting a prescription or continuing a medication. At this time, you are unable to upload the labs to our patient portal before the initial visit, so please be prepared to bring a physical copy of the labs or have them on your device for review with the provider.

- **What if I am already on gender-affirming hormone therapy?**
 - Depending on your current health status and goals, our medical providers may be able to continue your prescription for gender-affirming hormone therapy at an initial visit. This will vary case by case, and we recommend you discuss this request at the time of your appointment. It is likely your medical provider will ask to complete bloodwork at that visit and may issue a prescription to bridge your access to hormones until the labs are back, instead of issuing a multi-month refill. Our medical providers cannot continue a prescription for someone they have not met and cannot refill any medications before an initial medical visit. For people under 18 years old who have already started gender-affirming hormones or puberty-pausing medication with an outside provider, see below.

- **What should I know if I'm a Parent/Guardian trying to register my minor child?**
 - Several WWH medical providers see youth aged 10 and above. Guardian consent and presence at the appointments are required to access gender-affirming medical care. We have special paperwork for the guardians of minors to complete ahead of the initial medical visit, and we require that all people under 18 years old have a mental health evaluation prior to starting gender-affirming hormone therapy, including puberty-pausing medication. If your family has already worked with a mental health provider for this assessment, we may be able to coordinate care with that provider. Please plan to complete a [Release of Information](#) and prepare your outside therapist that care coordination may be needed. Any completed letters of support should be shared with our Director of Gender-Affirming Care (after your initial medical visit); the Director will review the letter and may request to collaborate with that provider. For youth and families who do not have outside mental health support for this initial assessment, we can link you to a mental health provider for a series of 3-5 telehealth sessions involving the guardians and minor patient. Like for all care at WWH, guardians and the minor must all be in the DMV area at the time of these mental health virtual appointments. Typically, blood work and follow-up medical visits are spaced out until the completion of the mental health assessment and supportive family discussions are complete.

- **Can I work with a WWH therapist for my mental health?**
 - You may be referred to the Behavioral Health team for a brief assessment or screening to further your treatment plan, and our team may share resources with you or your family about finding a therapist outside of WWH. We encourage you to talk with your WWH medical provider about options that may be available to you. See [our guide](#) for additional support options.

- **What if you don't take my insurance?**

- A list of our accepted insurances can be found [here](#). During your registration process, we will ask for a copy of your insurance card to verify coverage before your initial medical visit. If you have insurance we do not accept and you wish to pursue care without insurance coverage (known as “out-of-pocket”), you will be considered “self-pay,” and payment in full will be expected at the time of service. Depending on your income and family size, you may be eligible for our [Sliding Fee Schedule of Discounts](#) and will need to meet with our insurance navigation team.
- **Do you have a pharmacy or recommend one? How can I fill my prescriptions?**
 - Whitman-Walker Health operates a pharmacy from each of our locations. We offer free delivery within the DMV; please note that we are not able to deliver medications outside of the DMV due to licensing restrictions. There are also limitations in place for our medical providers prescribing some medications across state lines, or outside of the states where they are licensed. We recommend you come prepared with information for a pharmacy in the DMV area where you can routinely (likely, monthly*) pick up your medication in person. WWH would welcome the opportunity to be your pharmacy of choice at one of our two locations in DC.
 - *Note: It is illegal to dispense more than a 30-day supply of some medications.
- **How do I pay for any out-of-pocket care?**
 - Payment is due at the time of service. You will be asked to pay for your services at your visit. Should you be using insurance we accept and a patient balance comes due after your visit, there are several ways to pay your balance: (1) Patient portal: Once you are established in care with us, you’ll have access to your patient portal; (2) Electronic payment via text messaging and email, where you can submit a secure payment online; and (3) In person at one of our sites. Please remember that all outstanding payments must be paid before any new care is received.
- **Once I’ve had labs and a medical visit, how often do I follow up?**
 - Care at WWH is individualized to meet your unique medical needs and goals; at minimum, most of our medical providers require annual labs and in-person follow-up to ensure they are monitoring your basic primary care needs. They may also request outside records from a primary care provider to verify routine care is being provided, as well as preventative care, as we are considered responsible for your primary care once you establish care with us. For many people who enter care for gender-affirming hormone therapy, there is lab work at an initial visit, then again after about one month on hormones to assess how your body is responding to the treatment. Labs may be monitored more closely in people with additional health concerns or conditions being

managed, and for people under 18 years old.

- **I have other questions; how do I get answers?**

- To connect with a staff member in the Department of Gender-Affirming Care about general questions about our services, please email transhealth@whitman-walker.org or call 202-797-4457. Please note: the Department does not provide medical advice and cannot address individual clinical questions. It may take us 3 business days to respond to email and voicemail requests, and we appreciate your patience.

- **I'm ready to register, what next?**

- When you are ready to register for services with us, select an option below and be prepared to provide insurance details, ID, and basic demographic information. If you are over 18 years old, you can submit new patient registration paperwork via [this DocuSign link](#). If you are a parent or guardian of a minor child, you can submit new patient registration paperwork via [this DocuSign link](#). We will follow up within 2-3 weeks of receipt of the forms to schedule an initial, new patient visit; if you have not heard from us within that timeframe, please reach out. If you don't want to submit forms electronically, you may also call 202-745-7000 or text 202-978-6123 and ask to "Register for a New Patient Medical Visit for Gender-Affirming Care." Like the forms, you will be asked for basic demographic information, including your insurance details, before you are scheduled for your initial in-person visit. Note: if you are under 18yo you may not submit the forms by yourself, nor may you call to register over the phone.

We hope that this information is helpful! We look forward to supporting you toward your goals, and we appreciate your understanding of our own required policies and procedures. Please be in touch with concerns or feedback along the way.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Britt Walsh", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

britt walsh (they/he pronouns)
Director of Gender-Affirming Care