



## SB 923 (Wiener)

### Access to Gender Affirming Care

**Problem:**

Many transgender patients encounter discrimination and difficulty accessing the health care they need. The National Center for Transgender Equality reported that 1/3 of all transgender individuals who had seen a health care professional in 2014 had at least one negative experience related to being transgender, with higher rates for people of color and people with disabilities. These negative experiences include being refused treatment, verbally harassed, physically or sexually assaulted, or having to teach the provider about transgender people in order to receive appropriate care.

Fear of discrimination resulted in 28% of transgender individuals postponing or not receiving necessary medical care, which is especially troubling considering the health needs of transgender, gender non-conforming and/or intersex (TGI) people.

Research demonstrates that, compared with the general population, TGI people suffer from more chronic health conditions and experience higher rates of health problems related to HIV/AIDS, substance use, mental illness, and sexual and physical violence, as well as higher prevalence and earlier onset of disabilities that can also lead to health issues.

A survey of primary care providers found that over 30% did not feel that they were capable of providing transgender care and a small but concerning number would not be willing to care for transgender patients in need. Nearly 15% of providers unwilling to provide routine care, with that number increasing for specific services. In 2019, 44% of TGI people who were surveyed in the #Out4MentalHealth Community survey reported traveling farther than 30 minutes to see a primary care provider.

TGI people have trouble finding providers to provide routine care, so finding providers who can provide gender affirming surgeries within their health plan can be even harder.

**Background:**

The Williams Institute estimates that in the state of California, *at least* 218,400 individuals identify as transgender. Despite representing a significant portion of the State’s population, transgender, gender non-conforming and/or intersex (TGI) people are not receiving the health care they need.

**This bill improves access to gender affirming care by requiring:**

- Health plan staff who interact with patients to undergo TGI cultural sensitivity training.
- Health plans to maintain and update a list of contracted providers who offer and provide gender-affirming services.
- The Health and Human Services Agency to convene a working group to develop a quality standard for patient experience to measure cultural competency for TGI patients.

**Co-sponsors and support by:**

- Break The Binary LLC (cosponsor)
- California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network (cosponsor)
- California TRANScends (cosponsor)
- Equality California (cosponsor)
- Gender Justice LA (cosponsor)
- National Help Law Program (cosponsor)
- Orange County TransLatinas (cosponsor)
- Queer Works (cosponsor)
- Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance (cosponsor)
- San Francisco Office of Transgender Initiatives (cosponsor)
- The TransPower Project (cosponsor)
- TransCanWork (cosponsor)
- Trans Community Project (cosponsor)
- TransFamily Support Services (cosponsor)
- Transgender Health and Wellness Center (cosponsor)
- Tranz of Anarchii, Inc. (cosponsor)
- Unique Woman’s Coalition (UWC) (cosponsor)
- Unity Hope (cosponsor)
- Western Center on Law & Poverty (cosponsor)

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