



# Needs for the Transgender Population in the Orlando Metropolitan Area

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# Community Feedback

- ▶ A focus group and online survey were provided to obtain feedback on how to improve service and care to the Transgender population throughout the Orlando Metropolitan Area
  - ▶ The Orlando Metropolitan Area consists of Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties
  - ▶ The focus group was held on May 29, 2024
    - ▶ Four total participants, two in person and two online
  - ▶ A SurveyMonkey survey was created and made available on May 22, 2024 and available until June 5, 2024
    - ▶ 15 respondents

# Focus Group Findings (page 1)

- ▶ The initial topic in the focus group centered on perceptions surrounding general health care
  - ▶ Discussion started on addressing basic issues and advocating for one's own health
  - ▶ Respect, or lack of respect, was brought up early on and throughout the focus group
  - ▶ One major area of concern raised was not hearing back from providers or being able to get much needed care for mental health and oral health

# Focus Group Findings (page 2)

- ▶ Dealing with being misgendered was discussed as well as general personal safety just leaving their homes
- ▶ Several comments were made regarding one specific provider where some staff were responsive and kind and others treated them like curiosities
- ▶ Part of the discussion also focused on the need to hire trans peers and provider staff to work with the trans population
- ▶ Provider training on how to interact properly with trans and non-binary individuals; and not just training, real-life experience as well

# Focus Group Findings (page 3)

- ▶ Transportation was a main concern raised during the focus group
  - ▶ There are still instances where getting to an appointment requires taking three buses
  - ▶ Safety was raised again regarding transportation, with a comment made about “Trans Uber” being a way to encourage trans folks to obtain care in a safe manner
- ▶ The top three needs related to health care were transportation, housing, and food
- ▶ In addition to mental health, substance misuse was discussed as a coping strategy, and touched on police harassment

# Focus Group Findings (page 4)

- ▶ Gatekeeping was another issue discussed, being told to have to look a “certain way” or focus group participants hearing how other transwomen were having their transition dictated to them by providers and peers
- ▶ When asked about care elsewhere, New York was brought up multiple times in terms of the service offerings, specifically related to housing, transportation, post-surgery rehab facilities, and drop-in spaces

# Focus Group Findings (page 5)

- ▶ The lack of transitional housing for trans folks was brought up, again pointing to the general overall lack of safety trans folks feel throughout the Orlando Metropolitan area
- ▶ An area of concern for unhoused individuals was the fear of being treated like a pariah
- ▶ When the topic of medications came up, one of the focus group participants stated that several other trans folks had their medications sent to this individual's place out of fear of the medications being sent to their respective residence

# Focus Group Findings (page 6)

- ▶ A major theme raised multiple times was staff and peer diversity
  - ▶ There need to be more trans peer and staff, especially Black/African American folks
- ▶ Educational requirements and training were also brought up
- ▶ There need to be more opportunities for trans folks to be in peer and staff positions to create opportunities to bond and connect with each other



# Focus Group Findings (page 7)

- ▶ The focus group touched briefly on Planning Council and the fact that they were aware of one transwoman serving
  - ▶ More needs to be done to educate the community about provider offerings
- ▶ It was noted during the focus group that the findings from this focus group and the survey presented were presented to Planning Council by a trans individual
- ▶ It was also stated that focus group participants heard from other trans women who were interested in participating but were concerned about leaving their homes to attend in person

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 1)

- ▶ Fifteen individuals responded to the survey
- ▶ In terms of the biggest issues regarding their health care, the following was noted:
  - ▶ Services for unhoused folks
  - ▶ Needing case management
  - ▶ More mental health services
  - ▶ More trans staff and peers as well as training to the rest of care staff regarding trans care
  - ▶ Strill dealing with provider staff who do not adequately explain lab/test results

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 2)

- ▶ More health care related issues, the following was noted:
  - ▶ Services for unhoused folks
  - ▶ Needing case management
  - ▶ More mental health services
  - ▶ More trans staff and peers as well as training to the rest of care staff regarding trans care
  - ▶ Still dealing with provider staff who do not adequately explain lab/test results
  - ▶ Discretion for obtaining care
  - ▶ Governor DeSantis making life more difficult for LGBTQ+ folks

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 3)

- ▶ Regarding personal safety and general well-being given the current climate in Florida, the following responses were offered:
  - ▶ Violence against trans people is a major concern
  - ▶ Governo DeSantis ramping up anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and policies
  - ▶ Homophobia and racism
  - ▶ Not being treated with dignity or respect
  - ▶ The rising cost of living, particularly rent and utilities
  - ▶ Trying to find good medical care given all of the things the governor has done to strip away access to medical care

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 4)

- ▶ When it came to getting care in the Orlando Service Area, the following responses were provided:
  - ▶ Not enough facilities and providers to help, especially for homeless folks
  - ▶ Having to tell their entire life story to a new provider so many times, to the point that some shy away from getting care due to being exhausted telling their story so many times
  - ▶ Transportation, oral health, and mental health have been hard to navigate
  - ▶ Returning phone calls can be a real hassle

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 5)

- ▶ When it came to getting care in the Orlando Service Area, there were several more responses:
  - ▶ Paying for healthcare costs
  - ▶ Trying to get medications

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 6)

- ▶ These were the things survey respondents want the Planning Council to know about them and their health care:
  - ▶ More providers are needed to serve us
  - ▶ Health care is expensive
  - ▶ Lower case manager caseloads, we're beginning to feel like a number and not people
  - ▶ Help with affordable and decent housing
  - ▶ Make it easier for us to access health care
  - ▶ More resources are needed for prevention services

# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 7)

- ▶ These were the things survey respondents said would let them know Planning Council had heard them:
  - ▶ More funding allocated to trans health care
  - ▶ Ensuring trans folks are getting the care they need
  - ▶ Dedicating time during meetings on a monthly basis to discuss trans-related issues and discuss solutions
  - ▶ Explain things during Planning Council meetings in ways that we can all understand and follow
  - ▶ Keep doing the things you're doing to make us feel included and welcomed
  - ▶ Remembering we are people and being there for us



# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 8)

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# SurveyMonkey Findings (page 9)

- ▶ These were the things survey respondents said that Orange County Government could do to improve the quality of care they're receiving (several respondents stated similar sentiments):
  - ▶ Expand and diversify the service provider network
  - ▶ Allocate more dollars to trans health care
  - ▶ Increase overall funding in order to expand provider network
  - ▶ Lower case loads

# Some Next Steps to Consider

- ▶ Consider partnering with trans folks for future iterations of this particular line of inquiry; representation matters
- ▶ Dedicate monthly space during Planning Council meetings to trans-focused issues
- ▶ Work towards offering trans-friendly or exclusive services in order to engender trust between the trans community and the HIV service provider network and Planning Council
- ▶ Keep looking for funding opportunities centered on trans health care
- ▶ Continue making affordable housing a priority

# Additional Considerations

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- ▶ Push providers to hire more trans folks, both peers and staff to help foster trust and connections between people seeking care and those offering care, especially medical care and behavioral care
- ▶ Offer ongoing training for existing provider staff to increase competencies and sensitivities
- ▶ Explore novel transportation solutions to help reduce barriers to care
- ▶ Advocate for equal rights and health care treatment for all trans folks



Questions?