



"At Choices Medical TransCare, trans and gender non-conforming people will be able to get the healthcare they need in a safe, caring and respectful environment."

*Tanya Walker, Choices TransCare Outreach Coordinator.*

## Choices Medical TransCare

Launching this Fall!

In this month when people proudly raise the rainbow flag and celebrate sexual and gender identity and diversity, our June newsletter is pleased to introduce you to Tanya Walker, Choices Medical TransCare Outreach Coordinator who is helping develop our new program. Tanya has more than seven years of experience in case management, both as a community follow-up worker conducting home visits and a case manager.

### **Welcome, Tanya. Please tell the Choices community about yourself and why this program is so important.**

We live in one of the greatest cities in the world, and there's still a need for safe and adequate health care for transgender and gender nonconforming people in NYC. Most transgender people are marginalized in society, and they basically shy away from health care because they're afraid of being misgendered by health care professionals who are not culturally competent in their field.

Misgendered means being called out of your gender – you're a woman but people are using male gender pronouns. It's offensive and it hurts. It's traumatic – to be called out of your gender to a trans person. It can bring on depression, anxiety, and it makes some fear coming out of their homes.

Many trans people fight transitioning for many years, resisting, like myself. For instance, I was told by my father growing up that I would change and become masculine. And become a minister. So when I turned 17, I joined and was sworn into the military; at 18, I went to basic training. I was thinking I was going to change, and I would become a straight man...and it just never happened. I was fighting my transition for 30 years, telling myself I can't transition from one gender to another. Then all of a sudden it overpowers you, and here I am.

I know people who will not transition right now – they attend trans groups, but are afraid. Will not come out of the house dressed as their gender – they're too afraid of losing family, friends, status in society. Not to mention being physically assaulted. Gender is not in your genitalia. It's more biological than physical – it's what you feel, who you know you are in your mind.

### **What are the things you're hoping to accomplish with the Choices TransCare program?**

Choices will have a culturally competent staff, highly trained and qualified to address the needs of trans and gender non-conforming patients coming into the clinic. I want to see them feel safe and to get the healthcare that they need, including mental health care. It's very hard in NYC to find adequate mental health care for trans people. Some trans people want to be called their chosen name and some their birth name. The staff here at Choices will respect their gender identity and how they want to be called. This is really important in health care where you need to establish a trusting and caring relationship with patients. And that's what I want to achieve.

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*Melissa Sklarz and Hillary Clinton*

### **Message from Melissa Sklarz**

Today's LGBT health network began as a response to HIV-AIDS. Today it's imperative and essential that trans people have our own network of doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers. The physical transition from one gender to another – the biological, emotional and psychological changes – are unique and cry out for specialized care.

Until recently it was difficult to get the healthcare industry to recognize the uniqueness of trans lives. Choices Medical TransCare is part of a new generation of medical caregivers who are aware of that uniqueness and where the expectation of sensitivity will be realized for trans people. Bringing trans-affirming health to Southeast Queens is a niche that needs to be filled.

*Melissa Sklarz, Board Co-Chair of Empire State Pride Agenda, the state-wide LGBTQ lobbying organization and long-time political and community activist. She will be the first out trans delegate from New York to the Democratic National Convention in July.*

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### **Choices Medical TransCare is here to help you.**

Choices is a safe, supportive and caring environment and will provide the care you need to live your life as you are. You deserve it. Choices TransCare will have a team of mental health and peer counselors to address the psycho-social issues particular to the trans community as well as a special coordinator for those who will have to spread their care between different locations. From the best health care to assistance with identity documents and other support services, Choices Medical TransCare will be here for you.

*Dr. Mary Jane Bovo, Associate Medical Director, Choices Women's Medical Center*



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### **July 2016: Family Care at Choices**

Starting July, women and girls (14 years and older) will be able to receive Family Health Care at Choices Women's Medical Center by a team of expert providers; doctors, nurse practitioners and specialists. Choices will make accessing the healthcare that you and your family need easy and affordable.

Services will include physical exams, vaccinations, chronic disease management, wellness exams, care for short term illnesses such as flu, respiratory infections and more. Our state-of-the art facility, convenient location, extended hours, same-day and next-day appointments, in-house insurance application and renewal and on-site Lab makes Choices Medical the right decision when it comes to your Family Health Care.

Choices high-quality, compassionate and expert care in preventing, screening and treating illnesses will make and keep your family well. For more information about our Family Care, please call Choices at 718-786-5000 or text "CHOICES" to 27126.

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### **Dancing, Baking or Bowling. Were You Right?**

In our May newsletter we introduced you to three of Choices' wonderful women providers - and asked you to guess who does what in her spare time: dancing, baking or bowling. Did you guess right? Here's the real deal:

Amy Cousins, M.D. has won National Championships in ballroom dancing. Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Winter loves to bake, especially for her 4-year-old twins. Registered Physician Assistant Delisa Banks wishes she had more time to spend bowling. We salute them all!

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