

Things to Consider When Seeking Gender Affirming Care for Those Living Outside of Illinois

Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL) is committed to providing quality health care services to our patients including gender affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) for individuals ages 16 and older with signed informed consents. We recognize that the availability of services for gender affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) is changing rapidly in states other than Illinois. Planned Parenthood cannot provide legal advice or information about the legality of GAHT services outside of Illinois. We recommend that you consult with local/state entities such as the ACLU for specific advice for your state.

We have compiled some things to consider as you are seeking Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy (GAHT) services for yourself or a minor who lives outside of Illinois.

- **Initial appointment:** The initial appointment for GAHT services is typically scheduled with a clinician. This provider will gather information and review initial laboratory blood tests. These appointments typically take about 1-2 hours.
 - **Those at least 18 years old:** The initial appointment can be scheduled at any PPIL site including telehealth with some limitations: For appointments for those seeking testosterone hormone, a telehealth initial appointment can be conducted prior to November 11, 2023, but after November 11, 2023, the initial appointment must be in-person (note: for all telehealth visits, the patient needs to attest to being in Illinois at the time of the appointment).
 - **Those individuals ages 16 – 17:** The initial appointment can be scheduled at any PPIL location (other than telehealth), after a licensed behavioral health clinician/therapist has provided PPIL a letter confirming the diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria and recommending hormone therapy. An appointment with a PPIL behavioral health clinician can be scheduled to obtain the letter if needed. We can provide a template for your therapist to write the letter if you already have an established therapist. The appointment with a PPIL behavioral health clinician needs to be an in-person visit and all legal decision-making parents/guardians need to attend. The letter from your therapist needs to be reviewed and approved or the appointment with a PPIL behavioral health clinician needs to be completed before the initial GAHT service can be scheduled. All legal decision-making parents/guardians need to attend the initial appointment in order to sign informed consent documents.
- **Frequency of visits to Planned Parenthood for care:** After the initial GAHT service with a PPIL provider, follow up visits will need to be scheduled. Follow up visits can be scheduled with any provider at any PPIL site or by using telehealth services (as long as the patient is physically located in Illinois at the time of the telehealth service). Follow up GAHT services typically include laboratory tests that are reviewed by the provider at the time of the appointments. These follow up visits are expected to take place 3 months after beginning hormone therapy and 3 months after any changes to hormone doses. Once the therapy regimen is satisfactory and labs are in a healthy range, follow up appointments can be spaced out up to 6 months for testosterone and up to 12 months for other medications. For most patients, follow up appointments are scheduled at 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year following the initial visit, and then yearly.

If hormone therapy is being transferred from another provider to PPIL and that regimen is stable, we may be able to space out the visits and labs to 6 months and then yearly. We will need to have the medical records shared with us. You can ask your current healthcare provider to fax records to 312-533-2845 or you can upload a copy of your records to your MyChart (our electronic medical record's patient portal).

It is not necessary to see the same provider for all appointments. Our locations and hours are listed on our website. We suggest you plan your visits early as appointment times, especially for an initial GAHT service, can fill up quickly. Your transportation plans may need to take into consideration delayed travel times during heavier traffic periods, weather challenges, transportation to/from airport/train station, parking fees for urban locations, overnight stays, obtaining medications from a pharmacy near the health center

- **Prescriptions:** PPIL will electronically send the prescription to the pharmacy of your choice. PPIL does not know if hormone therapy will be available at pharmacies in a state with a legal ban. We recommend speaking with local support groups to learn about peoples' experiences in your state if you wish to use a non-Illinois pharmacy. We recommend using a pharmacy in Illinois and encourage you to include in your travel plans adequate time to obtain the prescription from the pharmacy. Depending upon how the medications will be paid, there may be a preauthorization process before the medication is available for pick up at the pharmacy. Please discuss with the PPIL provider if there is a need for more than a 30-day supply (although most insurance companies only cover 30-day supply at a time although if you are paying out of pocket, you may be able to access more than a 30-day supply).
- **Laboratory testing:** Initial laboratory tests are typically drawn at the PPIL at the time of the initial appointment and do not need to be fasting labs. Follow up laboratories can be drawn at any PPIL location or an outside lab of your choice with results shared to PPIL. It is unknown if laboratories located in states with gender-affirming care bans will draw labs for GAHT, therefore, we recommend that labs are drawn at a PPIL health center or at a LabCorps location in Illinois (there are some LabCorp locations inside Walgreens – see their website for specific locations <https://www.labcorp.com/labs-and-appointments-advanced-search>). We recommend having your lab tests drawn 1-2 weeks before your appointment to make sure we have received the results and can review them with you at your appointment. The most accurate time for lab tests to be done depends on how often you take your medications. For weekly injections, you should have lab tests drawn 3-4 days after your injection. For every other week injections, you should have lab tests drawn 7 days after your injection. For daily or twice daily medications, you should have lab tests drawn 3-4 hours after medication is ideal.”
- **Cost of Services and Medications:** PPIL services are covered by most Illinois insurance carriers. We recommend checking with your insurance before scheduling the appointment if you wish to use insurance. We anticipate that insurance plans in a state with a ban may not cover gender affirming hormone care or prescriptions. We encourage the use of discount cards like Good RX to help reduce the cost of prescriptions. PPIL has available for sale a package of 6 months of supplies needed for injectable medications for those with a prescription from PPIL (the medication would need to be obtained at a pharmacy).

Planned Parenthood of Illinois has a team of staff including case managers and behavioral health clinicians that can answer questions and assist you.