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PRESS RELEASE

Cascade AIDS Project and Kaiser Partner for More Inclusive Intake Forms

Portland, OR (May 30th, 2018) – Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) is very pleased to announce a new initiative in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente.

CAP and Kaiser Permanente have kicked off a project aimed at changing both the way individuals disclose their gender identity when enrolling in Kaiser insurance and the way gender non-conforming patients are then routed through the healthcare system.

This initiative started with a non-binary CAP HIV/STI Testing Coordinator, Shannon Redmond. They chose not to check a “male” or “female” box during insurance enrollment. As this precluded them from receiving insurance, the employee then went through a lengthy appeal process with Kaiser in an attempt to accurately portray their gender identity on the intake form. While the situation was eventually rectified after multiple months with help from Compensation Systems Northwest, the scenario represented a bigger structural issue within Kaiser and prompted action aimed at rethinking the HMO’s forms and processes.

Over the next year Kaiser and CAP will work together as CAP employees disclose their gender identity to Kaiser using a brand new intake form with options beyond the existing binary male or female. The pilot will allow users to choose male, female, non-binary, or choose to decline. A non-binary or decline response will challenge Kaiser to create new paths to guide patients through its system. For example, these patients may require a combination of traditionally male and female services OR services that bely clinicians’ expectations based on a patient’s gender presentation. On the technological side, individuals have a temporary marker in the system to allow them to be identified by sex and not gender.

Kaiser is piloting with all new CAP employees, and has assembled a small team to work on the project - including answering enrollee questions. CAP staff is excited to work with Kaiser on the progressive and much-needed effort. The pilot officially kicked off on March 9th when the very CAP employee that catalyzed the project completed the new form. Kaiser also provided the employee retroactive insurance for the time before the form existed.

Kaiser aims to scale up and roll out this project nationally within a couple years. CAP and Kaiser look forward to the pilot year and the benefit it will provide not only to CAP employees, but the wider Kaiser patient population as the organization learns and grows through the project.

About Cascade AIDS Project

Cascade AIDS Project is the oldest and largest AIDS Service Organization in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Prism Health, a primary care health center, is an integral part of CAP’s expanding mission to serve the broader LGBTQ+ community. More information can be found at www.cascadeaids.org and www.prismhealth.org.

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