Tyler Slaughter (he/him) knew he had come to the right place the moment our clinic staff at Country Doctor welcomed him to his first appointment.

They asked him what name he'd like to be called, not assuming it was the same as the one on his insurance card. They asked the question with a matter-of-fact ease that made him feel welcome — seen and heard in ways he’d never experienced before. Not in a doctor’s office. Not anywhere.

“It was all about making me feel comfortable in my own skin,” says Tyler, who became a Country Doctor patient about three years ago.

He doesn’t mind the nearly hourlong drive it takes them to get from his home near Federal Way to Country Doctor. He goes the distance because they know he’ll receive not only excellent medical care here, but also an uncommon level of dignity and respect developed over many years of caring for transgender patients and others in the LGBTQ community.

Growing up, Tyler never felt like he was a girl, despite his female anatomy. For years, “tomboy” seemed close enough. It wasn’t until midway through high school that he realized he didn’t have to keep pretending. He took his time at the start of his gender-reaffirmation journey, “which really meant wearing a lot more plaid,” he chuckles.

“And flannel!” his Mom, Lili (she/her), chimes in.

After a year of counseling and lots of thoughtful family discussions about the pros and cons of gender transitioning, they all decided — together — that the next step for Tyler would be testosterone treatments.

Lili remembers one of the moments that gave her confidence they were doing the right thing. “I was asking my daughter, ‘Why do you want to become a boy?’ and he said, ‘Mom, I don’t want to become a boy. I think I’ve always been a boy.’

Tyler's nurses at Country Doctor helped him conquer a lifelong fear of needles so he can administer his testosterone shots himself. His mom also learned how to give him his “T shots” every other week, in case he ever has trouble self-administering them.

“We all wanted to love and support Tyler in this process together,” says Katie Hester (she/her), Tyler’s primary care provider. “It was really special to us to see a young person so supported by his family and to be a part of that.”

Step by step, a gender navigation specialist helped Tyler jump through the many hoops that insurance companies require before granting coverage of treatments like the breast-removal surgery Tyler is slated to undergo this fall.

Tyler and his family know the path he’s chosen won’t always be easy. But they’re grateful that no matter what challenges they face, they can count on Country Doctor to be there for them in all the ways that affirm how important this journey is — for Tyler, for his health and well-being, for his future.
Dear friends,

For nearly 50 years, Carolyn Downs and Country Doctor have shared a deep commitment to welcoming all who needed care. We’ve made intentional efforts to welcome members of the LGBTQ community throughout our history.

Founded in 1979, the volunteer-run Seattle Gay Clinic chose Country Doctor as its partner when it was looking for a location, treating patients out of an iconic old firehouse on 15th Avenue East for many years. I remember climbing the stairs of that old firehouse to receive services there in the 1980s, when one in five gay men in Seattle were living with HIV. Many could not find welcoming and competent health care, so Country Doctor stepped up and became the nonprofit leader in HIV care.

Today, we care for 450 HIV-positive patients, directly and community-wide. We’ve made intentional efforts to share a deep commitment to welcoming all who needed care, and we have a rich history of providing high-quality care to all patients. It’s our mission to serve the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community.

We are proud to be expanding the services we offer to our transgender, non-binary, gender diverse and gender nonconforming patients, who face needless barriers to receiving medical care and deserve to thrive. Here are some of the ways we are deepening our commitment to gender-affirming care:

- A Gender Health Navigator now helps patients at both Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center and Country Doctor Community Clinic, assisting with the complex process insurance companies require for coverage of gender-affirming medical interventions.
- Another nurse has joined our Gender Health team, allowing us to serve more trans and gender nonconforming patients. (Learn more about Meg Cummings in the Provider Q&A on the next page.)
- Fourth-year University of Washington medical students in an LGBTQ clerkship spend one day a week at Country Doctor, gaining hands-on experience with gender-affirming care and other aspects of LGBTQ medicine.
- The Carolyn Downs clinic site for the Swedish Family Medicine Residency at Cherry Hill provides training in gender-affirming care.
- We recognize our commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment for our patients includes recruiting openly trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming providers to our staff.

Trans health care is an ordinary part of primary care at Carolyn Downs and Country Doctor, provided with competence and without stigma. We meet every patient’s medical needs with profound respect for everything that makes them unique.

One-third of our senior staff and board of directors identify as LGBTQ, along with many of you who support our work so generously. Thank you for standing with us in our belief that health care is a right that everyone deserves — today, tomorrow, and always.

Raleigh Watts (he/him)
Executive Director,
Country Doctor Community Health Centers

Deepening our commitment to gender-affirming care

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Give the gift of community health

During this season of giving, your gifts to Country Doctor Community Health Centers:

• Ensure that more people receive comprehensive care in a compassionate atmosphere of dignity and respect, regardless of their ability to pay.
• Advance the work we do to respond to emerging needs with innovative approaches.
• Make our vision of a healthier, more just community a reality.

Make your tax-deductible gift today by mailing us a check in the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.countrydoctor.org.