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Myth #4: Transitioning is as simple as one surgery

By German Lopez | @germanlopez | german.lopez@vox.com | Updated Nov 14, 2018, 4:09pm EST

Part of **Transgender people: 10 common myths**

Transitioning is a long, complicated process that involves far more than medical procedures. Trans people also have to go through personal, legal, and social changes — and some may go through some of these changes but forgo medical procedures entirely.

Trans people individually decide how they'll express their gender identity in different public and private settings. They may decide

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to be fully open with some people but cautious with others. Some trans people will also undertake legal changes, such as changing a name or switching a gender marker on a driver's license. And those who are willing and can afford it will go through medical procedures, including hormone therapies, gender-affirming surgeries, or only some of the medical options.

Kortney Ziegler, a trans man in Oakland, California, described his transition as a journey. "I use that word — journey — because it contrasts from a definitive time stamp," he said. "It's not that simple for a lot of people."

Depending on geography, the legal transition can be particularly tricky for some trans people. States have all sorts of requirements and rules for allowing people to, for example, change the gender marker on their birth certificates and driver's licenses. Some require a court order, verification from a medical professional, or certain surgeries, while others don't allow a change at all on some documents. (For a breakdown of states' laws for identification documents, check out the databases at the **National Center for Transgender Equality** and **Lambda Legal**.)

The legal difficulties are just one of many examples that demonstrate trans people

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can't just go through a simple medical procedure to reach the status they want in society. For some people, going through the social, legal, and medical hurdles is a years-long process — and local, state, and federal laws can make it difficult for trans people to fully complete their journeys.

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Transgender people: 10 common myths

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