



**Help keep  
Vox free**

We're 71% of the way to reaching our goal for our September campaign to support our clear and accessible policy coverage. Will you help us get there by making a gift today?

**Yes, I'll Give**

×

# Myth #5: All trans people medically transition

By German Lopez | @germanlopez | german.lopez@vox.com | Updated Nov 14, 2018, 4:08pm EST

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

Not everyone who is transgender prioritizes or desires procedures, such as hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgeries, required for a full medical transition. While some undergo medical transitions for cosmetic, psychological, or health reasons, many won't because they can't afford it, face some other obstacle, or simply don't want to.

The 2011 **National Transgender Discrimination Survey** found 61 percent of

## *Most Read*

- 1 1 winner and 3 losers from Fox's dud of a second GOP debate**
- 2 The Republican debate is fake**



trans and gender nonconforming respondents reported having medically transitioned, and 33 percent said they had surgically transitioned. About 14 percent of trans women and 72 percent of trans men said they don't ever want full genital construction surgery.

Some but not all trans people require but can't access medical care. They may, for instance, suffer from severe gender dysphoria, a state of emotional distress caused by how someone's body or the gender they were assigned at birth conflicts with their gender identity. This condition, the American Medical Association noted in a **2008 resolution**, can lead to "distress, dysfunction, debilitating depression and, for some people without access to appropriate medical care and treatment, suicidality and death." But the **AMA** and **American Psychiatric Association** say it can be treated by letting someone transition without significant barriers and social stigma.

But trans people very often face discrimination in medical settings that prevents them from getting this type of care. In a **national survey published by various LGBTQ groups in 2010**, 19 percent of trans and gender nonconforming people said they were refused care because of their gender

Each week, we explore unique solutions to some of the world's biggest problems.

Email (required)

By submitting your email, you agree to our Terms and Privacy Notice. You can opt out at any time. This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply. For more newsletters, check out our newsletters page.

SUBSCRIBE

identity or expression, 28 percent of trans and gender nonconforming respondents said they were subjected to harassment in medical settings, and 2 percent said they experienced violence. This led to delays in care for many people: 28 percent said they postponed medical care when sick or injured due to discrimination.

In 2016, the Obama administration clarified that Obamacare regulations **explicitly prohibit anti-transgender discrimination** from medical providers and insurers. So the type of discrimination trans people faced in the past is now illegal.

Still, access to health care remains a major issue for LGBTQ groups. For organizations like the **National Center for Transgender Equality**, getting all trans people into life-saving health care — whether it's by overcoming financial hurdles or discrimination — remains a major goal. But if the public and policymakers aren't aware of the kinds of issues trans people face in health care, it makes it much more difficult to communicate why this is part of a serious problem.

You've read 1 article in the last 30 days.

## Will you join us?

Our biggest supporters are our readers — and we're so grateful to everyone who has made a contribution during our September campaign. We're less than 1,000 contributions away from reaching our goal for the month, which in turn will allow us to say yes more often when our incredible journalists come to us with questions they want to answer and projects they want to pursue. **Will you make a contribution before the month ends and support our policy coverage through 2024 and beyond?**

One-Time	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Month</b>	<input type="radio"/> Annual
----------	---	------------------------------

- \$5/month**
- \$10/month
- \$25/month
- \$50/month
- Other

**Yes, I'll give \$5 /month**

We accept credit card, Apple Pay, and Google Pay. You can also contribute via




---

## Transgender people: 10 common myths

Myth #1: Transgender people are confused or tricking others

Myth #2: Sexual orientation is linked to gender identity

Myth #3: Letting trans people use the bathroom or locker room matching their gender identity is dangerous

Myth #4: Transitioning is as simple as one surgery

Myth #6: Transgender-inclusive health care is expensive

Myth #7: Children aren't old enough to know their gender identity

Myth #8: Transgender people are mentally ill

Myth #9: Transgender people make up a third gender

Myth #10: Drag queens and kings are transgender

---

# Sign up for Vox Recommends

Get curated picks of the best Vox journalism to read, watch, and listen to every week, from our editors.

Email (required)

SUBSCRIBE

By submitting your email, you agree to our Terms and Privacy Notice. You can opt out at any time. This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.