What is gender confirming consultant pharmacy (GCPC)?
GCPC is a self-developed practice setting involving the assistance and education of transgender individuals on the hormone therapies involved with gender transitioning. It also involves removing the obstacles to their care along with connecting and assisting them with the other resources they may need.

What is the role of a gender confirming consultant pharmacist?
In my role, I act on a volunteer basis to assist members of the transgender community as a liaison to their physician when starting or continuing their hormone therapies. I also frequently serve as an information bridge for either patients whose doctors work on informed consent or filling information gaps for patients moving from their gender therapists to physician care. In that capacity, I explain in detail the expected effects, benefits and risks, and possible health interactions of their individual therapies, hormone and otherwise. Because it has been a self-developed role, I have also taken active roles in removing financial- or resource-driven obstacles to their care and have, as of late, also assisted in improving their social support networks if necessary. The patients I take on will usually make me their primary communication hub to ensure smooth communication, problem solving and transition therapy maintenance. In many instances, I will work in collaboration with the patient’s doctor in the dosing and monitoring of the medications, blood lab values and external end points involved in safe, effective transitioning.
How can you prepare for a career as a gender confirming consultant pharmacist?

Though it’s difficult to answer that precisely because I’ve developed this on my own, I can talk about what I’ve done to prepare. I have studied and researched the multiple schools of practice on transition hormone therapy and familiarized myself with their benefits, risks and histories of effectiveness. I also see a strong value in becoming sincerely integrated into the transgender community on some level, as an educator, advocate, supporter, etc. I share this because, sincerely, you must develop trust and cultural competency in order to become effective and because you will gain your greatest education and insight from the community and your experience with them.

What is in the future for gender confirming consultant pharmacy?

It is my vision that the model matures in several areas. 1. It becomes a more formalized and repeated model across the country; 2. The pharmacist ultimately becomes the hub of both entry and communication for all points of the transgender individual’s care. Whether on their own, or from a physician, therapist, support group or even economic group, the patient will see pharmacists as the logical professional to reach out to next to help empower, educate and connect the individual as they seek to strengthen their journey; and 3. I will be able to mature this model into a self-sustaining practice by showing its validity to qualify for funding either by grants, donations or sponsorships.

MEMBER PROFILE: DARNELL JONES

How long have you practiced as a gender confirming consultant pharmacist, and what interested you about this practice area?

I began practicing and developing this practice model in June 2013 as a once weekly volunteer service initiative out of Affirmations LGBTQ center in Ferndale. I was drawn to explore and construct this practice model as a method to better serve and strengthen the transgender community coupled with seeking a method to use pharmacy skill sets to directly impact the health disparities shown as focus points for the transgender population in the Healthy People 2020 initiative. Most notable were the points concerning lack of educated health professionals available, the lack of safety and comfort in practice settings and the lack of trust inherent in the transgender community regarding health professionals. I also see this as a way to help increase the overall empowerment and positive self-imaging of those I serve.

What motivates you to continue practicing in this area?

I’m motivated primarily by my recognition of the intense need to reduce the health and social inequities of the transgender community and my ability to assist in this. I’m also drawn to the intense satisfaction of seeing this branch of pharmacy as being one of such positive power in the fulfillment of many patient needs. It has become one more aspect in my continuing service to this and the LGBT community at large. As an ally, I seek to do all I can daily and this form of practice and service fits that desire well.

What is one thing that you would want student pharmacists and other pharmacy professionals to know about gender confirming consultant pharmacy?

I have no idea if others are in the practice phase of this model but I would like to share that it is a model in its infancy and I currently practice it as a volunteer service. I have, however, been immensely rewarded many times over by the sense of satisfaction I feel from this proud pharmacy model. I would hope that any who would like to see this area become more real and sustainable would contact me at labofvlad@sbcglobal.net. I would only ask that you be the caliber of person and pharmacist who sees the increase in the human condition as a primary return on investment, and I know the rest will follow from that.

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