

# CITY SUBURBAN NEWS

FREE

PHILADELPHIA & THE MAIN LINE'S FAVORITE WEEKLY

Year 31, No. 35

Celebrating 31 Years of Community News

May 4 – May 10, 2016

Page 4

CITY SUBURBAN NEWS

May 4 – May 10, 2016

## PCOM Hosts First Transgender Medicine Symposium



To help primary care doctors better understand and more effectively treat the growing number of transgender patients in the US, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) recently hosted a continuing medical education lecture on transgender medicine, which brought together local and national experts in the field to speak on a variety of topics such as continuity of care, counseling services, surgical options and hormone treatments.

*Rachel Levine, MD, Pennsylvania's first transgender female Physician General, addresses attendees at PCOM's first Transgender Medicine Symposium.*

Among the event's speakers was Rachel Levine, MD, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's appointee for Physician General—and the first transgender woman to hold the title. She discussed transgender medicine among pediatrics and adolescents, and called for more gender confirmation care providers in Pennsylvania. She also stressed that gender identity is more than just one's physical characteristics.

"Gender identity is up here," she said, pointing to her head, "not down there."

Other speakers included AC Demidont, symposium co-chair and director of transgender medicine at the CIRCLE CARE Center in Norwalk, CT; Christine McGinn, founder of the Papillon Gender Wellness Center in New Hope, PA; and Sherman Leis, professor and chair, plastic and reconstructive surgery, and founder of the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery.

Traditionally, it has been difficult for this population to receive adequate care; a recent study by Lambda Legal found that 70 percent of transgender patients had experienced discrimination in health care, and another study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National LGBTQ Task Force found that 33 percent either postponed treatment or did not seek preventive care due to those past experiences.

"There is a lack of continuity of care among transgender individuals," said Lisa McBride, PhD, chief diversity officer and symposium co-chair. "Because primary care providers are often on the front lines of treating this population, it was important for us to bring them together to understand not only how best to provide care, but to ensure that care is maintained throughout the healthcare system."

Thus far, the College has taken several steps to augment its medical education curriculum, to better prepare DO and physician assistant studies students to address LGBTQ issues, including an interactive course for second year students to learn more about the unique health disparities facing this community, such as rates of HIV and cancer.

The College is also making its campuses in Philadelphia and Georgia more welcoming to transgender individuals who want to practice medicine—research shows that patients are more likely to trust a clinician who shares their background. These include the establishment of the LGBTQIA subcommittee of the President's Diversity Council; the establishment of Safe Zones on both campuses; and the construction of gender-neutral restrooms.