How Far Would You Travel to See a Health Care Provider Who Saw the Whole You?

Patients are traveling from seven different states, including rural Minnesota, to access high-quality, patient-centered health care at Family Tree Clinic.

How far do you travel to see your health care provider? Most people in the U.S. travel an average of 20 minutes to get to health care appointments.

What if you had to travel six to nine hours?

Our patients are doing just that. Since we rolled out limited primary care (2015) and trans hormone care (2016), we’ve seen an incredible increase in patients coming from the upper Midwest for their health care needs.

“I have patients who travel all night via train or bus, arrive at the clinic when we open, only to sit in the lobby until their afternoon appointment because they don’t know anyone in the city,” said Rachael Berube, one of our nurse practitioners, “but they choose to come here because they know they’re going to receive the type of care they want and deserve.”

Most of our patients who are traveling from different states or greater Minnesota are coming to Family Tree for trans hormone care.

Patients who travel from these areas express how

Each dot represents an area from which patients travel. Most of the longer distances represent folks who are traveling specifically for hormone care at Family Tree. People choose to come here either because hormone services are lacking or non-existent in their area, or they’re specifically seeking us out based on our reputation. Current states include greater Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

continued...
How Far Would You Travel

continued from front

unsupported they feel in their own community due to lack of resources and a void of trans competent health care services.

Transgender individuals are already more likely to be discriminated against, deal with depression and anxiety, and have dramatically higher rates of suicide. Adding lack of high-quality, competent health care only further increases the health disparities the trans and gender nonconforming community faces.

“We’re working hard to increase our capacity in order to serve more people. When we started providing hormone care on a sliding fee scale, we knew there was a need...we didn’t realize just how great the need was,” commented Alissa Light, Executive Director.

“There is nothing like this [Family Tree] in my hometown. I ride the bus for six hours just to get to the clinic because you guys are literally saving my life. I can never thank you enough.”

We’ve recently increased our capacity by working with Kelsey Leonardsmith, MD, who is an Allina Health and United Family Medicine fellow. Through this fellowship, Kelsey is able to provide hormone care at Family Tree one day a week. Kelsey specializes in adolescent care because as they state, “a year in the life of a teenager is a lot longer compared to someone in their 20s or 30s.”

Not only are we thrilled to welcome Kelsey to the team, but we’re also thrilled to have people like you who help us make everything we do possible.

Access to hormones is life changing for the trans and gender nonconforming communities. And because of you, we’re able to plan for the future so we can meet the growing demand.
Wendy Harris: Why I’m a Sustainer

Having been a sustaining donor for six years, Wendy is one of Family Tree Clinic’s biggest supporters. Learn why she values our work and how she encourages others to as well.

How did you learn about us?
After a particularly bad exam at another clinic, I decided to find a new clinic and found Family Tree. My relief at seeing all the queer-welcoming signs and being treated with utmost respect led me to want to make this experience available to more people.

Why is it important to you to support our work?
Many people are marginalized from mainstream health care. The work Family Tree does to welcome some of these people and provide respectful, knowledgeable health care is crucial.

Why are you a sustainer?
I do have health insurance, but I am aware that many people do not, or that their insurance is minimal or they are on someone else’s health insurance. I’m in a position to help make health care available to more people and decided to become a monthly donor to make it easier for me to give consistently.

What do you tell people about Family Tree?
Family Tree is awesome! The staff are diverse and welcoming to all patients, staff are respectful regardless of where we are on our journeys and what our background is. This is evident in everything from the way questions are asked at the front desk and on the health forms to the experience in the exam room.

Your support provides competent care to those who need us most.

9% in 2009
Patients who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and gender nonconforming.

52% today
MN Prison Doula Project and Family Tree Team Up

We’ll be partnering with the Minnesota Prison Doula Project in April to offer “It’s That Easy” parent classes at Shakopee Women’s Correctional Facility — and you made this possible.

The two-hour class, led by Jacki our Director of Community Engagement, will equip parent inmates with information and techniques to support healthy conversations about sexuality between young people and trusted adults.

It provides guidance on a variety of topics — from how to respond to straightforward questions about body parts, to how to broach more complex issues such as media influences and personal values. The first session is a trial run with the goal of visiting Shakopee on a regular basis.

And if you haven’t heard of the Minnesota Prison Doula Project, we encourage you to check them out by visiting mnprisondoulaproject.org.

If you have questions or would like to support this work, please contact Jacki at jtrelawny@familytreeclinic.org.

SAVE THE DATE

The 4th Annual Spelling Bee for Cheaters is happening October 5! It’s team-based spelling, and the more your team raises the more you can cheat!

Registration opens in July!

Community Building via Education

Our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Health Educators are doing incredible things....thanks to you.

Never underestimate the power of your support! The outpouring of volunteers and donors over the past few months is remarkable. It enables us to do some terrific things, but our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) Health Educators are making big waves.

They’ve been busy...

• creating a trans support group for Deaf folks;
• increasing capacity for one-on-one counseling (since the election there has been an up tick in requests);
• providing sex education classes at schools and chemical dependency programs; and
• working with families and expectant parents on healthy pregnancies and birth.

We’re also partnering with community members to support DDBHH folks in prisons. By working to create opportunities to provide health education to people who otherwise have zero access, we are focusing on building community directly through this work.

The staff and doulas of the Minnesota Prison Doula Project (pictured above) provide pregnancy and parenting support for incarcerated women. They help nurture healthy mother-child relationships and increase parenting confidence and skills.