

Throwing a medical lifeline to the transgender community

Finding the right medical professionals can be difficult for transgender people. The Genderis website wants to make it easier.

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After multiple therapy sessions, each costing \$175 out of pocket, yet another therapist told Kris Marquis that she needed to find someone else to talk to. Transgender issues weren't quite their thing.

Marquis had a breakdown. But also, she had an epiphany.

After years of frustrating experiences trying to find health care professionals experienced in working with the transgender community, Marquis decided to use her background in technology to attack the problem. She got to work on **Genderis**, a website that, when it launches as soon as December, will make it easier for transgender individuals to find doctors and mental health professionals with expertise in transgender issues.

Genderis will provide users with vetted medical professionals who are transgender-friendly, as well as give users the ability to track doctor visits and costs. Marquis said there's a road map with more features that may even include a job board and a global presence, one day.

As **society starts to turn an eye** toward a community that has existed for a very long time, there's still great ground to cover. One of the higher-profile news stories this year has been the **battle in states like North Carolina**, Indiana and Georgia to dictate who can use which public restrooms. Prominent figures in tech like **Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff** are using their clout to keep anti-transgender legislation from passing.

An **analysis** of state and federal data released this summer by UCLA's **Williams Institute** suggests there are 1.4 million adults in the US who identify as transgender. That figure doesn't include **transgender children**. Those people, plus countless unidentified others, will need medical help at some point while simultaneously facing a dearth of doctors who understand them.

Transgender people are also statistically **at a higher risk** for ailments such as heart attacks and strokes resulting in part from taking hormones, according to health care nonprofit **GLMA**. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Williams Institute **estimate that 41 percent of transgender people will try to commit suicide** during their lifetimes, compared with 4.6 percent of the general public. The need for health care spans many medical disciplines.

Marquis knows firsthand about the challenges of finding health care, such as gathering current information or dodging websites and search results she calls "trite, taboo or nefarious."

"Everything you look for around transgendered, or transsexual care is all these male/female signs, intertwining of the male and female signs, or pink or purple," she said. Cliches aren't the best way to enable conversation.

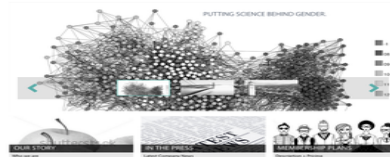
So applying her degrees in data and information systems and marketing, Marquis is trying to avoid such pitfalls and effectively rebrand the topic of transgender health care.

There are other sites pursuing similar goals. In July 2015, **MyTransHealth** launched a **Kickstarter** to build a website that lets people search for health care professionals by location and specialty. **RAD Remedy** is another nonprofit focused on connecting transgender individuals with health care providers.

Marquis, who grew up outside of Houston, Texas, and spent time in the Marines, also sees the growth and development of Genderis as a reflection of herself.

"I'm forcing myself to look in the mirror and also deal with my own challenges, my own coming out and deal with my own authenticity," she said. "The only way I saw that I was going to achieve this and to achieve balance and authenticity within my own life was to do something like this."

Marquis has been paying for Genderis' creation by renting out rooms in her house. She wants to launch a pilot in the San Francisco Bay Area around December or January, depending on whether she can secure additional funding soon.



Genderis wants to connect the transgender community with medical resources.

Genderis