

# Trans Masculine Alliance Houston

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## Leadership Team

**George Zemanek**

**Nexus Arrant**

**Myles Steelman**

## Want to get involved?

We always need folks to help present or co-lead at meetings, as well as tell us what topics they'd like us to focus on. If you'd like to help out or want to share an idea, please contact one of the members of the leadership team.



## What we've been up to...

June was Pride Month and some of us got to represent TMAH in the June 25<sup>th</sup> parade. We marched with the Transgender Foundation of America entry, alongside our trans sisters. The Monica Roberts Resource Center presented the first annual Houston Trans Pride event on July 24<sup>th</sup>. TMAH members George Zemanek and Landon Richie received recognition for their work in the transmasculine community.

The June 2<sup>nd</sup> bottom surgery panel discussion was a huge success. We had five panelists who spoke on their experiences with various gender-affirming surgeries. They discussed urethral lengthening, tissue expanders, sensation, complications, and medical tattooing. Written responses from one of the panelists are included in this newsletter for those unable to attend.

## May Calendar

**July 7:** As we move into warmer weather, and fewer COVID related restrictions, we're taking some time to discuss tips and concerns one should consider when you are traveling. This may include the new TSA guidelines, and what your rights are when you are flying, as well as sharing our overall experiences. We will meet in room 111 of the Montrose Center.

**July 21: TMAH Game Night** (6:30-8:30 pm in Room 111 of the Montrose Center) Bring board games, snacks, and non-alcoholic drinks. Bring a friend/partner/sibling too!

**July 23<sup>rd</sup> Social:** El Gato Coffeehouse, 508 Pecore St. Houston, TX 77009. We will meet up at 1:00pm. Entry is \$15 and must be pre-paid. Please contact Myles Steelman at [piggieangel6@gmail.com](mailto:piggieangel6@gmail.com) by July 9<sup>th</sup> if you'd like to attend. El Gato Coffeehouse is a cat person's dream. Tons of kitties to play with while you hang out with friends.

## **This Month's Spotlight**



PFLAG is the United States' first and largest organization uniting parents, families, and allies with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. PFLAG National is the national organization, which provides support to the PFLAG network of local chapters. PFLAG Houston meets once a month for general meetings and small groups. [www.pflaghouston.org](http://www.pflaghouston.org)

## **Did you miss the bottom surgery panel?**

The following responses were submitted by panelist Byron Kimball.

### **What influenced your decision to have surgery?**

Simply put, I didn't feel complete.

But long answer - In some way, I've always felt and known that a penis is really central to me feeling like I belong in my body. Some of my earliest memories are wondering when mine would develop.

But even when I came out as trans and began my transition several years ago, I waffled on whether or not to pursue surgery. Top? Hysto? Sure. Was a bit more ambivalent about bottom surgery, much as I wanted and needed a penis. Didn't think I could afford it and I'd internalized a lot of not great messages over the years over what a reconstructed penis was like - I was worried about losing sexual function, for instance. Figured I could just live with what I had and call it a day with prosthetics for sex and STP devices.

But it came to a head a few years ago. Nothing really sparked that moment. It was a mix of things. I started hearing from people who'd had bottom surgery and their experiences countered a lot of the myths I'd heard early on in my transition - their penises were just, well, penises with sexual sensation, a scrotum, a glans, you name it. Sex grew more uncomfortable - I became less able to just forget about my genitals and grew more dysphoric with every partner or encounter, especially when people would attempt to touch my current genital set-up. I became interested in surgery and started asking around for referrals right before COVID hit.

Initially, I was undecided between phalloplasty and monsplasty. I knew I wanted to have the ability to urinate standing, to have a penis that appeared at least somewhat cis passing, a scrotum, and, most importantly, no whiff of female genitalia. What I was undecided about was how important things like size and sexual penetration were. I knew I wanted to preserve as much sexual sensation as possible. I also didn't like the idea of a visible graft scar on a visible part of my body, like my arm. I consulted for both procedures.

What ultimately pushed me firmly into the metoidioplasty camp was this: with phalloplasty, if you opt for erectile implants, those need to be replaced every few years. I also felt more assured about metoidioplasty being a relatively more simple procedure (though any surgery has risks and complications). Doesn't mean that I won't consider phalloplasty at some point but metoidioplasty hits my desires: I'll have balls, the ability to pee standing and my own erections.

### **Who was your surgeon and why did you select that person?**

For now, I've decided to go with Dr. Nick Esmonde at the Meltzer clinic (their Portland office). Couple reasons - he was trained by OHSU and he has support from Meltzer, who has a lot of skin in the bottom surgery game. I found I really liked his bedside manner - he was patient and attentive w/all of my various (and there were various!) questions and concerns about bottom surgery. And, not gonna lie, his office was also able to fit me in for both surgery stages in the same year I consulted.

### **What type of surgery did you have?**

I've decided to have metoidioplasty, with urethral lengthening, a vaginectomy and a scrotoplasty with implants. This was a long and hard decision. It took years for me to even take the plunge for any kind of bottom surgery.

Because I recently lost over 70lbs *and* had a prominent fatty mons, my surgeon recommended I have an extended monsplasty first to remove loose skin and fat from my pannis and mons.

### **How much did your surgery cost? Like the final cost, including all stages and revisions?**

Co-pay for my current stage was about \$2,000 by itself under the plan I had at the time.

Under my current plan (Blue Shield through my employer) out of pocket for this year is \$4500.

### **How many stages was your surgery?**

It'll actually be about 4 stages all together \*knock on wood\*

1. Monsplasty - May 2022 (complete)

2. Metoidioplasty with UL, vnec, scroto - September 2022
3. Tissue expanders inserted - November 2022 (?)
4. Implants inserted - January 2023 (?)

### **Are you happy with the results?**

So far, yes! I'm only about 2 weeks out from my monsplasty but it's already made a huge difference for me. I had a lot of loose, hanging skin. Now it's gone and I feel way better about how I look. There may be a need for future revisions but

### **What do you wish you had known prior to the surgery?**

1. Save for consults. Those costs add up, especially if you're like me and you consult with a lot of surgeons
2. It's okay to take time to figure out your surgery plan.

### **What tips and advice can you give us?**

If you have any kind of monsplasty/body sculpting, compression shorts really do come in handy

Exercise 3x times a week in the months leading up to surgery and make it a habit to stay hydrated. The healthier you are before op day, the easier and faster your healing will be.