

# Trans Masculine Alliance Houston

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## Leadership Team

**George Zemanek, president**

**Nexus Arrant, vice president**

**Lee Mead, treasurer**

**Myles Steelman, social chair**

**Ben Zimmerman, member at large**

## 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...

We had so many things go on in April! Community activist Meghan Fairbanks and Miranda Wood from Equality Texas met with us on April 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the current state of trans rights and the Texas Legislature. They answered many questions and provided lots of great information, which is on pages 2-4 of this newsletter.

Our Sex Health and Wellness workshop on April 22<sup>nd</sup> was amazing. Mauro Nolasco from Harris County Public Health, Rowan Twosisters from Preggers Can Be Choosers, and Koomah spoke about a variety of topics including STI prevention, reproductive healthcare, contraception, and health and hygiene. Mauro's notes are on pages 5-10 of this newsletter.

Hey! If you have not already gotten a t-shirt, you can get one at any of our events and meetings. They are \$10 and come in white and blue.

## March Calendar

**May 4<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting:** 6:30-8:30 pm in Room 111 of the Montrose Center. Topic is: Dating and Relationships. Forming and maintaining healthy relationships is complicated enough even without being trans or nonbinary. For this discussion we'll share our questions, advice, and experiences surrounding dating and relationships.

**May 18<sup>th</sup> Game Night and Crafts!** 6:30-8:30 pm Room 111 Montrose Center  
Bring board games, snacks, and non-alcoholic drinks. Bring a friend/partner/sibling too! We will have a craft table set up for our crafty folks!

## **This Month's Spotlight: Preggers Can Be Choosers**

Preggers Can Be Choosers is a healthcare organization founded and run by Rowan TwoSisters, CPM, LM, and her sister Dr. Blythe TwoSisters, PsyD, HSP, PMH-C. Preggers Can Be Choosers provides individuals with pregnancy and reproductive care through a variety of services. These include prenatal massage, trauma-informed PE/PAPS/STI testing, labor whispering, and so much more. Rowan TwoSisters also has developed STREAM: Scar Tissue Support for the Chest. TMAH president George Zemanek, who was a total skeptic, can attest that this program actually works in releasing adhesions and reducing top surgery scars. He says, "Although individual results will vary, my chest is super sexy and pliable."

<https://preggers.rocks/>

## **Trans Rights and the Texas Legislature Presentation Notes Meghan Fairbanks**

### **Note:**

There are links in the document in places where they are relevant. There is a complete list of links at the end of the document as well, along with my contact info. -Meghan

### **What's going on:**

- Welcome to day 100 of the 88th Texas Legislature.
- Unlike most other states, the Texas Legislature meets once every two years.
- Unlike most other states, legislators in Texas can file as many bills as they want.
- There have been 140 anti-LGBTQ+ bills filed in this session of the Texas Legislature. That's about double the number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills filed in the last legislature.

### **There is hope:**

- Of the 70+ bills filed last session, only one passed and it was watered down with amendments to the point that enforcement is questionable. And... it took them three special sessions to do it. Special sessions are unusual, and having three of them is even more unusual.
- We are past the filing deadline for more bills.
- There have been 144 pro-LGBTQ+ bills filed and some of them are making their way through.
- Of the negative bills filed, only a small number are making any movement. Granted, some of those bills are quite worrisome.
- Barring any special sessions, the last day of the legislature is May 29th, so the clock is running out to get things passed.
- No anti-LGBTQ bills have actually passed in this legislative session so far. There are still plenty of opportunities for any pending bills to die.

### What can we do in Austin:

- Testify / drop cards. You must be on the capitol grounds to drop a card.  
[How to Drop A Card - TFN](#)
- Dropping cards and registering to testify (even if you don't actually get to testify) helps. If these bills pass, these numbers can be used when groups like the ACLU or Lambda Legal file lawsuits. For [HB 1686](#), 2800 people dropped cards in opposition to the bill. Less than 100 dropped cards in support.
- Visit rep's offices. Tell them in person what to support or oppose and why. Tell your story. Make it personal. Find shared values with them. If they are in opposition, put a human face to who we are and make them think about it before they vote. If they are supporters, thank them for their support and remind them who they're fighting for.  
[Guide to Sharing Your Story - TENT](#)  
[Contacting Your Representative - TFN](#)
- Rallies and protests. Every person in the crowd matters. Collectively we are powerful and visibility matters. It shows the rest of the country, the rest of the world, that we're fighting back. It motivates people. It draws attention to the story. It gives hope to the people that can't be there.  
[Know Your Rights at a Protest - ACLU](#)

### What can we do locally:

- [Who Represents me?](#)
  - Visit their local district office if you can.
  - Sign up for their email list, follow them on social media, etc. even if they aren't an ally. They were elected to represent you. Make your voice heard as their constituent.
  - Call them, or email them.
- Phone calls to your reps and to committee members. Ask them to oppose/support a bill, or thank them for their support.
- Post on social media. Just post something positive. Counter the negativity that's out there. Don't engage the trolls.
- Tell your story to people in your lives. Make sure they know what's going on. Encourage people in your life to speak out.
- [Submit written testimony - EQTX](#)  
[Guide to Sharing Your Story - TENT](#)  
[Contacting Your Representative - TFN](#)

### Organizations to Follow:

#### Equality Texas

[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [YouTube](#) [TikTok](#)  
[Linktree](#)

A couple of my faves from their Linktree:

[Today's Actions](#) - Updated regularly  
[2023 Bill Tracker](#)  
[Sign Up for Emails](#)

#### TENT - Transgender Education Network of Texas

[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)  
[Linktree](#)

## **TFN - Texas Freedom Network**

[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

[How to drop a card.](#)

[Activist Tools](#)

## **ACLU TX**

[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [YouTube](#)

### **Individuals to follow:**

Brad Pritchett w/Equality Texas

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

Ash Hall w/ACLU Tx

[Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

Adri Perez w/TFN

[Twitter](#) [LinkTree](#)

### **Other Links:**

[TLO](#) - Texas Legislature Online

You can sign up for a free account. There is a lot of info on this site and one of the things you can do is track individual bills and get email alerts when they move.

[Who Represents Me](#)

Find who your elected officials are.

[Harris Votes](#)

Voter registration and voting/election information for Harris County.

[Voter Registration](#) - You can fill out the form online, but you will still need to print and mail it yourself.

[Registration Lookup](#) - Use this to verify that your registration is current.

[Information Removal Request](#) - Use this form if you don't want your registration, which includes your address, searchable online.

[The Calendars Committee](#)

This includes the phone numbers and email addresses of the members' offices and tips for what to say when contacting them.

[An Email Template](#) someone wrote.

Meghan Fairbanks

281-858-3311

[meghan@tgqh.org](mailto:meghan@tgqh.org)

## **Sexual Health and Wellness Presentation Notes**

### **Mauro Nolasco**

To schedule an appointment for HIV and STI testing, PrEP services, and for free condoms – please give us a call at:

(832) 927-7612

We are located at:

Antoine Prevention Clinic

5815 Antoine Drive

Houston, Texas 77091

For mobile testing (at home or your choice of location) – Contact the Testing 123 mobile team!

(281) 962-8378

Testing 123

- A mobile service anyone in Harris County and surrounding areas can contact by text to schedule an appointment. The mobile testing team can come to you either at home or your choice of location like a park.
- Our vehicles are unmarked and help with discretion while testing.
- We offer a FREE rapid HIV and Syphilis test with results in ten minutes. We can also assist with PrEP services and free condoms.

Antoine Prevention Clinic

- Clinical team offer STI and HIV testing, treatment, and PrEP services.
- Our clinic also offers Family Planning services and free condoms.

#### **Is HIV infection among transgender people on the rise?**

From data provided by the CDC – of the 36,801 new HIV diagnoses - Transgender People made up 2% (671) of new HIV diagnoses in the US and dependent areas in 2019.

#### **What is the current rate of new HIV infections in Houston?**

In 2020, there were 28,592 people living with HIV in Houston.

In 2020, 954 people were newly diagnosed with HIV according to [aidsvu.org](http://aidsvu.org)

### How effective is Prep?

- PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.
- PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken as prescribed.
- For **receptive anal sex (bottoming)**, PrEP pills reach maximum protection from HIV at about **7 days** of daily use.
- For **receptive vaginal sex** and **injection drug use**, PrEP pills reach maximum protection at about **21 days** of daily use.
- We don't know how long it takes for PrEP shots to reach maximum protection during sex.

Our Antoine Prevention Clinic can help get anyone started on PrEP.

### What happens if I have unprotected sex and then find out my partner has HIV?

- PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) means taking medicine to prevent HIV after a possible exposure. PEP should be used only in emergency situations and must be started within 72 hours after a recent possible exposure to HIV.

The **window period** for an HIV test refers to the time between HIV exposure and when a test can detect HIV in your body. The window period depends on the type of HIV test used.

- A **rapid antigen/antibody test** done with blood from a finger stick can usually detect HIV 18 to 90 days after exposure.
- An **antigen/antibody lab test** using blood from a vein can usually detect HIV 18 to 45 days after exposure.

### What is the most common STI? What do I really need to watch out for?

According to the CDC - The most common STD is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Often, HPV infection doesn't cause any noticeable symptoms or health problems. 9 out of 10 of HPV infections go away on their own within two years, according to the CDC. However, because the virus is still in a person's body during this time, that person may unknowingly transmit HPV can also cause cervical cancer and other cancers of the genitals, head, neck, and throat.

We recommend seeing your doctor if you notice unusual bumps or lesions on your penis, scrotum, or anus.

Some women may notice that they have genital warts, which can appear inside the vagina, in or around the anus, and on the cervix or vulva.

### What are all of the STIs? What are the signs and symptoms?

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), also known as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), are very common.

STDs pass from one person to another through vaginal, oral, and anal sex. They also can spread through intimate physical contact like heavy petting, though this is not very common.

**The only way to completely avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.**

## Chlamydia

Common STD that can cause infection among both men and women. It can cause permanent damage to a woman's reproductive system. This can make it difficult or impossible to get pregnant later. Chlamydia can also cause a potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the womb).

Chlamydia often has no symptoms, but it can cause serious health problems, even without symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may not appear until several weeks after having sex with a partner who has chlamydia.

Even when chlamydia has no symptoms, it can damage a woman's reproductive system. Women with symptoms may notice

- An abnormal vaginal discharge; and
- A burning sensation when peeing.
- A discharge from their penis;
- A burning sensation when peeing; and
- Pain and swelling in one or both testicles (although this is less common).

## Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is an STD that can cause infection in the genitals, rectum, and throat. You can get gonorrhea by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has gonorrhea. A pregnant person with gonorrhea can give the infection to their baby during childbirth.

Gonorrhea often has no symptoms, but it can cause serious health problems, even without symptoms.

Most people with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms. Even when there are symptoms, they are often mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection.

Symptoms can include:

- Painful or burning sensation when peeing;
- Increased vaginal discharge; and
- Vaginal bleeding between periods.
- A burning sensation when peeing;
- A white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis; and
- Painful or swollen testicles (although this is less common).

## Herpes

Genital herpes is an STD caused by two types of viruses – herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) and herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2).

HSV-1 often causes oral herpes, which can result in cold sores or fever blisters on or around the mouth. However, most people with oral herpes do not have any symptoms. Most people with oral herpes get it during childhood or young adulthood from non-sexual contact with saliva.

Genital herpes is common in the United States. In 2018, CDC estimates show there were 572,000 new genital herpes infections in the United States among people aged 14 to 49.<sup>1</sup>

You can get genital herpes by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the infection. You can get herpes if you have contact with:

- A herpes sore;
- Saliva from a partner with an oral herpes infection;
- Genital fluids from a partner with a genital herpes infection;
- Skin in the oral area of a partner with oral herpes; or
- Skin in the genital area of a partner with genital herpes.

You also can get genital herpes from a sex partner who does not have a visible sore or is unaware of their infection. It is also possible to get genital herpes if you receive oral sex from a partner with oral herpes.

You will not get herpes from toilet seats, bedding, or swimming pools. You also will not get it from touching objects, such as silverware, soap, or towels.

If you have more questions about herpes, consider discussing your concerns with a healthcare provider.

### Syphilis –

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can cause serious health problems without treatment. Infection develops in stages (primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary). Each stage can have different signs and symptoms.

Latent stage is a period where there are no visible signs. Without treatment, you can continue to have syphilis in your body for years.

Tertiary stage can affect many different organ systems. Tertiary syphilis is very serious and would occur 10-30 years after infection began.

You can get syphilis by direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

You cannot get syphilis through casual contact with objects, such as:

- toilet seats
- doorknobs
- swimming pools
- hot tubs
- bathtubs
- sharing clothing, or eating utensils

During the first (primary) stage of syphilis, you may notice a single sore or multiple sores. The sore is the location where syphilis entered your body. These sores usually occur in, on, or around the

- penis;
- vagina;
- anus;
- rectum; and
- lips or in the mouth.

Sores are usually (but not always) firm, round, and painless. Because the sore is painless, you may not notice it. The sore usually lasts 3 to 6 weeks and heals regardless of whether you receive treatment. Even after the sore goes away, you must still receive treatment. This will stop your infection from moving to the secondary stage.

### Trichomoniasis –



Trichomoniasis (or “trich”) is a very common STD caused by infection with *Trichomonas vaginalis* (a protozoan parasite). Although symptoms vary, most people who have trich cannot tell they have it.

In the United States, CDC estimates that there were more than two million trichomoniasis infections in 2018. However, only about 30% develop any symptoms of trich. Infection is more common in women than in men. Older women are more likely than younger women to have the infection.

Sexually active people can get trich by having sex without a condom with a partner who has trich

During sex, the parasite usually spreads from a penis to a vagina, or from a vagina to a penis. It can also spread from a vagina to another vagina.

Men with trich may notice:

- Itching or irritation inside the penis;
- Burning after peeing or ejaculating; and
- Discharge from the penis.

Women with trich may notice:

- Itching, burning, redness or soreness of the genitals;
- Discomfort when peeing; and
- A clear, white, yellowish, or greenish vaginal discharge (i.e., thin discharge or increased volume) with a fishy smell.

Having trich can make sex feel unpleasant. Without treatment, the infection can last for months or even years.

## **How are STI's treated?**

Chlamydia Treatment –

- Chlamydia does have a treatment. It is important that you take all of the medicine your healthcare provider gives you to cure your infection. Do not share medicine for chlamydia with anyone. When taken properly it will stop the infection and could decrease your chances of having problems later. Although medicine will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

Gonorrhea Treatment –

- Gonorrhea does have a treatment. It is important that you take all of the medicine your healthcare provider gives you to cure your infection. Do not share medicine for gonorrhea with anyone. Although medicine will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

Syphilis –

- Syphilis is curable with the right antibiotics from your healthcare provider. However, treatment might not undo any damage the infection can cause.

Trichomoniasis –

- Trich is the most common curable STD. A healthcare provider can treat the infection with medication (pills) taken by mouth. This treatment is also safe for pregnant people.

- You should not have sex again until you and your sex partner(s) complete treatment. You should receive testing again about three months after your treatment, even if your sex partner(s) received treatment.

Herpes –

- There is no cure for genital herpes. However, there are medicines that can prevent or shorten outbreaks. A daily anti-herpes medicine can make it less likely to pass the infection on to your sex partner(s).
- Without treatment - Genital herpes can cause painful genital sores and can be severe in people with suppressed immune systems.

### **Which STIs can be cured?**

STIs caused by bacteria can be cured using medication.

Syphilis

Gonorrhea

Chlamydia

Trichomoniasis

Please follow up with your Primary Care Provider or our Antoine Prevention Clinic for HIV/STI testing and/or treatment.