

CALL TO ORGANIZE RALLIES ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA:

Demand UPMC in Pittsburgh Continue Saving Trans Lives

Information for LGBTQ+ Organizations to Plan Solidarity Rallies

CALL TO ACTION: UPMC has decided to begin denying gender affirming medical healthcare for new minor patients at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP). This care at UPMC's *only* gender clinic has been vital to the many young people whose lives depend on it for over a decade. Statewide coordinated rallies will raise critical visibility of mass public rejection of UPMC's decision in pre-compliance with an illegal Executive Order, and demand they reverse their decision under the current circumstances. Continuing behavioral healthcare alone is not enough to save the lives of trans children and youth. These rallies will demonstrate needed public support for young trans Pennsylvanians.

YOU: We need your organizations and communities to rise up to this moment to organize rallies at UPMC facilities across our commonwealth on **Thursday, April 3rd, 2025**. A major rally will be taking place at UPMC's headquarters in Pittsburgh on April 3rd and rallies in solidarity throughout PA will elevate the message that Pennsylvanians DO care about trans children and youth.

The rallies are being held to demand that UPMC:

- 1) Reinstate gender affirming care for new patients at CHP in Pittsburgh given the current circumstances**
- 2) Should a court order, law, or regulation specifically mandate UPMC cease direct gender affirming care for young trans people, UPMC must enthusiastically support and fund alternative providers to ensure trans youth receive the medically-necessary healthcare they need to survive**

- 3) **Establish an advisory committee for UPMC's administration on gender affirming care, comprised of transgender youth and community leaders, and healthcare professionals**
- 4) **Not retaliate against our communities and continue funding for local programs and LGBTQ+ healthcare.**

GOAL: Mobilize rallies at UPMC locations — large or small — across their entire Pennsylvania footprint, including at urgent care centers, clinics, and hospitals across to demand they continue providing full gender affirming care to trans youth who are new patients. These solidarity rallies in conjunction with the mass rally in Pittsburgh will demonstrate to the public and our own communities our state's support for trans youth in Pennsylvania. These are also vital opportunities to build your community and networks. **YOU SHOULD BE BRINGING A SIGN-UP SHEET AND/OR ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO SEND THE ONLINE FORM LETTER TO UPMC! DO NOT MISS THE CHANCE TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED AFTER YOUR RALLY. We rally to organize, not just organize a rally.**

Timeframe:

- *Planning:* March 29-30
- *Announcement and Posting:* March 31
- *Event:* April 3

Who participates: All who support trans youth, civil rights, and healthcare access.

Who is the audience: Trans Pennsylvanians, allies, civic organizations, public officials, other healthcare systems, and local residents.

What: Outdoor rallies with speeches, chants, and signs, as key events for visibility and demonstrating people power to UPMC leadership. How these events look will be different based on your area. **It is important to center the decision-making in planning the rally with those most impacted by UPMC's decision and respect the lived experiences of our diverse**

communities. Your rallies may be small gatherings of a few people with signs on a sidewalk in front of an outpatient facility, a group of ten in front of an urgent care center with signs and media coverage, or a larger mobilization with speakers and an audio system in a permitted space in front of a UPMC hospital. All are important in demonstrating how widespread the support is for gender affirming care for trans youth.

Where: UPMC has locations in the following counties. [Please click here](#) to find the hospitals, outpatient facilities, urgent care centers, and other sites they maintain across PA. Any public space that is highly visible in front of any of these locations would serve as a perfect site for your rally.

UPMC has physical locations in the following counties:

Western PA: Allegheny, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland

Consolidation requested in Allegheny County to attend the major rally in downtown Pittsburgh — Please avoid as possible planning a rally near Pittsburgh and instead figure out how to attend the one downtown

North Central PA: Clinton, Lycoming, Potter, Tioga, Union

South Central PA: Adams, Dauphin, Cumberland, Franklin, Lebanon, Perry, York

When: At any point of the day on April 3rd that works best for your communities. **The rally itself should be no more than an hour!** Speakers, including elected officials, should only be 2-3 minutes max each.

SUPPORTING NOTE: Get over imposture syndrome. The smallest rally is two people. Everything starts somewhere, and your presence can be the beginning. Scream, even if your voice shakes. You can do this! People are

asking you to! You have the right to act up! Many of us are tired, we are busy. If we are not leading actions *right now* when they are taking healthcare away from our community's children and youth, when would we? When would you? The time is now and you can do this!

How to Plan and Execute a Successful Rally

1. Decide to organize and establish partnerships
2. Identify a location and verify you can assemble there
3. Create a flyer and promotional graphics
4. Announce and promote the rally
5. Plan the run of the rally
6. Execute the rally

1. Decide to organize and establish partnerships

Identify a core team of organizers in your organization, partner organizations, and/or local communities. Reach out to LGBTQ+ organizations and affirming stakeholders in your regions to officially partner in the effort — the ask being for them to have their logo on the promotional materials and for them to urge supporters to attend through all means possible. A sample email to partner organizations is shared at the end of this document.

2. Identify a location and verify you can assemble there

Decide which UPMC location you want to hold your gathering in front of.
[Register your rally online here.](#)

Identify a highly-visible, safe **public** space or sidewalk in front or adjacent to a UPMC location that you would be permitted to assemble with the projected number of rally participants.

Highly-visible public spaces include local parks, the sidewalks at a major street intersection, or town squares. **You have constitutional rights to stand or travel on sidewalks when not blocking traffic or entryways.** Some parks or plazas may be a gray area that could lead to needing a permit. You can always organize, and if asked to leave, just disperse to another space as possible. You will still have organized.

YOU DO NOT NEED PERMITS FOR PUBLIC GATHERINGS IN PUBLIC SPACES THAT ARE NOT BLOCKING TRAFFIC OR ENTRYWAYS!

If there is a location you prefer and you inquire with local officials that you would need a permit, apply for any necessary permits to ensure compliance with municipal regulations.

Identify if you have any audio amplification needs. If you have a smaller group, you may not need anything. If you have a medium-sized group, a megaphone may be helpful. If you have a larger gathering, a microphone and speakers may be useful. Organizations, local production companies, or neighborhood musicians often have this equipment to lend for free or a small charge.

Identify if there are any public seating areas near the rally, or plan to bring a few folding chairs: Some individuals may not be able to stand for long periods of time and may need a seat. Public spaces may have park benches. Others may be in plazas near private property. Some participants may want to lean on private property (planters, etc.) which may not be allowed. **Please make sure you follow all stated rules and not encourage or allow participants to enter private property without permission.** Bring folding chairs to place in an area that does not obstruct traffic as possible.

Identify a rain location as possible. If a rain location (hopefully a private outdoor area that is near the UPMC site) is not easy to find, encourage participants to bring raincoats, ponchos, and umbrellas. On March 28th over

250 participants rallied in Allentown for TDOV in the rain. People will still attend, unless thunderstorms or serious inclement weather develop.

[Register your rally online here.](#)

3. Design a flyer and promotional graphics, create signs

Identify individuals who can help design a flyer promoting the rally, noting the date, time, location, and partnering organizations.

Include the following title to unite your gathering as a coordinated event with the others across PA: **“Demand UPMC in Pittsburgh Continue Saving Trans Lives”**

Have a community night/gathering before the rally for folks to make their own signs! You can ask participants to bring their own signs, but if you can have a space with provided crafting materials and sample statements to write on posters that can be very helpful for many people.

4. Announce and promote the rally

Engage local LGBTQ+ organizations, trans advocates, and community leaders to spread the word and get their support. Post information inviting all supporters to attend the rally in safe places in person and online. Help the flyer go viral within your local community on social media platforms. Text all your friends and family inviting them. Email your contact lists and all supportive community organization leaders you know. Ask all supporters to also spread the word.

Use platforms like Instagram, X, and Facebook to promote the events with hashtags (ex: #UPMCrally or #EnoughUPMC). Post as soon as possible, even if you are still working out details.

Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky are great. Even though Facebook and Instagram are owned by Meta, many community members remain connected on such platforms. TikTok can post flyers and can be useful for youth engagement. Use hashtags that are location specific (ex: #Philly, #Pittsburgh, #Lancaster).

Distribute digital and printed flyers to local businesses, schools (particularly LGBTQ+ student and youth organizations), and community centers to raise awareness.

Special Guests to Invite to Attend: Local officials, county commissioners, school board members, State Representatives, State Senators, Mayors, US Representatives

5. Plan the run of the rally

Create a timeline and share with other organizers (sample provided) that identifies the timing and location of rally activities.

If you have a speaking program (can be done for small or large gatherings!):

Decide if you have any audio amplification needs, and acquire the necessary tools or equipment in advance, and develop a set up and break down plan.

Identify an emcee: an individual who is a strong public speaker to open, run, and close out the speaking program. This individual would introduce the speakers and keep the program moving.

Set a time for speeches by civic leaders and public officials. This portion should be planned to be no more than 15-20 minutes.

Discuss with your core team of organizers to whom you would like to extend invitations to speak — and personally invite them. Inviting trans individuals who are comfortable speaking publicly, parents and family members of trans youth, key civic leaders, healthcare providers in their personal capacities, or public officials are often great speakers. **Each speaker should be invited with a clear understanding that they are to limit their remarks to 2-3 minutes and only talk about trans youth healthcare in Pittsburgh through UPMC.** These coordinated rallies are *not* about addressing the lack of gender affirming care in other regions.

When compiling your agenda, make sure to emphasize inclusion of marginalized voices. Community members should always go first, with public officials finishing up. Make sure you and whoever is the emcee of the event know the correct pronouns for speakers. Ask if you do not know.

A **sample agenda** for consideration, with each speaker only providing remarks for 2-3 minutes:

1. Welcome remarks by local activists and organizers — clearly note that you are here in solidarity with trans youth in Pittsburgh and announce your call to action: urging attendees to support trans-inclusive policies, support elected officials who stand with us, and hold elected officials that abandon us accountable. Demand a stop to pre-compliance anywhere else it may exist.
2. Brief remarks from trans youth, family members of trans youth, local trans community leaders.
3. Brief remarks from key civic leaders, healthcare providers in their personal capacities, or other important community members.
4. Brief remarks from public officials in solidarity.

5. A symbolic act (e.g., signing a pledge, raising the trans pride flag, or some other visual demonstration that helps capture the cause.
Example: for BLM it was taking a knee and moments of silence.

6. Concluding remarks and next steps by local activists and organizers.

If you have a chanting program:

Identify an individual/s to be your chant leader/s, who will shout out (possibly with a bullhorn or other device) to encourage participants to use their voices as able.

Create your own chants to use as you rally, or use the sample chants provided.

If you have a budget: Consider buying and handing out small trans flags, stickers, buttons, or other crowd items. You can also produce your own posters and have them printed before the rally to distribute. Not all participants will show up with their own signs or visible signs of their support, so providing them for free at the rally can be important as resources allow.

Consider a de-escalation plan or Wall of Love in event of counter rally/protestors.

6. Execute the rally

GET SIGNATURES FOR ONLINE FORM LETTER TO UPMC: Have a clipboard with a QR code (provided) and announce at the rally the website link for participants to send an email to UPMC. If we can send a huge number of emails to them and tell that to the media, that will both show the support for trans youth but also capture participants information that can be shared back with you for future local organizing work.

MEDIA: Notify local media of the rally, ideally at least 24 hours before the rally. You can use this sample press release [here](#). Once you register your rally, we will also amplify your gathering to local and state press. If you cannot get press, or you are concerned about the event being too small, do not worry. Ask for people's permission first to take a group picture. If you don't have a formal speaking program but someone would like to say a few words, record it and post it to social media using the hashtags. Your goal is to show that you were there!

SECURITY: At minimum, you should notify local law enforcement the day prior to the event — although this is a courtesy and not a necessity. If you do not have a relationship with them, you may consider not contacting them.

ACCESSIBILITY: As possible and when requested, provide virtual options, interpretation services, and ensure venue accessibility.

- Virtual Options: Stream the events live for those unable to attend in person.
- Interpretation Services: Provide ASL interpreters and other language support for non-English speakers if possible.
- Venue Accessibility: Ensure the locations are accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair access and assistive listening devices.

CONFIRM VOLUNTEERS: Recruit and confirm volunteers to help with event organization, welcoming participants and ensuring they've signed up on a contact list or sent the online form letter to UPMC, setting up and breaking down any podiums or audio equipment, supporting crowd control, taking photos and videos, and providing information.

HAVE A BUCKET/BAG FOR SNACKS AND WATER: It's always a good idea as possible to have an emergency stash of light snacks and water bottles accessible to organizers. There may be an urgent situation when an attendee needs water or a snack immediately.

ACCEPT DONATIONS: Have a donation bucket or sign with a QR code linked to a donation website for your organization or another partner to continue funding this work. Especially if your organization has spent money on this rally. You can have the emcee make a call for donations at some point in the speaking program. Some participants will want to help financially — don't leave support on the table! We need all the resources we can as we take action.

Execute the rally, take action, mobilize for change!

For questions or ideas, please contact the Pennsylvania Youth Congress at info@payouthcongress.org

This guide has been prepared by UDTJ and the Pennsylvania Youth Congress in support of TransYOUning in Pittsburgh

UPMC Rally Planning Checklist

Identify a core team of organizers and supporting community organizations (sample email provided) ☐

Identify a safe, highly-visible public location near a UPMC site and verify you can assemble there ☐

Determine if you have any audio amplification needs, the presence of nearby seating, a rain location, or if you need any permits ☐

Design a flyer and promotional graphics, create signs ☐

Announce and promote the rally ☐

Invite public officials, special guest speakers, an emcee, and a volunteer to lead chants ☐

Draft rally timeline and speaking program agenda, if you have one ☐

Execute the rally ☐