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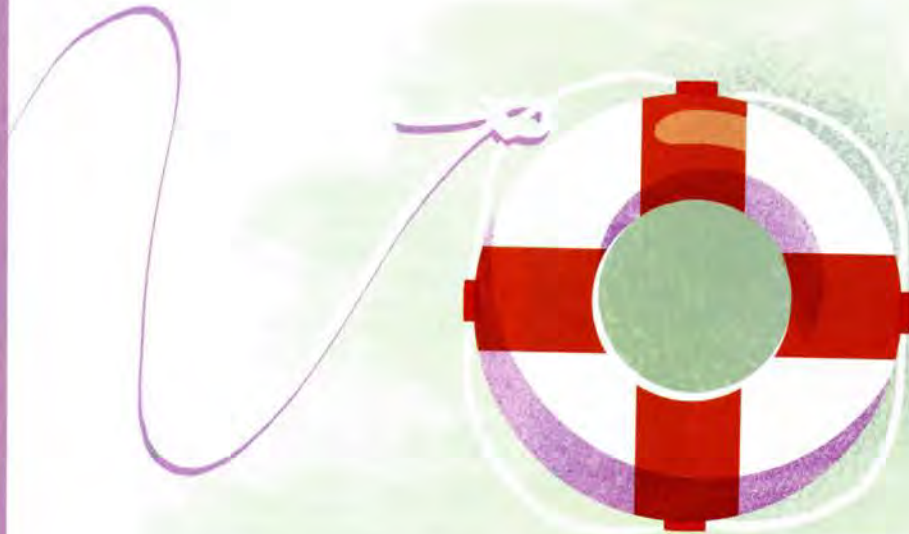
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TOP DOCTORS

2015



ADVENTURES IN MEDICINE

Our 10th-annual list of the best health practitioners in the Seattle area, including—for the first time ever—physician assistants. Plus, patients share their experiences, from breast cancer to chronic pain, gender identity, and childhood anxiety.

Edited by Ariana Dawes and Darren Davis

Illustrations by

Owen Gatley



A 1,500-Mile Transition

KIERAN LIVED AS A FEMALE FOR 30 YEARS before finally deciding to transition to male. Only in rural southern Minnesota such a change proved to be a challenge. The local therapist insisted on referring to him as “she” and “her,” even after Kieran’s repeated requests for male pronouns. In the doctor’s office he was diagnosed with gender identity disorder and struggled to find a physician willing to provide sex reassignment surgery. Searching for areas of the country with the largest and most supportive transgender community, he found that Seattle scored near top of the list.

In 2010, the former “army brat” packed his bags and bought a one-way ticket to the Northwest. Soon after, he read a short but transformative review with **Kevin Hatfield**, transgender medicine specialist at the Polyclinic in Seattle. Hatfield started Kieran with hormone therapy and referred him to a slew of doctors working with trans patients, including a therapist, a surgeon, and a gynecologist. Kieran underwent a full hysterectomy and is in the prepping stages for chest reconstructive surgery.

“Seattle is incredibly welcoming of LGBT culture and communities, and you can see that in the resources available,” he says. “This place is a crazy melting pot, and I love it here.” —*Jeanny Rhee*



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Cathleen M. Goetsch Genetic counseling for cancer patients First Hill, 206-223-6600, Virginia Mason

*Does not accept new patients

Waking Up from a Nightmare



HANS WAS A VIBRANT AND OUTGOING 10-YEAR-OLD BOY before everything changed overnight. Frustrated, angry, and confused over the simplest things, often wedging himself between his bed and wall to cope, he begged his parents to make the feelings stop.

“A psychiatrist suggested OCD,” says Heather, Hans’s mother. “Another thought that we were enabling his behavior.”

In spring 2014, Heather learned about PANDAS, an autoimmune condition hypothesized to occur when an infection triggers inflammation in the brain. Tics, anxiety, and personality changes are common symptoms. These changes happen suddenly and can often be misdiagnosed.

When their pediatrician’s antibiotics didn’t help enough, any hope of a rapid recovery diminished. Summer holidays and family visits were out of the question, as Hans was too scared to leave the house. “We were desperate for help,” says Heather, “but nobody in our area knew enough about the condition”—until she found **Hatha Gbedawo** of Vital Kids Medicine on a PANDAS support website. For the first time Heather spoke with someone who knew more about the disease than she did. Dr. Gbedawo devised a long-term plan using dietary changes and natural supplements instead of antibiotics alone. These changes relieved Hans’s symptoms and eradicated infection. Choosing a natural method was not something Heather had in mind, but she believes it saved her son’s life. —*Aoife Reilly*



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