

## Words Matter: Local hospitals add pronouns to health records systems

Local hospitals, including Southlake Regional Health Centre and Stevenson Memorial Hospital, will include patient pronouns in their health records system going forward.

The move, which also included Oak Valley Health, was announced in a joint statement last week and came into effect August 10.

From that time, all three organizations will ask patients and clients whether they would like to share their pronouns at the point of registration.

“Understanding and recognizing gender identities is important to delivering inclusive, patient-centred health care,” said the hospitals in a joint statement. “Using pronouns correctly is a sign of safety and respect – an environment all three organizations strive to achieve. All members of a health care organization – front-line staff, clinicians, and administrators – play a crucial role in offering an inclusive, affirming experience for all people, including those with non-binary gender identities. One way to assure proper pronoun use is to collect this information from the start. Once the patient provides consent for their identified pronoun to be used, it will be entered into the shared platform and the pronouns will be used by the care team.” The goal, they said, is to improve care for 2SLGBTQ+ people.

“At Southlake we are committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable space for all and we are thrilled to be moving forward on this initiative with our hospital partners,” said Arden Krystal (she/her), President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre, in a statement. “Understanding and recognizing gender identities and using correct pronouns is important in creating an environment where the best experiences happen for both staff and patients, which is something we strive to achieve every day.”

Added Jody Levac (he/him), President and CEO of Stevenson: “This is a step forward for Stevenson in becoming a more inclusive health care organization. We want to ensure that every patient, visitor and staff member feels supported and recognized with regards to their personal identities, background, values and more when they come to Stevenson. Pronoun identification is a crucial element of good clinical care and is an important sign of respect. Proper pronoun use can also increase communication and trust with patients. We are very proud to launch this initiative with our hospital partners.”

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