

RACHEL LEVINE

b. October 28, 1957

TRANSGENDER SECRETARY OF HEALTH

“We need to do a better job educating medical students about LGBT issues and transgender medicine.”

She is the first transgender cabinet officer in Pennsylvania history.

Rachel Levine, M.D., is the Secretary of Health for the Pennsylvania Department of Health. She is the first transgender cabinet officer in Pennsylvania history and one of the highest-ranking transgender public officials in the United States.

Born male and named Richard, Levine attended an all-boys private school outside of Boston. “All I knew is I wanted to be a girl, or I was a girl,” she says. Levine describes carrying this “secret” from an early age and struggling to fit in, even playing linebacker on the high school football team.

Levine graduated from Harvard College in 1979 and earned an M.D. from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1983. She completed her medical training in pediatrics at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, followed by a fellowship in adolescent medicine.

She practiced at Mount Sinai until 1993.

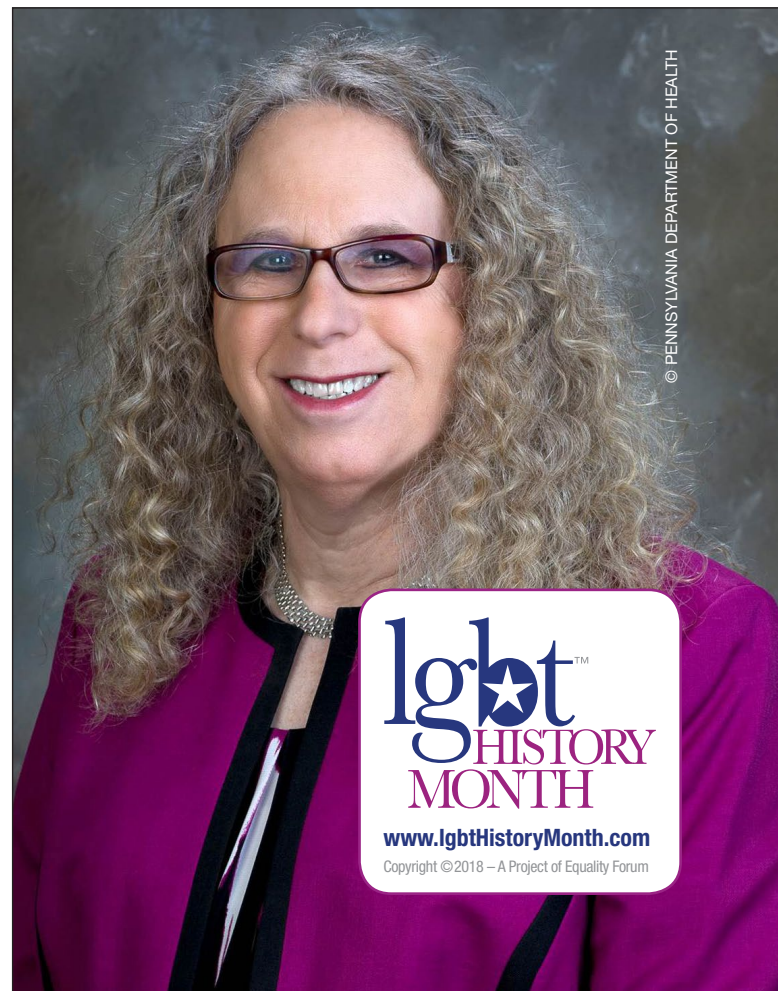
In 1996 Levine moved on to Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, where she founded the Eating Disorders Program for adolescents and adults. She has served as chief of the Division of Adolescent Medicine and Eating Disorders and as vice chair for Clinical Affairs for the Department of Pediatrics. She is a professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at Penn State College of Medicine and has worked as the faculty adviser for the university’s LGBT student group. She is also the LGBT affairs liaison at the Penn State Hershey Office of Diversity. In 2010 she completed her transition from male to female.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced Levine’s appointment to Physician General in 2015. She was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. In March 2018 she became Secretary of Health.

As the state’s top doctor, Levine shapes policy on issues ranging from HIV to childhood lead testing, and she has made significant strides in tackling Pennsylvania’s opioid crisis. She also uses her platform to address LGBT issues, including transgender care. She spearheaded an LGBT workgroup for the governor’s office that creates programs to ensure fairness and inclusivity in health care, insurance and other areas. She serves on the board of Equality Pennsylvania, an LGBT organization that lobbies for equal rights.

In 2015 Levine served as Grand Marshal of the Philadelphia Pride Parade. In 2017 she was named to NBC Out’s national #Pride30 list, which recognizes individuals making an impact on the LGBTQ community. In 2018 Equality Forum presented her with the Frank Kameny Award.

As Richard, Levine married and had a family before divorcing many years later. She remains close with her ex-wife and two children. Levine is in a committed long-term relationship.



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