LGBT* Health Issues: A Whirlwind Overview

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*LGBT=Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

The UCSF LGBT Center

- Founded in 1998—still the only LGBT office in a health education or health care setting
- Provides training, consulting, curriculum & conferences to schools, hospitals, clinics, etc. nationwide
- Supports LGBT students, faculty, staff & patients in medical center & schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, PT & life sciences
LGBT ABCs

- The L, G & B: lesbians, gay men & bisexuals
- The T: today & often, transgender people who transition to a sex other than the one on their birth certificate (MTF or FTM), who can face very high discomfort & bias

A Little History

- LGBT people & issues are much more visible in health care . . . because we’ve become much more visible in society
  - Before 1970: hiding, to prevent loss of job, family, friends & home
  - After 1970: coming out, to achieve greater understanding, acceptance & equity
But We’re Not Over the Rainbow Yet . . .

- Among LGB people:
  - 75% have been verbally abused
  - 32% have been the target of physical violence
  - 34% have been rejected by their families

- Among transgender people:
  - 57% have been rejected by their families
  - 26% have been fired
  - 19% have been refused housing

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation, National Center for Transgender Equality

Legal Issues

- No federal nondiscrimination law
- In 29 states, legal to discriminate against LGB
- In 35 states, legal to discriminate against T
- In most states, same-sex couples are not legally recognized as family & so lack healthcare (and other) rights of married couples
Benefits Issues

- Same-sex partner health coverage is rare—and taxed
- Transgender care is excluded by almost all insurance policies, despite established standards of care & AMA affirmation of medical necessity
- Same-sex partners can rarely access survivor & retirement benefits that spouses depend on
- Leave is guaranteed to care for an ill spouse, but very seldom for a same-sex partner

Health Disparities: Background

- LGBT disparities overwhelmingly arise from:
  - Stress of coping with bias & discrimination
  - Targeting by alcohol & tobacco industries
  - Lack of knowledgeable or focused services
  - Legacy of having to meet in bars
Best-Known Disparities

- Higher STIs among MSM* & transgender women**
- Higher substance use among MSM & transgender women
- Higher obesity among lesbians (though no higher incidence of hypertension, diabetes, CV disease)

* MSM: men who have sex with men
** Transgender data heavily drawn from HIV prevention research with sex workers

Other Disparities: The 2007 CHIS

- Smoking
- Alcohol abuse
- Psychological distress
- Medication for mental health
- Cancer
Provider-Related Issues

- Denied care
- Delayed & avoided care
- “Different,” aka suboptimal, care
- The “outness dilemma”

Transgender Issues

- Lack of insurance coverage for transitions
- Appointment denials & elongated wait times
- Confidentiality & privacy violations
- Use of wrong name/sex accidentally or deliberately
- Mocking comments, expressions of disgust, etc.
- Denied or questioned bathroom use
- Inappropriate room assignments
- Unnecessary or repetitive questions & exams
- Claimed lack of trans health knowledge
Same-Sex Couple Issues

- We may not be able to indicate our couple status.
- Contact with our loved one may be denied, challenged, or limited—even with the new CMS & Joint Commission visitation requirements.
- We may be treated differently if there’s any PDA.

Issues for Other LGBT Groups

- Youth
  - Higher prevalence of bullying, parental abuse, homelessness, depression, smoking, drinking, drug use.
- Elders
  - Bias in residential settings & home care.
  - Among men, higher stress, isolation, disabilities, chronic disease.
- Same-sex parents.
- Health professionals.
How Individuals Can Help

- Review LGBT health resources
- Know that any patient can be LGBT & offer opportunities for patients to come out
- Respond comfortably & warmly when patients come out
- Be alert for discomfort or bias in others
- Arrange—or offer—training
- Support LGBT colleagues
- Support legal protection & equal benefits

How Institutions Can Help

- Review recommendations in The Joint Commission’s *LGBT Field Guide*
- Take the national LGBT Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) to assess & record progress vs. key benchmarks for LGBT patient-centered care
Thanks so much for all you already do—& let me know if I can help!
General information about LGBT people and issues:
- **Human Rights Campaign**: www.hrc.org
- **National Gay & Lesbian Task Force**: www.ngltf.org
- **National Center for Transgender Equality**: nctequality.org
- **Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG)**: www.pflag.org

National & state LGBT health initiatives and organizations:
- **Straight for Equality in Healthcare** (PFLAG): www.straightforequality.org/healthcare
- **Gay & Lesbian Medical Association**: www.glma.org
- **National Healthcare Equality Index** (HRC’s annual hospital survey): www.hrc.org/hei
- **National LGBT Health Coalition**: lgbthealth.net
- **American Medical Association GLBT Advisory Committee**: www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/glbt-advisory-committee.shtml

LGBT health publications:
- **Joint Commission LGBT Field Guide**: www.jointcommission.org/lgbt/
- **CDC LGBT health pages**: www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/
- **Fenway Institute Learning Modules**: www.fenwayhealth.org/site/PageServer?pagename=FCHC_ins_fenway_EducPro_modules
- **LGBTQ Cultures: What Health Care Professionals Need to Know About Sexual & Gender Diversity**, Michele J. Eliason et al. (online text with nursing CE credits): www.nursingcenter.com/prodev/static.asp?pageid=928987
- **Kaiser Permanente Provider’s Handbook on Culturally Competent Care: LGBT Population**: www.madisonstreetpress.com/cgi-bin/shop.shtml?id=25 or call 510-271-6663 to order
- **Clinical Guidelines for Care of LGBT Patients** (Gay & Lesbian Medical Association): http://www.glma.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/Welcoming%20Environment.pdf

Information & materials for creating a welcoming environment:
- **Transgender Law Center** (tips for welcoming transgender patients): transgenderlawcenter.org
- **American Cancer Society** (brochures on LGBT cancer & smoking): contact local ACS office
- **GLBT Health Access Project** (posters and protocols): www.glbthealth.org
KEY LGBT HEALTH RESOURCES (continued)

Reports on LGBT health disparities:
• When Health Care Isn’t Caring (Lambda Legal): www.lambdalegal.org/health-care-report
• The Health of Aging LGB Adults in California (UCLA): healthpolicy.ucla.edu/NewsReleaseDetails.aspx?id=79

Population-specific LGBT health information:
• Primary Care for Lesbians and Bisexual Women, Sally Mravcak, MD: www.aafp.org/afp/20060715/279.html
• Lesbian Health 101: A Clinician’s Guide, Patty Robertson, MD & Sue Dibble, DNSc, eds.: nurseweb.ucsf.edu/public/npress/ord-lh.htm
• CA DPH Resources for Clinicians Treating STDs in MSM: stdcheckup.org
• Magnet (SF-based health website for MSM): new.sfaf.org/magnet/
• UCSF Anal Cancer Screening Information: id.medicine.ucsf.edu/analcancerinfo/diagnosis/screening.html
• Bisexual Health: An Introduction & Model Practices: www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/bisexual_health
• Clinical Guidelines for Transgender Care, Trans Care Project, Vancouver, Canada: www.vch.ca/transhealth/resources/careguidelines.html
• UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health: transhealth.ucsf.edu
• Endocrine Society Guidelines for Treatment of Transsexual Persons: www.endo-society.org/guidelines/Current-Clinical-Practice-Guidelines.cfm

Information for/about LGBT youth, families, and elders:
• The Trevor Project (suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth): www.thetrevorproject.org/
• GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network): glsen.org
• Gay/Straight Alliance Network: www.gsanetwork.org
• California Safe Schools Coalition: www.casafeschools.org
• Our Family Coalition (LGBT parenting support in Bay Area): ourfamily.org
• Family Acceptance Project (resources for families of LGBT youth): familyproject.sfsu.edu/
• Family Equality Council: www.familyequality.org
• COLAGE (Children of Lesbians & Gays Everywhere): www.colage.org
• National Resource Center on LGBT Aging: www.lgbtagingcenter.org/