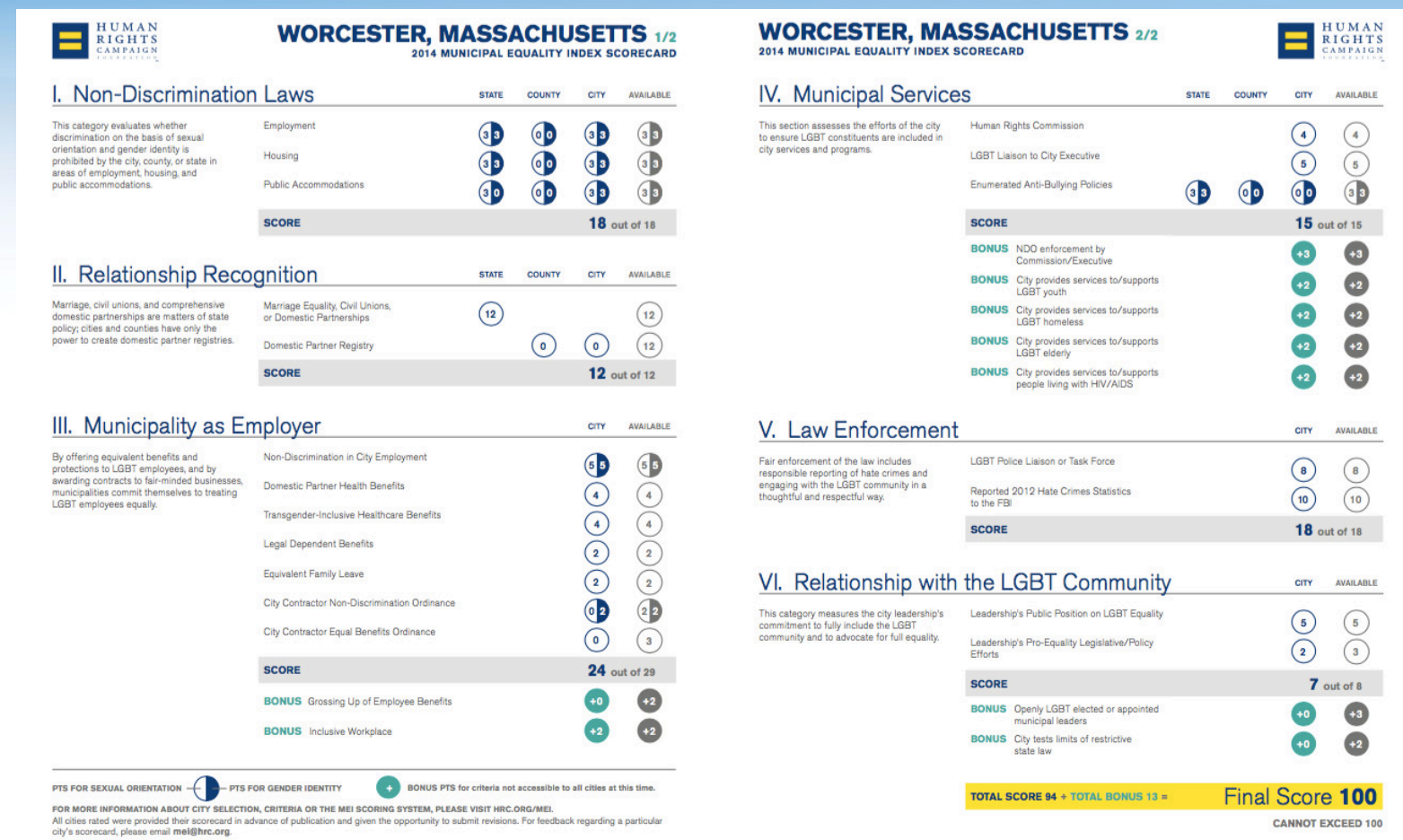


Municipal Engagement

Human Rights Campaign Scores



In 2013, the Human Rights Campaign rated cities across the nation for LGBT inclusiveness in municipal law. Worcester received a score of 55/100 in 2013, bringing LGBT issues to the attention of City Hall. Within a year, Worcester made structural and legislative changes to improve LGBT inclusiveness and in 2014, the city received a score of 100. Key areas that were addressed are **Municipality as Employer, Municipal services, and Law Enforcement.**

Municipal Liaisons to LGBT Community

- **City Hall – Jayna Turchek, Human Rights Director**
- **Worcester Police Department – Lt. Rick Bates** attends local LGBT meetings and is a strong advocate for LGBT training in Law Enforcement. He has pushed for mandatory LGBT training for all Police department employees and continues to work towards improving relations between police and the community.

Community Resources & Organizations

LGBT Youth

- **Gay-Straight Alliance (or Gender Sexuality Alliance):**
 - Student-run clubs in local schools that provide a safe space for students to discuss issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- **Safe Homes:**
 - Led by youth and professional staff, this program offers a drop-in Center, one-on-one counseling, HIV testing, and trainings for service providers on topics concerning LGBT youth
- **Supporters of Worcester Area Gay and Lesbian Youth (SWAGLY):**
 - Run by AIDS Project Worcester, this program provides a space for people ages 14-23 to socialize, learn, and share about issues facing LGBTQ youth today

LGBT Seniors

- **Worcester LGBT Elder Network:**
 - Promotes access to education, support, community resources, and social opportunities for LGBT seniors
- **Rainbow Lunch Club:**
 - Held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester, offers LGBT seniors age 60+ a nutritious meal and an opportunity to socialize with friends
- **Resource Guide:**
 - List of service providers vetted by WLEN editors and approved as LGBT-friendly, including physicians, counselors, financial advisors, legal support, and places of worship

Key Issues

LGBT Health Disparities

DURING CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE:

- Gender-variant (transgender) children may have more trouble making friends and behavioral problems than non-gender-variant children.
- Male-to-female transgender youth may face higher risk for HIV than young gay and bisexual men.
- Childhood abuse may be higher among LGB youth.
- Suicidal behavior is higher among LGB youth.

DURING EARLY/MIDDLE ADULTHOOD:

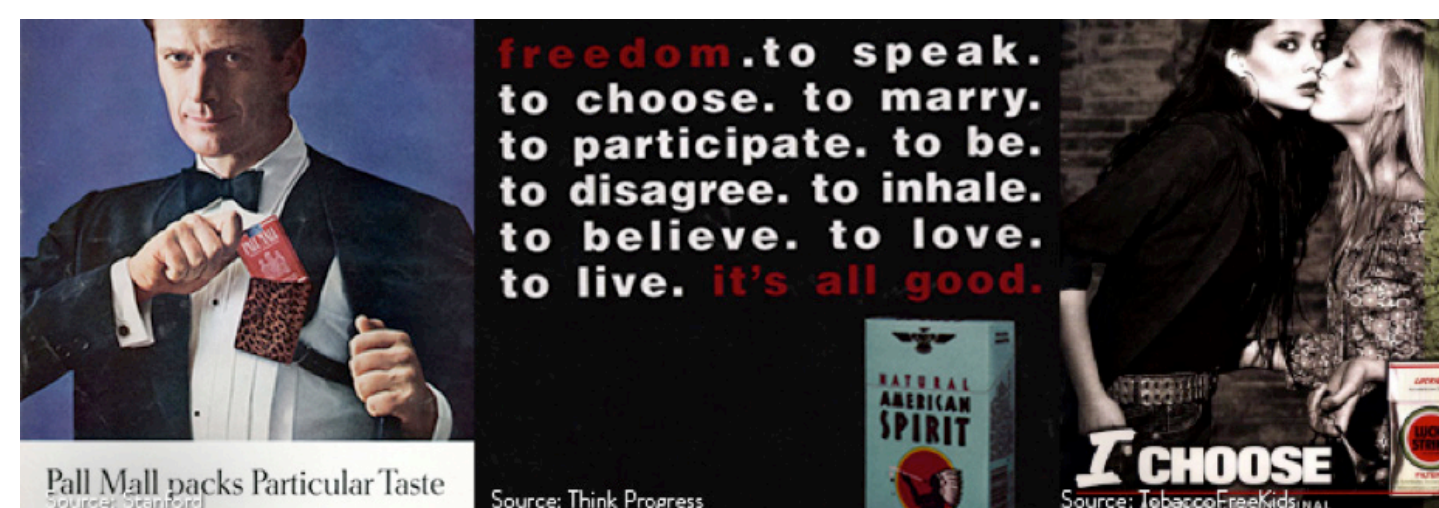
- Gay men may have higher rates of erectile dysfunction than heterosexual men.
- Lack of health insurance, fear of discrimination by providers, and dissatisfaction with services act as barriers to accessing health care.
- Like heterosexual adults, LGB adults experience intimate partner violence; data on IPV among transgender adults has not been studied.

DURING LATER ADULTHOOD:

- Transgender elders may have health problems as a result of long-term hormone use.
- LGBT elders have encountered discrimination for much of their lives.
- Lesbian and gay elders are less likely than their heterosexual peers to have children, and their family relationships are not well understood.

Source: The Fenway Institute

Tobacco Use in the LGBT Population



In Massachusetts, 17% of LGBT people are current smokers, compared to 9% of the heterosexual population. Big tobacco continues to target disenfranchised groups. (Source: Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership)

Conclusions

- While there has been an emergence of community resources and municipal engagement surrounding LGBT issues in Worcester, barriers continue to prevent members of this community from accessing long-term, high-quality primary care.
- The LGBT population, like other minority groups, has specialized health needs. In order to best understand and address these needs, we must first conduct better research characterizing this population. The electronic medical record can be a strong tool for obtaining this crucial information.
- All members of a healthcare team, from front-end staff to care providers, play a pivotal role in establishing an inclusive environment.
- There needs to be increased communication between UMMS and the LGBT community of Worcester.

Health Resources

- **AIDS Project Worcester:**
 - Services include health education, counseling, outreach, HIV counseling and testing, & supportive educational groups
- **Family Health Center Worcester:**
 - Provides culturally diverse populations with access to affordable, high-quality primary health care and social services, regardless of patients' ability to pay; in process of assessing LGBT competence among staff
- **Planned Parenthood (Central MA health center):**
 - Offers education, resources, and service referrals to the LGBT community
- **Fenway Health Center:**
 - Mission: "Making life healthier for those who are LGBT, people affected by HIV/AIDS, and the larger community."
 - Offers trainings, webinars, and consulting for healthcare institutions and providers looking to enhance LGBT inclusiveness
 - Focus on institution-wide hiring policies, partner benefits, and support from administration, as well as specific suggestions for promoting health equity (e.g. intake forms, waiting room magazines, and signage)

UMMS Library Guide

Our group partnered with Len Levin of the Lamar Soutter Library to create an online resource guide for use by providers seeking information for their LGBT patients. The library guide is separated into individual sections geared towards the unique health needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender subpopulations.

It is our hope that this centralized source of information will help all members of the healthcare team to provide high-quality care for this diverse group of patients.

Examples of other Library Guides can be found at the following link: <http://libraryguides.umassmed.edu/>

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