

Improving LGBT+ Patient Care: A Provider Survey and Educational Resource Guide

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Introduction

Unique challenges exist for Worcester's LGBT+ community, which includes those who are:

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual and asexual
- Transgender, agender, genderqueer
- Intersex
- Allies

Access to care and the quality of care delivery are unsatisfactory in the Worcester area. UMMS and UMMC are well positioned to respond to the community and provide comprehensive and inclusive care to these individuals. **The goal of our project is to raise awareness of the knowledge gap present in much of the provider population on LGBT+ specific health concerns and competencies.**

Population of Focus

Members of the LGBT+ community experience many health disparities compared to their heterosexual counterparts, including¹:

- Higher rates of disability, physical limitations, and poorer general health
- Higher risk for psychological distress, suicidal ideation, and mental health disorders
- Gay, bisexual men and transgender women experience increased rates of HIV
- Lesbian and bisexual women experience higher rates of being overweight or obese
- Sexual violence disproportionately affects transgender women and men

Project Summary

Our needs assessment with members of the Worcester LGBT+ community suggests that providers lack knowledge and/or skills required to provide the highest quality of care delivery to LGBT+ patients. To determine provider competency, we created a survey for primary care providers in the UMass system. This survey contains questions on ten essential considerations for providing competent LGBT-centered care, including: office environment and medical records, sexual history, PrEP and PEP, health screening, hormone replacement therapy, antiretroviral therapy, substance use, mental health, family planning, and intersex. A resource guide was developed to provide education and references for providers. Below each resource, a brief summary highlights its significance and notable features for easy reading.

Project Goals

- Understand the specific needs of LGBT+ patients
- Create a survey to assess provider knowledge of LGBT competent care
- Provide a concise resource guide to educate providers on important areas of LGBT+ care

Project Outcomes

- A survey for providers is finalized and ready for distribution
- A comprehensive resource guide that coincides with each survey topic is available for review once providers complete the survey

Next Steps

- Administer survey to 2-3 primary care practices in the UMass system
 - Connect with leaders in those practices who will support our efforts
- Evaluate the data collected from the survey to determine gaps in providers' LGBT+ competency
- Meet with appropriate faculty to integrate LGBT+ education in the UMass Medical School and Graduate School of Nursing to better prepare future providers

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Reference

¹Fredriksen-Goldsen, Karen I. et al. "The Health Equity Promotion Model: Reconceptualization of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Health Disparities." *The American journal of orthopsychiatry* 84.6 (2014): 653–663. PMC. Web. 26 Oct. 2017.