

Advancing Health Equity for LGBTQ+ Identifying Patients with Cancer

LGBTQ+ People Experience a Number of Health Disparities

They are at higher risk of certain conditions, have less access to health care, and have worse health outcomes >



These challenges/barriers reflect the inequitable quality of care LGBTQ+ patients receive:



Medical professionals' lack of knowledge about the needs of LGBTQ+ patients



Lack of data collection



Access issues related to Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

Increased Provider Education Can Improve Care

Healthcare professionals and health organizations can help by >



Asking patients about their preferences for treatment, pronouns, support system, etc.



Asking patients about their fertility plans/wishes so they can be fully informed about treatment options available to them.



Ensuring educational materials feature diverse representation.



Receiving trauma-informed training for this specific population to reduce the likelihood of unintentionally retraumatizing patients during screening, examinations, etc.

Trauma-Informed Care: A practice approach that recognizes an individual may have a history of traumatic experiences and delivers care in ways that are supportive and reduce the risk of re-traumatization. Guiding principles include safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Data Are Important to Collect

SOGI Data are demographic data that track how LGBTQ+ identifying patients are served. These data are critical to accurately assess the current problems that LGBT people experience—such as mental health and substance use disparities and barriers to accessing health insurance coverage and health care—and developing effective policies and programs to address them.



Healthcare professionals and health organizations can help by



- ✓ Developing EHR infrastructure compatible with inclusivity.
- ✓ Training staff to appropriately ask questions to gather necessary data.
- ✓ Collecting, analyzing, and reporting SOGI data. Data informs evidence bases which ultimately provides validity for much needed research funding.



Policy makers can help by



- ✓ Removing barriers in caregiving. Current issues with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) prevent LGBTQ+ people from being able to take time off to care for a loved one. Family of choice needs to be observed by federal law.
- ✓ Ensuring health protections of LGBTQ+ identifying persons.
- ✓ Requiring collection of SOGI data; creating collection policies with accountability measures.

Providers Need to Create More Welcoming, Affirming & Inclusive Care Environments



Ways to create

- ✓ Visible signage (rainbow/trans flag, Black Lives Matter fist, etc.) throughout care spaces and waiting areas.
- ✓ Diverse representation in pamphlets and reading materials.
- ✓ Inclusive language (i.e. renaming from “women’s clinic”).

Why it's important

- ✓ Patients are more likely to return to care in places where they feel safe and welcome, improving odds of better health outcomes.
- ✓ Patients will feel seen by their provider and more likely to trust them with their care.
- ✓ Patients will not feel like they have to choose between their care and their personhood.

