



Advancing Health Equity for the LGBTQ+ Community

Provider Resource

sage | Advocacy &
Services for
LGBTQ+ Elders
We refuse to be invisible®

LGBTQ+ individuals continue to face discrimination, lack culturally competent care, and have limited access to affirming providers. LGBTQ+ older adults¹ face significant health disparities compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts.²

- LGBTQ+ people also have fears of experiencing medical neglect, mistreatment, and discrimination in adult day care, long-term care, residential aged care, palliative care, and end-of-life care facilities.³
- Chronic minority stress over the life course heightens risk of premature cognitive aging and decline among LGBTQ+ older adults.⁴
- LGBTQ+ older adults' lack of access to LGBTQ+ affirmation and age-friendliness in healthcare environments contributes to health disparities by discouraging utilization of health services.⁵
- The HIV/AIDS epidemic disproportionately impacts LGBTQ+ communities across the life course, with the number of LGBTQ+ older adults living with HIV increasing.⁶

Equitable LGBTQ+ healthcare depends on culturally competent, patient-centered care, better access through telehealth and community health centers, inclusive communication, diverse leadership, provider wellness, and community health workers who help bridge gaps and improve health literacy.

In some settings, conversations about health equity and inclusion may be more difficult to navigate; in these cases, it may be helpful to emphasize how inclusive care improves health outcomes, satisfaction, and overall system efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

As a provider, you play a critical role in advancing health equity by delivering culturally humble, inclusive, and accessible care. You can implement the following practical solutions to disrupt inequitable health outcomes:⁷

Inclusive Healthcare Delivery

- **High-Quality Care:** Attend trainings that center LGBTQ+ patient experiences to build your cultural humility and encourage your colleagues to keep growing alongside you.
- **Affirming Environment:** Use inclusive intake forms and pronoun fields, screen for mental health and trauma in affirming ways, collect SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) data respectfully and securely, include interpreters and translate materials into other languages, and involve LGBTQ+ patients in decision-making about their care.
- **Increased Access:** Offer telehealth and mobile care models to support LGBTQ+ patients in rural, underserved, or less supportive environments. Partner with community health centers, community health workers, social workers, case managers, and peer support specialists to bridge gaps in care, increase outreach, and provide feedback.

Workforce Diversity

- **Workplace Culture:** Support wellness among providers to prevent burnout and ensure high-quality care.
- **Inclusive Representation:** Invest in recruiting and retaining LGBTQ+ professionals across all levels of healthcare from leadership on boards to staff and providers to front desk coordinators.
- **Community Partnerships:** Connect with community health centers, community health workers, social workers, case managers, and peer support specialists who work with the LGBTQ+ community. Hire LGBTQ+ elders to be trusted liaisons, educators, advocates, and peer navigators.

Inclusive Research and Data

- **Comprehensive Data Collection:** Include LGBTQ+ identities in research and disaggregate SOGI data to identify gaps and tailor interventions.
- **Community-Driven Research:** Partner with LGBTQ+ organizations and academics in your community to ensure research reflects the lived experiences and priorities of the LGBTQ+ community.

Your Role in Policy Change

As a provider, you have a responsibility to ensure that the voices and lived experiences of your LGBTQ+ patients are heard by policymakers. Join LGBTQ+ advocates in coalition with community health partners and other health officials to help craft inclusive policy. Join and support campaigns, coalitions, and organizations working for inclusive health policies:

- Join Defend Public Health, a volunteer-driven network of public health researchers, healthcare workers, advocates and allies fighting to protect the health of all.
- Support GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality, the world's largest and oldest association of LGBTQ+ and allied health professionals. Join GLMA's Policy & Government Affairs Committee and support the development of LGBTQ+ health policy priorities. Sign up for GLMA's mailing list for updates on their advocacy efforts.
- Join the HIV Medicine Association, a community of nearly 6,000 health care professionals who advance a comprehensive and humane response to the HIV pandemic, informed by science and social justice. HIVMA works to increase access to health care services and coverage for people with HIV and populations heavily impacted by HIV and to foster a robust, diverse and culturally competent HIV workforce. Become an IDSA/HIVMA Advocate and influence infectious diseases policymaking in Congress and the Administration.
- Get involved with the Seven Days in June campaign, which aims to establish a civic expectation that health must be treated as a core governing responsibility, regardless of ideology or party. Sign up for updates on future health campaigns here.
- If you are an LGBTQ+ healthcare provider, join the LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory.

Providers play an important role in addressing healthcare disparities and advancing health equity for all. Your work serving the community equips you to be an effective storyteller. Share your firsthand experience providing healthcare with policymakers. The following suggestions outline policy priorities you can raise with elected representatives, as well as actions you can take to raise awareness and support change.

- Advocate for greater access to affordable healthcare through policies that support comprehensive Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance coverage.
- Advocate for policies that address root causes of disparities and influence overall health, including housing, education, transportation, mental health, and nutrition.
- Testify and give public comment. Stay updated on town halls, congressional meetings, and public comment periods. Share your stories of working with insurance companies, navigating billing codes, and supporting the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ community members.
- Include LGBTQ+ advocates in coalitions with community partners, health leaders, and public officials to help craft equitable policies. Ensure the voices and lived experiences of the LGBTQ+ community are heard by policymakers.
- Advocate for the Equality Act and policies that require health care staff in care settings to be trained in preventing and eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Advocate for city, county, or state-level LGBTQ+ and HIV Long Term Care Bills of Rights. Explore SAGE's toolkit for more information.
- At the federal level, urge your U.S. Senators and Representatives to demand that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) delay the Interim Final Rule (IFR) to HR 1 and redraft it with a lawful, workable definition of "serious or complex medical condition" that covers people living with HIV under Medicaid. See the Action Alert from AIDS United.

As the policy landscape continues to evolve, join SAGE's Action Squad to receive information and tangible steps for moving your local community and our country towards more inclusive policies. For the latest information and additional resources, please visit The Pfizer Multicultural Health Equity Collective (The Collective)'s website, which aims to close gaps in care and access impacting historically underserved and underrepresented communities while addressing drivers of health inequities in healthcare, including systemic racism.

While a collaborative effort between LGBTQ+ patients and advocates, community partners, health leaders, and public officials is needed to address disparities, you have the responsibility as a provider to speak truth to power. Center the voices of the LGBTQ+ community in treatment plans and in hospital, clinic, or care setting strategic plans.

Now is the time for healthcare providers to lead with intention and equity. Speak up, center the voices and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ community members in your decision-making and commit to collaborative actions that disrupts inequitable health outcomes. Join organizations, partners, advocates, and leaders in ensuring every person receives the affirming, high-quality care they deserve.

At SAGE, we envision a world where LGBTQ+ elders are valued, have limitless opportunities, and thrive. Since 1978, we have led the way in advocating for policies, services, and resources that empower LGBTQ+ elders to live openly and authentically. Our dedicated team members work nationally and globally to protect our rights, build health and longevity, and preserve the vibrancy of our community as we age. Each one of us has a place to create a bright and vibrant future for the LGBTQ+ community as each one of us lights the way for the next generation to follow. Learn more at www.sageusa.org.

1 Fredriksen Goldsen & de Vries, 2019

2 Fredriksen Goldsen & de Vries, 2019

3 Cloyes & Candrian, 2021; Elk et al., 2018

4 Correro & Nielson, 2020

5 Cloyes & Candrian, 2021; Elk et al., 2018

6 Marshall & Cahill, 2021; UNAIDS, 2022

7 Pfizer, Inc., 2025