

Out for Health



Winter 2019

Causes in Common: LGBT Liberation & Reproductive Justice

Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes is excited to launch an important initiative aimed at increasing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health and wellness in our region.

Our New York State grant funded **Out for Health** project reflects Planned Parenthood's long standing commitment to support, advocate and educate about sexual orientation and gender identity in our community. In 1988 we hosted our first professional development workshop in Ithaca about LGBT issues in schools and kicked off our 21 year commitment to serving the needs of the LGBT community.


Through providing training, access to educational materials and support, guidance on writing inclusive school policy, and existing as a resource regarding LGBT health and youth issues, we are proud of our long history working with and for the LGBT community! Our collaborative approach has allowed us to stand up for the rights of LGBT youth, advocate for equal access to health services, write a national-award winning guide about providing transgender inclusive care, and serve on local and national task forces, workgroups and boards to address the important connections between sexual and reproductive health and the vital need for

increased access to high quality, culturally appropriate health care for LGBT people. In addition to the exciting regional work that lies ahead through our **Out for Health** project, PPSFL is also pleased to be a member of the Causes in Common Coalition and the New York State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health and Human Services Network.



Causes in Common is an organizing initiative of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center (the Center) in New York City, bringing together activists in the LGBT Liberation and Reproductive Justice Movements to work toward shared goals; PPSFL is a proud member of the Causes in Common Coalition.

Please join us as we work to build organizational and community capacity to increase LGBT health and wellness in the finger lakes.


 Email LGBT@appsfl.org to sign up for our e-newsletter and get informed and involved, receive updates on the latest news, event invites, LGBT advocacy opportunities and more!



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PPSFL LGBT FACT:

 In February of 1993 our Board of Directors approved a policy titled "Advocacy for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Civil Rights" and includes a commitment to advocacy for LGBT civil rights, community education, increasing public understanding of the diversity of human sexuality, and providing culturally competent health services to LGBT people.

Out for Health is a project of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes, proudly providing exceptional services, honest education & fearless advocacy in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Tompkins Counties since 1968.



Provider Spotlight

**Tania Villa, Physician Assistant
Planned Parenthood, Ithaca Health Center**

Q: Describe your work....tell us what you do?

A: I am a Physician Assistant at Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes (PPSFL) in Ithaca. Just about every day, a patient asks me why I do the work that I do. And I tell them. I used to work in community education, teaching about healthy relationships amongst other things. When my agency closed, I knew I had to go back to school. I went to Physician Assistant school so that I could work at Planned Parenthood! This is actually my dream job! On a daily basis, I see patients for a wide range of medical issues. I perform annual exams, sexually transmitted disease screening, birth control management and evaluation of medical concerns such as pain checks. I see men, women, and transgender individuals. At each visit, I spend time educating about healthy sexual relationships, sexuality and safer sex practices. I feel like PPSFL is a welcoming environment to discuss topics that may be uncomfortable for many people.

Q: What are some common barriers, concerns or myths that LGBT people face seeking care?

A: I feel as though one of the biggest concerns LGBT people face in seeking care is the issue of discrimination. It can be very tough to walk into a new medical provider if you feel as though you will be misunderstood or judged based on your appearance, gender identity or sexual orientation. "Coming out" to a new provider can also be a daunting task. Many members of the LGBT population have been discriminated in the past, and these concerns are based on real experiences they have had. I believe this is a huge barrier to health care for many members of the LGBT population. At PPSFL, we strive to offer a nonjudgmental environment for everyone that walks through the door.

"At PPSFL, we strive to offer a nonjudgmental environment for everyone that walks through the door."

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the misconception that women who have sex with women do not need to be concerned about STDs. This is not true. Women can pass many sexually transmitted diseases to their female partners. Women should be routinely screened for sexually transmitted diseases along with annual pap smears.

Q: What's one health tip or suggestion you'd like to share with our readers.

A: I suggest that every person come in for routine sexually transmitted disease screening! Bring a friend or two!

Tips for Health Providers

Want to do more to create a welcoming environment for your LGBT patients? A few small things can have a big impact for your patients!

- * Do you have a stock of educational pamphlets you regularly refer patients to? Be sure some titles specifically address the health care needs and issues facing LGBT people.
- * How about posters & magazines? Check out the images and messages on your walls in and your waiting room...be sure to actively include images that represent LGBT people...and the diversity of the *whole* community you serve!
- * What about paperwork? When asking routine questions on an intake form, like asking a patient to identify an emergency contact person, be sure your language is inclusive of same sex partners. When you ask about relationship status, consider a blank line instead of a check list. When asking about sexual contacts, consider including "men, women, and *both*."

Would you like more tips? Email LGBT@ppsfl.org for links, resources, and more suggestions for creating a welcoming health care environment for LGBT people!



Health disparities and aging: lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women are particularly vulnerable

Elder lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are particularly vulnerable populations when it comes to health disparities. Specific health disparities faced by aging lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women include:

Health care concerns

- Approximately 12 percent of lesbians have no confidence they will receive appropriate and unbiased treatment from medical personnel in old age.
- Only 35 percent of older lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women are out to all of their health care providers.

Discrimination

- 26 percent of lesbians report their greatest concern about aging is discrimination based on sexual orientation. This fear is most acute for those in civil unions or domestic partnerships, which could make their sexual orientation more visible.

Financial security

- Lesbians feel generally less financially prepared for retirement than do gay men.
- 60 percent of LBT women express concern about outliving their income as they age.
- LBT women are less likely than gay and bisexual

men to have purchased long-term care insurance or to have written wills.

Caregiving responsibilities

- Almost 19 percent of LBT female elders care for their aging partners.
- 20 percent of older LBT women spend 41 or more hours a week assisting a care recipient.
- LBT female elders also report “always or often” assisting their families of origin or parent(s) with healthcare providers (81 percent), arranging for medical care (73 percent) and helping with advice or decision-making (87 percent).
- 70 percent of these women report that the strain of taking care of their family of origin places limits on their social lives and requires them to take time off from work.

The information above comes from the important work being done by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

What exactly do we mean when we talk about health disparities?

Health disparities are differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions or outcomes that exist among specific population groups.

Health disparities can affect groups of people based on gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or special health care needs and occur among groups who have persistently experienced historical trauma, social disadvantage or discrimination, and systematically experience worse health or greater health risks than more advantaged social groups.



For more information about health disparities, aging, health and many more important LGBT issues, visit: www.thetaskforce.org



Local LGBT Health Research

One exciting aspect of the **Out for Health** grant is that PPSFL commissioned local research conducted by Harris Interactive in October of 2008. The research was gathered in an effort to help us better understand issues and concerns unique to the LGBT community when it comes to accessing quality health care services in our region. Harris Interactive selected participants from a lengthy list of volunteers to engage in a three day online bulletin board discussion about LGBT health. PPSFL was interested in learning about what LGBT people need in terms of health care, what are the concerns and worries LGBT

people face when seeking care, what are some of the success stories from navigating the health care system and what can providers do to create a welcoming environment for LGBT people?

Our participants shared a lot and we appreciate their candor, their time and their ideas! We will be releasing the data in the spring and sharing your insights as well as tips and tools for creating a welcoming health care environment for LGBT people to local health providers! Thank you!



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Events Calendar!

January-April

Out of the Closet and Onto the Screen Film Series
Intersections of Sexuality & Faith in Film
Ithaca College
www.ithaca.edu/lgbt

February 24th

LGBT Health and Wellness Project Coffeehouse
Soul Full Cup, Coming, 6:30-8pm
Free & open to all!

March 6-8

TransRhetorics Conference, Cornell University
www.arts.cornell.edu/lbg

March 8-14

National LGBT Health Awareness Week

March 18-20

Sport, Sexuality and Culture Conference
Ithaca College
www.ithaca.edu/lgbt/events

April 24-26

Pride and Joy Families Weekend, Utica,
www.prideandjoyfamilies.org

Want more information about LGBT Health?

The Gay & Lesbian Medical Association, www.glma.org *click on "for patients"

GLMA is working to bring about equality in healthcare for LGBT people. When LGBT people go to see a doctor or other healthcare provider, the care they receive should be as good as anyone else would receive and LGBT healthcare professionals should not be discriminated against in their work. While much of our work is with healthcare professionals, we provide some information and referral services to LGBT patients.



National Association of Lesbian and Gay Addiction Professionals, www.nalgap.org

NALGAP is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of alcoholism, substance abuse, and other addictions in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities.



Looking for more health information?
We can help! Email LGBT@appsfl.org!