

The LGBT Health Initiative

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) information and outreach is one of the new areas in Healthy People 2020. The lack of data is the single largest gap in the LGBT health arena and Health and Human Services has made a public commitment to close that gap.

The LGBT Health Initiative at the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department is a pilot project that assesses the health concerns and issues of the LGBT community in Lexington-Fayette County. This initiative consisted of focus groups representing different demographics within the LGBT community. Based on the information gathered, targeted and culturally sensitive programming will be implemented to address the concerns in an effort to improve the health, safety and well-being of LGBT individuals. In addition, the data will also be used to inform and educate local health providers on LGBT health issues, inform the LGBT community about culturally sensitive and welcoming healthcare professionals, and to develop a survey tool. This anonymous survey was available on-line and advertised through posters/flyers, Facebook and Twitter, and endorsements by key leaders in the LGBT community to encourage participation in the survey.

Data from Phase I of this pilot has been analyzed and preliminary data results are available below. The LGBT research team is planning Phase II of the pilot to include a face-to-face survey interview to capture a more diverse sector of the LGBT community. Partners for the LGBT Health Initiative include: the Kentucky DPH Office of Health Equity, the State HIV/AIDS Program, and Dr. Jeff Jones (Assistant Professor at Georgia Southern University) Lexington-Fayette County Health Department (LFCHD) Epidemiology staff, AIDS Volunteers, Inc., and practicum students from the University of Kentucky and Asbury School of Social Work. Grant monies for the project were received from the Kentucky Office of Health Equity and the State HIV/AIDS Program.

Pilot Data Results:

- Of the 352 respondents 270 were online, 67 were focus group participants, and 15 completed paper surveys.
- Demographics of the respondents largely mirror the Fayette County general population in terms of gender and income however the sample was slightly more racially diverse, the mean age was older by 4 years, included transgender population and the pilot respondents were slightly more likely to be in a cohabitating relationship (50% married, civil union, domestic partner or living with a partner) than heterosexual couples in Fayette County (46.6%).
- Survey Results
 - 8.9% - Reported a health care provider did not treat them as well as other heterosexual patients.
 - 71.4% - Have made their sexual orientation known to their medical provider.

- 82.6%- Have had a routine medical checkup in the past 2 years.
- 85.0%- Would be more likely to use health care providers who specifically states they welcome LGBT patients and will treat them with equal respect.
- 1 in 6 respondents reported being targeted for violence or discrimination because of their sexual orientation.
- Almost half of respondents reported experiencing depression.
- The top 5 reported health conditions mirror chronic conditions among Kentuckians as a whole.

For Additional pilot study questions related to data results, survey instruments, survey methodology or study design can be directed to Dr. Jeff Jones at jeffjonesphd@gmail.com or Vivian Lasley-Bibbs, Kentucky Office of Health Equity, at Vivian.lasley-bibbs@ky.gov