

LET'S TALK ABOUT LGBTQ+ HEALTH



Health Challenges Facing the LGBTQ+ Community



PHYSICAL HEALTH

- > Lesbian and bisexual women may be at increased risk for breast, cervical and ovarian cancer compared to heterosexual women
- > Men having sex with men (MSM) are at an increased risk for prostate, testicular, colon and anal cancer
- > Lesbian women are more likely to be obese than heterosexual women
- > People in the LGBTQ community are often harassed and may be subject to violence and experience domestic violence



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Find a primary care provider you are comfortable with and schedule annual appointments. Talk about breast, cervical, colorectal, prostate screenings and testing for sexually transmitted diseases along with preventive and prophylaxis services.



SUBSTANCE USE

- > 3 in 10 LGBTQ+ people smoke and cigarette smoking kills over 30,000 LGBTQ+ individuals each year
- > Higher levels of alcohol and other drug use is found in the LGBTQ+ community
- > LGB youth are 25% more likely to use alcohol and 50% more likely to use cannabis
- > LGB youth are 2x as likely to use cocaine and ecstasy and 4x as likely to use meth and heroin



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ask about your risk factors and how you can help prevent disease to reduce risk for certain health conditions.

FACTS

- > The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning (LGBTQ) community consists of a broad range of community members and includes all races, ethnic and religious backgrounds and socio-economic status.
- > In New Jersey, 343,000 people aged 13+ identify as LGBTQ+ (2020).
- > LGBTQ+ individuals have unique health needs and experience an array of challenges due to stigma, discrimination, lack of access to appropriate care and heightened concern about confidentiality.
- > Improved health is achieved by understanding needs and receiving continuity of care.



MENTAL HEALTH

- > LGBTQ+ people are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety
- > LGBTQ+ people have increased risks of eating disorders including bulimia and anorexia
- > LGBTQ+ youth have elevated rates of suicide
- > Social isolation, discrimination and societal and familial rejection are frequently experienced



WHAT YOU CAN DO

What you discuss with your provider stays with your provider.

Be as open as possible and share both your health and personal histories.



SEXUAL HEALTH

- > Many sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, syphilis, hepatitis and herpes appear in higher rates in the LGBTQ+ community
- > HIV is 40x more common among men who have sex with men
- > Bisexual women have the highest rates of combining substance use with sex and report higher rates of risky sexual behavior



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Getting tested regularly can help early detection and treatment.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention and post-exposure prophylaxis are available.



TRANSGENDER HEALTH

- > Ensure your health providers know your entire health history including medications and surgeries
- > Ask what to expect and watch for with hormone treatments
 - Transgender women should ask about estrogen and blood clots, swelling, blood pressure and blood sugar;
 - Transgender men should ask about blood tests to know if their testosterone dose is safe.
- > Talk with your health provider if you are seeking silicone injections; avoid silicone sold at “pumping parties” as it can be contaminated or move around inside your body.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are not feeling heard and respected, find a new provider.



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Social determinants (factors that affect health and well-being that are outside a person’s control) affecting the LGBTQ+ community includes:

- > Legal discrimination in access to healthcare and insurance, employment, housing, marriage, adoption and retirement benefits.
- > Lack of laws protecting against bullying in schools.
- > High rates of poverty, making it more difficult to afford health insurance or care, housing and higher education.
- > Inequities in benefits programs including disparities between reproductive treatments and adoption programs, which create a higher financial burden.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Advocate for yourself and speak up about your needs and concerns.

Seek out LGBTQ+ support groups and/or attend events focused on LGBTQ+ issues to connect with others in the community.



What to Look for in LGBTQ+ Affirming Health Care Providers/Practices

- A welcoming environment that includes signage, displays and materials about LGBTQ+ health concerns.
- A visible nondiscrimination statement.
- Offers liaisons for LGBTQ+ health services such as a health navigator to address concerns and guide you through the process of accessing care.
- Look for practices/systems of care recognized as a Leader in LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality.



Feeling Nervous or Overwhelmed About Finding Healthcare?

Hunterdon Health is Committed to Providing Inclusive Services

The LGBTQ+ community must have access to health providers who understand their unique health needs/concerns and are committed to quality and inclusive health care that ultimately achieves better health outcomes.



Registered Nurse Sara Trawin is the LGBTQ+ navigator at Hunterdon Health available to support LGBTQ+ community members and their families find compassionate care specific to their needs. Call or text 908-246-8309 to find out more about this service/resource.

References:

- <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/lgbt/evidence-based-resources>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/index.htm>
- <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma12-4684.pdf>
- https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/NJ

Looking for Resources:

Visit Hunterdon Health website: <https://www.hunterdonhealth.org/>

For copies of this document and other resources, visit: <https://www.hunterdonhealth.org/services/hunterdon-mercero-chronic-disease-coalition>

