

Health Equity in Diverse Populations: LGBTQ+

The Community First Health Plans membership is growing both in numbers and diversity. As we work toward Health Equity and Health Equity Plus Accreditation through the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), we want to ensure that our Provider network is serving our LGBTQ+ Members with the same high-quality inclusive, welcoming, and compassionate care any and all patients can expect.

Please use the following information and resources to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community so that we may better serve and support these Members.

LGBTQ+ Health Risks

Up to 46% of the LGBTQ+ population in San Antonio avoided or postponed going to see a health care professional, according to a 2020 report. An additional 30% say that they were refused care due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. As the [Institute for Public Health at University Health](#) explains, "People who are LGBTQ+ have the same health needs as straight or cisgender people but tend to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes. People who identify as LGBTQ+ may struggle to access health care because of stigma and discrimination."

Members of the LGBTQ+ population are at higher risk of experiencing:

- Social inequities, including substance use disorders, unemployment, homelessness, and higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Mental illnesses and suicidal ideation.
- Intimate partner violence.
- HIV infection.

LGBTQ+ Health Care Education and Support

Please review the following resources to educate yourself about the LGBTQ+ community:

1. [University Health LGBTQ+ Health](#) – University Health and community health care resources
2. [National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center](#) – Educational programs, resources, and consultations for health care organizations
3. [LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#) – A list of commonly used terms the LGBTQ+ community
4. [The Pride Center of San Antonio](#) – Local organization that serves the LGBTQ+ community through in-person and virtual resources.
5. [Fiesta Youth](#) – Local organization that serves LGBTQ+ youth, their families, and allies.
6. [The Trevor Project](#) – National organization with a mission to end suicide by LGBTQ+ youth with resources for crisis support.
7. [988](#) – LGBTQ+ people under 25 can access 24/7 LGBTQ+ support on 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. To call an LGBTQ+ trained crisis counselor, dial 988 and then press 3. To text, send the word PRIDE to 988.
8. [Human Rights Campaign Foundation \(HRC\)](#) – A 501(c)(3) organization that shares resources for health care professionals, including a [Healthcare Equality Index](#) for Provider participation as an additional measure to help inform LGBTQ+ patient-centered care.



Next Steps

Below are seven ways to ensure health equity for LGBTQ+ patients, as outlined by Quality Interactions, an organization that provides Cultural Competency and Implicit Bias Awareness Training for Healthcare Professionals.

1. Prominently display an organizational non-discrimination policy.
2. Depict LGBTQ+ individuals and families in educational materials and posters.
3. Collect gender identity and sexual orientation information on intake forms.
4. Hire LGBTQ+ staff and provide an inclusive workplace.
5. Learn about and stay on top of LGBTQ+ health issues.
6. Include LGBTQ+ people in marketing and community outreach.
7. Require Cultural Competency Training specific to the LGBTQ+ community.

Thank you for being part of our Community First Provider Network and for helping us improve health equity for our Members.

Additional Sources

[State of our Community – San Antonio LGBTQ+ 2020 Survey](#)

[7 Ways to Ensure Health Equity for LGBTQ Patients](#)

[Quality Interactions, Cultural Competency, and Implicit Bias Awareness Training for Healthcare Professionals](#)