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# Talking points and statistics

* Per a 2017 Gallop Poll, the percentage of adult Americans identifying as LGBTQ is steadily rising: 3.5% (2012) to 4.5% (2017). This increase has been driven almost entirely by millennials whose reports of being LGBT have risen from 5.2% six years ago to 8.1% today.
* Maine has a higher percentage of LGBTQ adults (4.9%) compared with the rising national average (4.5%); and 21% of LGBTQ adults in Maine are raising children4
* 56% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people report experiences of serious discrimination in healthcare, while 70% of transgender people report serious discrimination (reporting at least one of the following: healthcare professionals refusing to provide needed care, refusing to touch them or using excessive precautions, using harsh or abusive language, blaming them for their health status, or being physically rough or abusive)5
* CMS and The Joint Commission have issued requirements for LGBTQ equity and inclusion, and expert recommendations have now emerged for LGBTQ patient-centered care.
* Among transgender adults, the lifetime prevalence of suicide attempts is 40%1
* Lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults have a two-fold risk of suicide attempts compared to heterosexual adults2
* Lesbian and gay individuals are twice as likely to have a substance use disorder compared to heterosexual counterparts; bisexual persons are three times as likely to have a SUD; and those that are “unsure” of how to identify are five times as likely to have a SUD.6,7
* LGBTQ youth comprise approximately 40% of the homeless youth population
* Factors that strongly protect LGBTQ people, especially youth, against depression and suicidal behavior include access to and use of LGBTQ inclusive medical and mental health3
* Resiliency factors can be enhanced through access to LGBTQ-affirming counseling and therapy, medical care, and LGBTQ-specific resources3

Takeaways

* The prevalence of LGBTQ Americans is steadily rising
* Maine has a higher prevalence of LGBTQ individuals
* LGBTQ persons face serious healthcare discrimination
* LGBTQ persons have significantly higher rates of homelessness, SUD’s, suicide attempts, and mental health comorbidities – this directly impacts NLH Acadia Hospital’s patient cohort
* Implementing LQBTQ specific policies increases access to healthcare and improves patient outcomes

References

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5. When Health Care Isn’t Caring: Lambda Legal’s Survey of Discrimination Against LGBT People and People with HIV. New York: Lambda Legal, 2010. Available at: <http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/when-health-care-isnt-caring>
6. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health: 2017
7. Boyd, CJ, et al. (2019). Severity of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use Disorders Among Sexual Minority Individuals and Their “Not Sure” Counterparts.