

Major University Establishes New LGBT Health Center

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Research efforts for LGBT patients include creating innovative medical and mental health services that lead to the training of students and practitioners and promote the development of outreach strategies specific to today's critical needs.



Columbia University Medical Center in New York has started a new program to serve the needs unique to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) patients. The purpose of the [LGBT Health Initiative](#) at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) is to bring together research, clinical care, education, and policy to fight stigma and promote resilience among LGBT people.

Based at the Division of Gender, Sexuality, and Health at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, in association with the Columbia University School of Nursing, LGBT Health Initiative is reported to be "of historic importance" specific to "translating advanced research on LGBT health into state-of-the-art clinical care, teaching and training of health professionals, and public policy analysis and formulation," noted Jeffrey Lieberman, MD, Chair of [Columbia Psychiatry](#), Director of the NYS Psychiatric Institute, and President-elect of the [APA](#).

[According to a recent press release](#), the decision to open the center is to foster research efforts for the LGBT, create innovative medical and mental health services, lead to the training of students and practitioners, and promote the development of outreach strategies specific to today's critical needs. "We will bring together scientists, clinicians, educators, and policymakers to respond comprehensively to the critical issues facing LGBT people. For example, families, schools, and health providers are often ill-prepared to offer support to LGBT youth, which increases their vulnerability to shame, low self esteem, isolation, loneliness and self-harm. We will conduct the research necessary to develop the tools that families, schools, and health providers can use to strengthen resilience among LGBT people," according to Anke A. Ehrhardt, PhD, Director of the Initiative and Director of the Division of Gender, Sexuality, and Health at the NYS Psychiatric Institute and the [Columbia University Department of Psychiatry](#).

"Almost every day in the news, there is another sign of progress in fighting stigma and in confronting the inequities found among the LGBT population. However, despite this dramatic increase in public awareness, research to guide this progress and training in evidence-based, culturally competent health care has lagged behind," said Co-Director Walter O. Bockting, PhD, a clinical psychologist and internationally known sexuality research. "To fill this gap, we will take LGBT health research, practice, education, and policy to a whole new level by working collaboratively with faculty and students, colleagues in the field, affected communities, and policymakers. Together, we will lead the way toward greater understanding, better access to care, improved quality of life, and well-being."

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