

Guide for Finding an LGBTQ+-Supportive Health Care Provider

Anyone who's sick clearly wants access to the best healthcare services that are available. However, numerous studies show that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people as well as those who identify with other nontraditional orientations (LGBTQ+) are faced with considerable barriers to competent healthcare services every day.

[Over half of surveyed LGBTQ+ respondents](#) to a recent poll reported experiencing incidents of violence or harassment because of their sexual orientation. Furthermore, many LGBTQ+ individuals find it difficult to locate healthcare providers that understand their needs.

In fact, in 2017 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) conveyed its plans to reverse laws that protect transgendered patients from discrimination when seeking treatment through federally funded healthcare programs. In addition, the agency has announced its intent to afford care providers the authorization to refuse certain critical services to LGBTQ+ patients on the grounds of moral objection. At the same time, the HHS has opened a new division specifically dedicated to fielding religion-based objections from healthcare providers who prefer to deny services to LGBTQ+ patients.

In combination, these circumstances work together to further decrease access to care for the group. Accordingly, there is a dire shortage of effective healthcare services available to serve them.

To address this issue, many organizations that advocate for LGBTQ+ diversity, inclusion and rights publish healthcare information online so that those in the community can connect with needed services. The following are three such resources, which are freely accessible and available online 24-7.

Gay & Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)

The [Gay & Lesbian Medical Association's Provider Directory](#) can help LGBTQ+ patients find inclusive care facilities and providers across the United States. It's the national organization's mission to promote health equality for LGBTQ+ citizens.

To date, many people do not understand the full breadth of healthcare challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, many people typically only think of HIV and AIDS as it pertains to the health concerns of this group. However, LGBTQ+ people face a full spectrum of health issues. This includes:

- Access to health services
- Addiction
- Behavioral health
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Depression
- Hepatitis
- Smoking

The work of the GLMA has fostered positive change regarding openly LGBTQ+ medical professionals. Now, the group is refocusing its efforts toward promoting public policy regarding treatment access and equality for LGBTQ+ patients.

The GLMA believes that all health professionals and supporters can play a role in promoting the well-being of the LGBTQ+ community. The group's members are dispersed across the United States and several other nations. They represent a range of specialties, including:

- Emergency medicine
- Family medicine
- Infectious diseases
- Internal medicine

- Neurology
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry

As a policy, the GLMA welcomes all supporters of their mission.

Healthcare Equality Index (HEI)

The [Healthcare Equality Index](#) offers an up-to-date list of LGBTQ+-supportive health care policies and organizations. It's an invaluable resource that empowers LGBTQ+ patients to locate and research medical facilities.

Each year, the Human Rights Campaign publishes the HEI report, making it available to over 3 million supporters through its website. Consumers can simply use the HEI online database or interactive map to check the ratings of local healthcare facilities. The resource gives LGBTQ+ patients the ability to make informed decisions about where they seek treatment.

For healthcare providers, the HEI initiative empowers medical professionals to learn best practices for LGBTQ+ fairness and inclusion. Through the program, healthcare professionals can learn how to effectively deliver patient-centered care to LGBTQ+ patients.

The HEI initiative also provides free online continuing education for medical professionals. This training is a key component in [enabling healthcare professionals to develop proficient emotional intelligence](#) for treating LGBTQ+ consumers.

The program also allows healthcare providers to connect with LGBTQ+ patients. Duly, Healthcare Equality Index services are a powerful resource for fighting back against the erosion of the fundamental civil rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

Overview of Discrimination and the LGBTQ+ Community in America

Gender discrimination endangers the lives of LGBTQ+ patients with delays and outright denials of critical medical services. AmericanProgress.org published [this informative article outlining the challenges facing LGBTQ+ people](#) when looking for healthcare services. The piece offers numerous beneficial suggestions and solutions for LGBTQ+ consumers who are in need of competent medical services.

The article expresses that everyone has a right to fair treatment by healthcare providers. In part, conveys the exposé, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) addresses this issue by outlawing bias and discrimination on the part of healthcare and insurance providers.

Legislation passed by the former Obama administration and several court rulings specifically protect LGBTQ+ consumers from discrimination in healthcare because of their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Healthcare discrimination discourages LGBTQ+ patients from seeking essential services. Furthermore, facilities and care providers well-versed in the needs of the group are limited.

Resultantly, LGBTQ+ patients who been turned away from one facility are more likely to have trouble finding another competent provider. Despite limited protections, LGBTQ+ consumers still face bias and discrimination at many of today's healthcare facilities.

Advocates for LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion should make their voices heard by the U.S. Department of Justice to safeguard the rights that protect the community. Additionally, supporters of LGBTQ+ people should make sure that their state legislators work to protect the rights of the group – as well as that of all citizens.