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Improving Access to Healthcare for LGBTQ Individuals in Burlington

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Improving Access to Healthcare for LGBTQ Individuals

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Family Medicine Rotation #5

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Community Health Center Burlington

Preceptor: Dr. Heather Stein

Problem Identification

- Research consistently suggests that LGBTQ individuals face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of civil and human rights¹
- Discrimination against LGBTQ individuals has been associated with higher rates of substance abuse, psychiatric disorders, and suicide^{2,3,4}
- LGBTQ health requires specific attention from health care and public health professionals to address disparities:
 - LGBTQ youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide⁵
 - Lesbians are less likely to get preventative services for cancer⁶
 - Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs⁷
 - Transgender individuals have high prevalence of HIV/STDS, victimization, mental health issues, and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual individuals⁸

Public Health Cost/Considerations

- In 2014, gay and bisexual men made up an estimated 2% of the U.S. population, but accounted for 70% of new HIV infections
 - The lifetime treatment cost of an HIV infection is \$379,668⁹
- In 2016, CDC funding to Vermont included¹⁰:
 - HIV/AIDS - \$1,261,647
 - STDs - \$185,654
 - Viral Hepatitis - \$91,200

Community Perspective (1)

- **On why this clinic is important:**

“I want there to be a safe place for folks to either come establish care or seek care, where they know they are going to be made to feel comfortable as much as possible when discussing things that can be uncomfortable. I’m hoping that this clinic will serve that purpose, and that we’ll increase the services provided to our existing LGBTQ patients and help serve new patients.”

-Heather Stein, MD, Associate Director of CHCB

Community Perspective (2)

- **On why this clinic is important:**

“I think there’s an unmet need for LGBTQ-affirmative providers in this area, and I think we need to make a more public and sustained effort to get people primary care and screening.”

“The hope is that people will be able to get care in a more timely fashion, and not wait for screening or treatment.”

-Leo Kline, APRN

Intervention & Methodology (1)

- CHCB has recently approved a specialty clinic to address LGBTQ health issues, called the **Be You Clinic**
- One afternoon per week will be staffed with LGBTQ affirmative provider and social work/nurse teams
 - 4 30-minute spots will be held for new/current trans patients seeking care
 - Remaining openings would be both prescheduled and same-day 15 minute visits
 - If any openings remain they will be filled with same-day patients, regardless of LGBTQ status

Intervention & Methodology (2)

- Aim: to spread awareness of this new specialty clinic and the services prioritized for LGBTQ individuals
- A flyer was developed to distribute to waiting rooms at CHCB as well as other supportive community organizations (Vermont CARES, Pride Center of Vermont, etc.)

Results

- The flyer was reviewed by LGBTQ-affirmative providers and staff
- Feedback has been that the flyer is clear, uses appropriate language, and is encouraging
- **The first clinic, held on 11/6/17, had all appointments filled with LGBTQ patients**



Be You Clinic LGBTQ healthcare

The Community Health Centers of Burlington has created a specialty clinic to better serve the LGBTQ community!

Thursday afternoons, this clinic will be staffed with a LGBTQ-knowledgeable provider, nurse, and social worker.

Services include:

- Primary care for LGBTQ individuals, partners, and families
- STI screening and treatment
- Sexual health education
- Gender-affirming care, including hormonal and surgical transition
- Behavioral health and psychiatric health referrals

Call 802-864-6309 to request an appointment at the
Be You Clinic

617 Riverside Avenue, Burlington, Vermont, 05401

Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- Evaluation
 - Quantify the utilization of the appointment slots at the clinic
 - Assess patient satisfaction with the Be You clinic, services provided, and affirmative providers
- Limitations
 - The clinic is held only one afternoon per week in Burlington; transportation and work schedules could be limiting for patients
 - The flyer does not detail all potential services provided at the Be You clinic

Future Directions

- Further dissemination of resources to clinics and organizations outside of Burlington
- Creation of referral tools in NextGen and/or PRISM to the Be You clinic
- Extension of the Be You clinic to other Community Health Center sites (South End Health Center, Champlain Islands Health Center, etc.)

References

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- 4) Herek GM, Garnets LD. Sexual orientation and mental health. *Annu Rev Clin Psychol*. 2007;3:353-75.
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