

California LGBT Health Care Advocacy Working Group

Principles for Health Care Reform

As a broad coalition of more than 80 organizations that serve California's diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, we are working together to achieve:

1. **Guaranteed health care for all.** Health care is a human right that should be available to all Californians. Factors such as actual or perceived race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, marital status, language spoken, immigration status or HIV status should not be barriers to obtaining comprehensive health care coverage. Insurance plans must be "guaranteed issue" and available to the children of LGBT parents and caregivers on the same terms as those available to all children. Comprehensive coverage should be uniform statewide and without county opt-outs.
2. **Affordable care.** Because poor and low-income people are the most at risk in our current health care system, any health care reform proposal must guarantee that comprehensive coverage is truly affordable. Access to insurance does not mean access to care if costs are shifted to consumers who lack the means to pay.
3. **Comprehensive, quality care.** For the state to achieve the best possible health outcomes, all Californians should have coverage that guarantees them comprehensive, quality health care that meets their individual medical needs. For example, transgender individuals should have full access to comprehensive coverage for medically necessary transition-related health care services.
4. **Culturally competent care.** Health care providers should receive state-of-the-art training to meet the specific needs of all underserved communities, including the LGBT community. Research shows that culturally competent care produces better health outcomes and that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia present serious barriers to the delivery of appropriate health care and often result in a fear of discrimination that causes many LGBT people to delay or avoid getting the care they need.
5. **Full equality under the law.** Californians will only be healthy when everyone is afforded equal status and protection under the laws of the State. Research indicates that when discrimination is enshrined in law, physical, emotional and financial harm results. For example, lack of equal access to civil marriage leaves couples and families vulnerable during times of crisis and medical emergency.
6. **Support of existing, proven models of care.** Health reform must include investments in community-based care. Existing and proven models of care, such as LGBT health care clinics and programs, must be preserved. Health reform proposals should specify how the state will support, maintain and fund such models of care.
7. **Better data collection on LGBT health disparities.** The health care needs of all Californians must be adequately measured. As reform measures are being implemented, state surveys and health assessment tools must be revised to include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity so that the state can collect data on LGBT health disparities that will inform the ongoing delivery of care. This data should be collected in such way that addresses the diversity within the LGBT community, in terms of geography, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, and other factors.