Health care in the United States is undergoing its greatest transformation in generations through the Affordable Care Act.

For the first time, LGBT-specific health goals are included in national initiatives such as Healthy People 2020 and are the subject of pivotal research summaries such as the Institute of Medicine’s report, The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding.

Groundbreaking research about health disparities and barriers to culturally competent care exists, yet knowledge about LGBT health is not being translated into best practices in real-world contexts. As a result, urgent health problems remain unaddressed, and the promise of a more equitable, patient-centered medical system could leave LGBT people behind. LGBT Health Policy & Practice was established at the George Washington University in 2013 by Dr. Stephen Forssell to bridge this gap between research knowledge and clinical practice.

73% of transgender patients believe they will be treated differently by care providers; 52% feel they will be refused care. In Uganda and other nations, LGBT people can be imprisoned for telling care providers they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

8 in 10 LGBT youth report being verbally harassed; 4 in 10 report being physically attacked because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (GLSEN 2012).

HIV incidence among young black gay men is almost 3 times that of young white gay men aged 13 to 24 (CDC).

Lesbians and bisexual women have higher rates of breast cancer and get less routine health care than other women (American Cancer Society).

Gay men have higher rates of major depression, bipolar disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder than their heterosexual counterparts (CDC).
The LGBT Health Policy & Practice Certificate Program offers a year-long graduate-level certificate in LGBT health, mental health issues, and health care policy to physicians, nurses, psychologists, hospital administrators, policy makers, social workers, and other health care professionals. Students gain knowledge and strategies needed to transform policies and practices in their workplaces, pass on what they have learned to co-workers, change the culture, and end disparities LGBT people face when seeking care.

The program’s hybrid online and on-campus model offers the flexibility that working professionals—who come from across the nation and around the globe—need; much of the coursework is completed through online lectures and student interaction. The cohort meets in Washington, D.C. for two separate week-long residencies that enable students to share their unique experiences and meet key policymakers in the U.S. government and global leaders in health and human rights.

**Mission**

Train current and future leaders to develop and apply best practices and shape policy to eliminate disparities and improve health outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

**Vision**

Be the premier university program for advancing the lifelong health and well-being of LGBT people.

As a doctor working in South Africa as a public health clinician, I have recently started a program to support lesbians who are victims of sexual violence and hate crimes. The LGBT Health Policy & Practice Program at GW is crucial to providing me—as a clinician and someone who can potentially influence policy in my country—with relevant knowledge, skills, and networks.

Dr. Ntlotleng Mabena
Chief Operations Officer, Centre for HIV and AIDS Prevention Studies (CHAPS)
Johannesburg, South Africa
These remarkable scholars are transforming thousands of lives through their capstone projects, including—from our inaugural class—a major university health plan is adding transgender care to their benefits; a medical school’s curriculum has been revised to be more culturally competent; and nurses in elder care facilities now have access to training to help them better care for aging LGBT residents.

Dr. Stephen Forssell, Founding Director, LGBT Health Policy & Practice Program
As a teen, I was a part of the 40 percent of homeless youth who are LGBT. I fared better than my brother (also LGBT), who took his own life shortly after his 18th birthday. I worked hard and earned scholarships so I could get my college degree. Although GW’s LGBT Health Policy & Practice graduate program does not qualify for financial aid, thanks to the generosity of donors I received enough assistance to further my education and give a voice to the countless people, like my brother, who did not get to realize that dream.

Pearl Outland, CERT ’14
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Support Us

Gifts support students’ Capstone projects, graduate fellowships, and academic enrichment such as leadership field trips, distinguished guest speakers, visiting scholars, and symposia. Since short certificate programs do not qualify for traditional student aid, to maintain our innovative approach and to guarantee top-notch candidates, philanthropy plays a game-changing role.

There are many ways to give. All gifts are tax-deductible and may be directed to the area of greatest interest to you.

- **General** – Unrestricted gifts are vital to sustaining academic excellence, cutting-edge curriculum, and tangible, real-world Capstone projects.

- **Sponsorship** – Forum sponsors help raise awareness about LGBT Health Policy & Practice and its impact. Engage as a community leader alongside a recognized and trusted brand in the nation’s capital: the George Washington University. Simultaneous webcast reaches a global audience.

- **Scholarship** – A top priority is to make this groundbreaking program accessible to all qualified candidates, regardless of ability to pay. The majority of applicants, domestic and foreign, require some level of financial aid to enroll.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Donate online at [lgbt.columbian.gwu.edu](http://lgbt.columbian.gwu.edu)
I now have a much clearer understanding of the complexity of dealing with health issues and disparities for sexual and gender minorities, and the need for inquiry to go beyond labels—LGBT, straight, or other—and dig into behaviors and social contexts.

Ronald L. Schlittler, CERT ’14
American Psychological Association, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns Office
Washington, DC