In 2013, the Human Rights Campaign rated cities across the nation for LGBT inclusiveness in municipal law. Worcester received a score of 55/100, bringing LGBT issues to the attention of City Hall. Within a year, Worcester made structural and legislative changes to improve LGBT inclusiveness and in 2014, the city received a score of 100. Key areas that were addressed are Municipal services, Public Safety, Healthcare, and Law Enforcement.

### Municipal Liaisons to LGBT Community

- **City Hall – Jayna Turchek, Human Rights Director**
- **Worcester Police Department – Lt. Rick Bates**
- **Safe Homes, Inc.**
- **North and Burncoat High Schools, the Worcester LGBT Elder Network, and Fenway Health**

### Community Resources & Organizations

#### LGBT Youth

- **Gay-Straight Alliance (or Gender Sexuality Alliance):** Student-run clubs in local schools that provide a safe place for students to discuss issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- **Safe Homes:** Led by youth and professional staff, this program offers a drop-in Center, one-on-one counseling, HIV testing, and trainings for service providers on topics concerning LGBT youth
- **Support of Worcester Area Gay and Lesbian Youth (SWAGGLY):** Run by AIDS Project Worcester, this program provides a space for people ages 14-23 to socialize, learn, and share about issues facing LGBTQ youth today

#### LGBT Seniors

- **Worcester LGBT Elder Network:** Promotes access to education, support, community resources, and social opportunities for LGBT seniors
- **Rainbow Lunch Club:** Held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester, offers LGBT seniors age 60+ nutritious meals and an opportunity to socialize with friends
- **Resource Guide:** List of service providers vetted by WLEN editors and approved as LGBT-friendly, including physicians, counselors, financial advisors, legal support, and places of worship

### Municipal Engagement

**Human Rights Campaign Scores**

- **2013:** 55/100
- **2014:** 100

### Key Issues

**LGBT Health Disparities**

- While there has been an emergence of community resources and municipal engagement surrounding LGBT issues in Worcester, barriers continue to prevent members of this community from accessing long-term, high-quality primary care.
- The LGBT population, like other minority groups, has specialized health needs. In order to best understand and address these needs, we must first conduct better research characterizing this population. The electronic medical record can be a strong tool for obtaining this crucial information.
- All members of a healthcare team, from front-end staff to care providers, play a pivotal role in establishing an inclusive environment.
- There needs to be increased communication between UMMS and the LGBT community of Worcester.

### Conclusions

- **Tobacco Use in the LGBT Population**
  - In Massachusetts, 17% of LGBT people are current smokers, compared to 9% of the heterosexual population. Big tobacco continues to target disenfranchised groups.
  - (Source: Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership)

### Health Resources

- **AIDS Project Worcester:** Services include health education, counseling, outreach, HIV counseling and testing, & supportive educational groups
- **Family Health Center Worcester:** Provides culturally diverse populations with access to affordable, high-quality primary health care and social services, regardless of patients’ ability to pay; in process of assessing LGBT competence among staff
- **Planned Parenthood (Central MA health center):** Offers education, resources, and service referrals to the LGBT community
- **Fenway Health Center:** Mission: “Making life healthier for those who are LGBT, people affected by HIV/AIDS, and the larger community.”
- Offers trainings, webinars, and consulting for healthcare institutions and providers looking to enhance LGBT inclusiveness
- Focus on institution-wide hiring policies, partner benefits, and support from administration, as well as specific suggestions for promoting health equity (e.g. intake forms, waiting room magazines, and signage)

### UMMS Library Guide

Our group partnered with Len Levin of the Lamar Soutter Library to create an online resource guide for use by providers seeking information for their LGBT patients. The library guide is separated into individual sections geared towards the unique health needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender subpopulations.

It is our hope that this centralized source of information will help all members of the healthcare team to provide high-quality care for this diverse group of patients.

Examples of other Library Guides can be found at the following link: [http://libraryguides.umassmed.edu/](http://libraryguides.umassmed.edu/)

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