



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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First-ever Colorado LGBT plan aims to reduce disparities and improve health

DENVER — Today the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment released the first-strategic plan focused on the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Coloradans. With participation from more than 45 organizations across Colorado, the plan aims to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, health disparities faced by LGBT communities by removing barriers and building new pathways to healthy living.

“We have the responsibility to eliminate health disparities among the LGBT population in Colorado,” said Dr. Chris Urbina, the department’s executive director and chief medical officer. “We need to have the highest standard of healthy living for all Coloradans.”

As with the rest of the nation, Colorado’s LGBT population experiences higher rates of tobacco, alcohol and substance use; infectious disease; and depression. National and state research shows that many LGBT people face multiple obstacles in getting appropriate health information, prevention services and health care. Some of these obstacles include lack of access to insurance for self or same-sex partners and children, providers unskilled in working with LGBT patients, and societal discrimination that contributes to chronic emotional stress and health risk behaviors.

The LGBT Health Outcomes Planning Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was led by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Julie Graves, the department’s project lead, said, “This is an important first step in understanding our resources, articulating our goals and beginning the collaborations needed to move the work forward.”

The four key goals of the Colorado LGBT strategic plan include the following:

- Build competent and LGBT-affirming prevention, early intervention, and health care services accessible throughout Colorado.

- Engage LGBT Coloradans and community organizations to shift social patterns toward healthier living and improve the health and wellness systems that serve their communities.
- Ensure LGBT-affirming policies and political actions strengthen individual and community partnerships to advance mutual aspirations.
- Improve Colorado LGBT-specific data and research to inform about health outcomes.

A presentation and dialogue about the LGBT Health Outcomes Planning Project will be held on today, 5-7 p.m., at the Russell Pavilion inside Exempla Saint Joseph's Hospital in Denver. To read the plan and share with others, please visit <http://bit.ly/MAelZT>.

To show support for the health and well-being of Colorado's LGBT community, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment invites all its partners and the public to march in the Denver Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 17, at 9 a.m. starting at Denver's Cheeseman Park and ending at Civic Center Park.