



Doctors for Change 2019 Policy Priorities

LGBTQ Health Issues

ABOUT DOCTORS FOR CHANGE

Doctors for Change is a member-based organization with over 1,500 participating health care providers, students, and medical residents throughout the Houston region. Our members, Board of Directors, and Leadership Team donate countless hours to make our organization run. The Board and Leadership team work closely with committees and our staff members to accomplish all of the work that we do. Doctors for Change works to increase access to care and improve the health of all Houstonians and all Texans through research, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

WHY LGBTQ HEALTH

Research suggests that LGBTQ individuals face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights. Discrimination against LGBT persons has been associated with high rates of mental health disorders, substance abuse, and suicide. In fact, LGBTQ youth are 2-3 times more likely to commit suicide. Recent polling shows that a solid majority (64%) of all demographic groups in Texas favor nondiscrimination laws to protect LGBTQ Texans.

Eliminating LGBTQ health disparities and enhancing efforts to improve LGBTQ health are necessary to ensure that LGBTQ individuals can lead long, healthy lives. Evidence shows that reducing health disparities results in: reductions in disease transmission and progression, improved mental and physical health, reduced health care costs, and increased life expectancy.

Pertinent legislation:

- HB 244 (Farrar): Relating to the prohibition of certain discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression; providing an administrative penalty; creating a criminal offense. Referred to State Affairs 2/19.
- HB 254 (Bernal): Relating to the prohibition of certain discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression; providing an administrative penalty; creating a criminal offense. Referred to State Affairs 2/19.
- SB 151 (Rodriguez): Relating to the prohibition of certain discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression; providing an administrative penalty; creating a criminal offense. Referred to State Affairs 2/1.
- HB 85 (Gonzalez, Mary): Relating to the prosecution of the offense of indecency with a child. **Committee report sent to Calendars on 4/5.**
- HB 517 (Israel): Relating to unprofessional conduct by mental health providers who attempt to change the sexual orientation of a child; providing penalties. Referred to Public Health 2/20.