

Health WITH DOES IT MATTER?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion for the LGBTQ+ population are important due to the history of exclusion. Homosexuality in the DSM- II was removed in 1973 (Lothwell et al. , 2020). Up to 40 % of LGBTQ+ individuals experience discrimination in a healthcare setting, leading to negative outcomes (Nowaskie, 2020). The LGBTQ+ population has an increased risk of mood disorders, attempted and completed suicides, substance use disorders, significant delays in seeking healthcare, and experience increased victimization, violence, and harassment (Nowaskie, 2020 ; Lothwell et al. , 2020).

CURRENT CHALLENGES

The LGBTQ+ community faces various challenges in accessing equitable mental health care and healthcare. Many challenges come from insurance difficulties, such as being unable to afford insurance, having a primary care provider, or paying for prescriptions that insurance won't cover (Ramsay et al. , 2022). Additionally, there is fear of disclosure, refused care, and limited provider training on LGBTQ+ problems (Ramsay et al. , 2022). There is a lack of demographic information and internalized stress leads to adverse outcomes (Nowaskie, 2020 ; Ramsay et al. , 2022).

IMPACT AND BENEFITS OF LEGISLATION

Legislation helps to provide structure, rules, and access to mental health and healthcare overall. For example, the Affordable Care Act expanded mental health services under Medicaid and provided protections of discrimination to include sexual orientation and gender identity (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2020). The benefits of legislation helped to create safer spaces for the LGBTQ+ community and thereby reduce discrimination and victimization while improving training for providers (Zanutto & Skipper, 2020).

CURRENT LEGISLATION

Legislation proposed as of April 2023 for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 aims to stop funding for military members who are transgender and require gender-affirming care or hormone therapy (118th Congress, 2023). The impact of this proposed law is very negative with adverse mental health outcomes for many individuals who choose to serve the United States of America.

CALL TO ACTION

As of November 2024 , over 500 bills have been introduced into various state legislatures that are anti- LGBTQ+ (ACLU, 2023). Without your support, anti- LGBTQ+ will continue to be submitted and some could eventually be law. This will affect the people you know and love. Do your part today and get involved!

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