

LGBTQ+ Health Equity in New Hampshire

In June, five local activists joined **New Futures** for ***A Conversation with LGBTQ+ Advocate on Health Equity in New Hampshire***. Panelists spoke about their lived experiences in the Granite State, past and continuing advocacy efforts, and what we can do year-round to support LGBTQ+ health in the Granite State. We were joined by **Gerri Cannon** (she/her), State Representative; **Ed Butler** (he/him), Fmr. State Representative; **Alyssa Antman** (she/her), Planned Parenthood Northern New England; **Carlos Cardona** (he/him), Laconia Community Leader; and **Finnley Allen** (he/him/they/them), LGBTQ+ Youth Advocate.

Watch the full conversation at:

<https://new-futures.org/demand-pride-month-events>

Policy in NH

- Same-sex marriage became legal in NH on January 1st, 2010.
- NH banned conversion therapy for minors in 2018.
- In 2018, NH became the 18th state to enact gender identity non-discrimination protections.
- The NH ACLU estimates that about 1,000 TGNC (transgender/non-conforming) students attend NH high schools, but as of December 2020, only 48 out of 196 school districts and charter schools have a TGNC student policy.

The Numbers

- 47** percent of adults living in NH identify as lesbian, gay, or transgender. ([source](#))
- 31** percent of these residents are raising children in NH. ([source](#))
- 50** is the average age of **NON** lesbian, gay, or transgender residents in NH. ([source](#))
- 39** is the average age of lesbian, gay, or transgender residents in NH. ([source](#))

LGBTQ+ and Health Care

- Panelists discussed health care needs in NH. Some of these needs include:
 - More health care providers who are knowledgeable about the LGBTQ+ population and are **culturally competent**.
 - **Access to affordable health care** and more providers who accept **Medicaid**.
 - **Suicide prevention** and **mental health care**.
- **LGBTQ+ people face more barriers to accessing health care than non-LGBTQ+ people do.** As Human Rights Watch reports, "LGBTQ+ individuals are twice as likely to be uninsured as non-LGBT individuals and many have difficulty finding providers who will treat them without passing judgment on their sexual orientation or gender identity or offer the services they need, particularly in rural areas. Some have difficulty finding providers who will treat them at all."

LGBTQ+ and Reproductive Health

- According to the Guttmacher Institute, "**LGBTQ+ people experience major disparities in sexual and reproductive health care and worse health outcomes than the population overall.**"
- The American Cancer Society reports that lesbian and bisexual women receive routine preventative cancer screenings at lower rates than heterosexual women.
- Planned Parenthood is a major provider of health care for LGBTQ+ folks living in NH, but the budget and other attacks on Planned Parenthood's funding is putting access to care for the 11,000 patients served by Planned Parenthood in NH at risk.

LGBTQ+ and Aging

- There's a strong need to support the health of the LGBTQ+ community as LGBTQ+ folks age. **The aging population needs access to affordable care.**
- Due to factors that include not being able to legally marry before 2010, discrimination and confusing laws around same-sex couples adopting children, current older LGBTQ+ adults are less likely to have children than younger LGBTQ+ adults today, which may mean that more LGBTQ+ adults will need **nursing home care** and may need at younger ages than people who have children to help care for them.
- Older LGBT adults are at **higher risk of social, economic, and physical health disparities** than older non-LGBT adults. These disparities include "social isolation, functional limitations, and disability". These disparities exist because, "**Lifetime experiences of social exclusion, discrimination, victimization, stigma, and identity concealment** all have been associated with diminished health among LGBT midlife and older adults."
 - An important 2016 report from the UCLA School of Law Williams Institute addresses many of the health issues older LGBTQ+ adults face as well.
 - Read more here: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-aging/>

LGBTQ+ and Mental Health

- Panelist Carlos Cardona brought up access to **mental health treatment** and **suicide prevention** as major needs in NH. Carlos described how many LGBTQ+ folks in NH have experienced discrimination while trying to access mental health care, and many LGBTQ+ people don't have strong support systems at home or in their personal life.
- According to the American Psychiatry Association, "**LGBTQ individuals are more than twice as likely as heterosexual men and women to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime.**"
- According to The Trevor Project, "**42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth.**"

Health Equity & Advocating for the LGBTQ+ Community

Panel question: What advocacy efforts have you been involved in or seen that have advanced LGBTQ+ health in the Granite State?

- Representative Cannon has been advocating for legislation to make it easier for transgender people to change their **birth certificates** for the past 3 years. Currently, people have to go to court for a judge to decide, but in states like Massachusetts, transgender people can bring a form signed by a doctor to City Hall and walk out with a changed birth certificate. **The difficulty of this process in NH can have negative impacts on the mental health and well-being of transgender people.**
- Locally, Carlos is advocating for and focusing on suicide prevention, especially for LGBTQ+ people.
- On the Federal Level, Fmr. Representative Butler spoke about supporting the Equality Act in the Senate.

What You Can Do

- Advocate for policy change that supports LGBTQ+ folks and furthers health equity, like **continuing Expanded Medicaid, increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates, protecting LGBTQ+ students, and funding for the aging population.**
- **"Speak with us, not for us, unless we ask you to."** - Panelist Finnley Allen
- Share lived experiences with people who are in positions to make changes.
- Elevate the voices of LGBTQ+ folks.
- **"Acceptance, acceptance, acceptance."** - Panelist, Fmr. Representative, Ed Butler
- Get involved and support local LGBTQ+ organizations.
- **Watch the panel discussion to hear directly from LGBTQ+ activists!**

Resources

- [LGBTQIA+ Glossary of Health Care Terms](#)
- [Do Ask, Do Tell: Talking to your health care provider about being LGBTQ+ Brochure](#)
- [SAMHSA LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity](#)
- [The Case for Lived Equality in the Classroom Report](#)
- [Trans Action NH](#)
- [GLSEN NH](#)

References

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