



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:00AM

March 31, 2012

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

City Launches Action Plan to Address the Health Needs of the LGBT Community in Chicago

CHICAGO - The City of Chicago, led by the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced the launch of a Community Action Plan outlining strategies to address the specific health needs of Chicago's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community (LGBT).

The LGBT Community Action Plan serves as a supplement to *Healthy Chicago*, the City's public health agenda. It identifies ways to address high rates of smoking, obesity, HIV prevention, access to care, and other concerns within Chicago's LGBT community. The Chicago Department of Public Health developed this plan in coordination with City leaders and community health providers across the city, and also relied on input from LGBT residents and allies of the community.

"Chicago's strength is in the diversity of its communities," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel, "and I am committed to ensuring that all Chicagoans have access to the care and information they need to live healthy lives and contribute fully to the vibrancy of our city."

The action plan outlines 22 strategies to improve the overall health of the LGBT community, including: improving data collection, addressing violence within the community, improving cultural competency about LGBT-specific concerns among Chicago's health providers, and improving overall inclusion of the LGBT community across the city in order to better connect members with health resources and information.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

“Chicagoans in communities across the city face similar health concerns, but there are clear disparities in health status among the city’s diverse LGBT community that require specific strategies to target and address these concerns,” said Dr. Bechara Choucair, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Highlights of the LGBT Community Action Plan:

- Promote the collection of sexual orientation data in electronic medical records and encourage researchers focused on LGBT health to share findings and develop new LGBT health research.
- Improve the tracking of hate crimes against transgender persons, publicize resources for reporting violence, and conduct outreach on strategies to avoid violence.
- Develop cultural competency training to help educate health care providers, employers and educators on the health needs of the LGBT community.
- Increase tobacco cessation efforts in the LGBT community to address the high prevalence of smoking, which is at 30 percent, 12 percentage points higher than the 18 percent of the overall population.
- Promote inclusion of same sex couples in programs aimed at healthy pregnancies, childbirth and early childhood health.

The Community Action plan was put together with the help of many community based organizations, providers, partners and stakeholders that have the same dedication that CDPH does to the overall health of Chicago and hold expertise on the health challenges faced in the LGBT community.

Partners who assisted CDPH in the development of this plan include the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, Howard Brown Health Center, University of Illinois at Chicago, Affinity and the Center on Halsted.

###