SAGE MAINE SURVEY REPORT: MAINE’S HEALTH PRACTITIONERS CARING FOR GLBT OLDER ADULTS PATIENTS

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Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) is the country’s largest and oldest organization (founded 1978) dedicated to improving the lives of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) older adults.

SAGE Maine, first statewide chapter of SAGE

Needs Assessment Findings
- (1) Create a network of health-care providers and other professionals who are knowledgeable and affirmative regarding LGBT aging issues;
- (2) Train staff and management of long-term care services and facilities to provide a safe and comfortable environment.
Purpose of the Health Practitioners’ Survey Project

- Ascertain information to further understand the health care service environment in Maine for older adult Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender (GLBT) people.

- Seek the candid opinions of physicians, advanced practice nurses, and physician assistants; to provide a report that will be helpful to health professions associations and the Maine Office of Aging & Disability Services.
Estimated that about 15,000 Maine adults over the age of 60 are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual.

“Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have unique health experiences and needs, but it is not known exactly what those experiences and needs are” (IOM, 2010)

Older LGBT individuals face additional barriers to health because of isolation and lack of social services, and culturally competent providers
Methods

- Survey design: 24 questions, 6 that allowed open-ended answers and/or comments
  - SAGE Maine Task Force
  - GLMA
  - UNECOM Q Med Club

- Health Practitioner Survey was distributed to leaders of various health professions organizations in Maine (Jan-March)

- Survey Monkey Data Summary Report
# Maine's Practitioner #s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>State Numbers</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Survey #s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPs/APN</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>As of 5/14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAs</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>Employed as of 5/13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDs</td>
<td>3,420</td>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>43 (DO/MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOs</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>43 (DO/MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,109</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.* 6 skipped</td>
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</tbody>
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Most are in Primary Care
Q1 What efforts are made to welcome GLBT patients? [check all that apply]

Answered: 94   Skipped: 6

a. Window decal...
b. Reading materials
c. Non-discrimi...
d. Other (please... e. No special efforts

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Question 2

I believe a GLBT-friendly environment is generally provided...

[Check all that apply]

Answered: 97  Skipped: 3

a. In facilities...

b. By my staff

c. By my professional...

d. A GLBT-friendly...
Q3 To what extent do you think that there are anti-GLBT attitudes within your practice?

Answered: 97  Skipped: 3

a. None at all
b. At least some among...
c. At least some among...
d. A great deal
Q4. Is GLBT training provided in your practice environment?

Training examples: “training focused on GLBT sensitivity, health disparities, and unique health needs”

- 14.5% provide GLBT training in their practice
- 69% do not provide trainings
- 16.5% don’t know if GLBT trainings are conducted in their practice environments.
Q1. How comfortable are you with providing medical care to GLBT patients?

- 82% are very comfortable with providing medical care to GLBT patients
- 16% are somewhat comfortable
- 2% answered that they are somewhat uncomfortable with providing care to GLBT patients
- 4 people didn’t answer the question
Q6. How comfortable are you in interacting with GLBT persons in general [outside of your medical practice]?

- 90%: Very comfortable
- 10%: Somewhat comfortable
- 3 practitioners didn’t respond to this question
Self Identified GLBT Patients

93% Yes

No
QUESTION 8

Older GLBT Patients

66%

Yes
No
Question 9

Q9 For which GLBT patient population do you feel competent to care? [check all that apply]

Answered: 94  Skipped: 6

- a. Gay
- b. Lesbian
- c. Bisexual
- d. Transgender – Male to...
- e. Transgender – Female to...

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%  90%  100%
Q10 How have you acquired knowledge of GLBT health care? [check all that apply]

Answered: 95   Skipped: 5

- a. Professional training...
- b. Continuing education
- c. Professional...
- d. From GLBT patients
- e. Other (please...)
- f. I have no specific...
Q11 How do you collect information that would inform you of a patient’s GLBT status? [check all that apply]

Answered: 95  Skipped: 5
Q12. For your GLBT patients, are the medical and social services you refer to, including end of life care, GLBT sensitive and competent?

75%
Q13. Do you make a special effort to refer GLBT patients to GLBT sensitive/competent service providers?

- 47% answered “yes” they do make a special effort
- 53% answered “no” they do not make a special effort.

Options for the “no” answer

- (1) Practitioners refer to best care providers regardless of their GLBT sensitivity/competence
- (2) Practitioners refer to providers they have relationships with
- (3) They do not know any sensitive/competent providers
QUESTION 14

Provisions for Rights of GLBT Couples

- Yes: 77%
- No: 17%
- No Answer: 6%
Q15. Regarding your GLBT elder patients, are you aware of any instances in which these patients were discriminated against within their communities because they were GLBT?

- 21%: Yes
- 30%: No
- 50%: Didn’t know.
Q16. ...Are you aware of any instances in which these patients were discriminated against within a healthcare setting because they were GLBT?

- 10%: Yes
- 43%: No
- 46%: Didn’t know

We Wondered....Did these patients experience less discrimination in the health care setting or were they less likely to share these experiences with their practitioner?
Q17. ...Are you aware of any instances in which these patients were afraid to seek health care at certain locations due to anxiety/fears about potentially being discriminated against because they were GLBT?

- 10%: Yes (discriminated against due to be GLBT)
- 32%: No to this question
- 24%: their patients were afraid to seek health care at certain locations due to fear/anxiety about potential discriminations
- 44% didn’t know.
Q18. Please describe any special considerations that you employ when you care for GLBT elders.

See Comments
DISCUSSION ON OUTCOMES...

The Old Broad Jump
Report is 50% complete
Today’s discussion will aid completion
Report will be printed and in pdf format and distributed
Stay tuned....
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- SAGE Maine Health and Social Services Task Group: Laura Gottlieb, Andrea Otis Higgins, Nancy Kelley, Jessica Maurer, Roanne Seeley, Frank Brooks, Michael Laska, Shirl A. Weaver, Co-Chair & Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Co-Chair.

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- UNECOM 2012 QMED Club for their assistance in designing and reviewing survey questions

- AARP for their continued support of SAGE Maine, providing meeting space and resources to keep us moving forward with attaining our mission

- The organizations who distributed the survey to their members and the practitioners across Maine so they could participate in this survey.