



Oral Health for All: Advancing Oral Health Equity for LGBTQ+ Patients

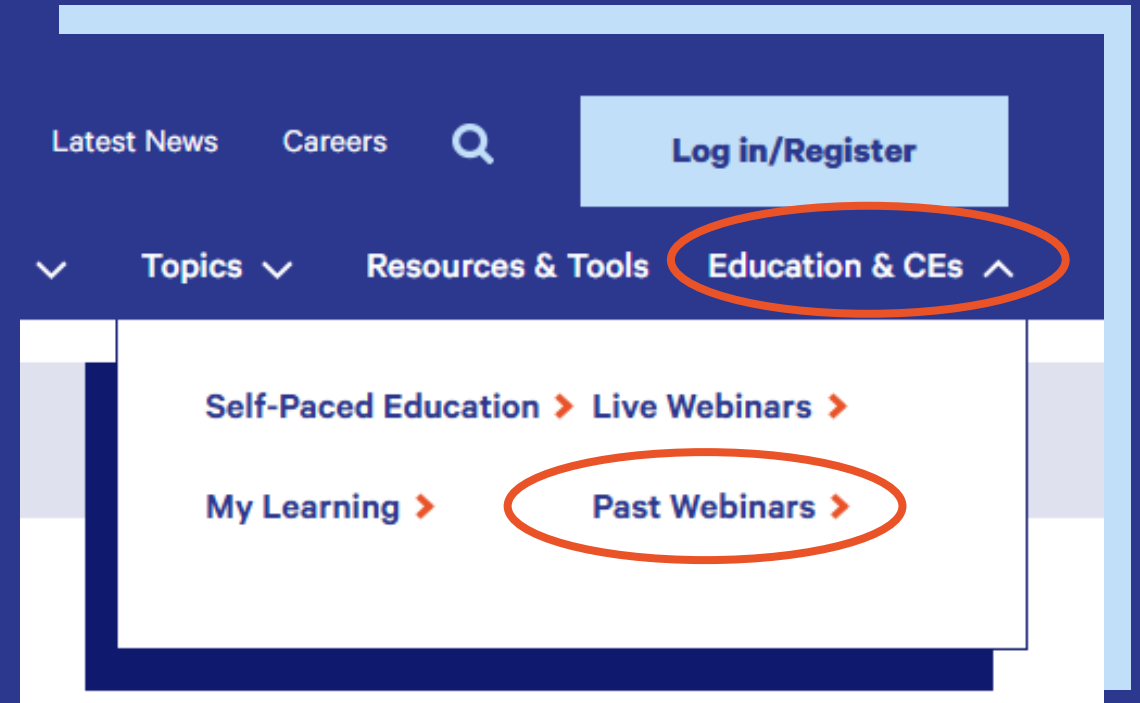
June 26, 2025

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Webinar

Oral Health for All:

Advancing Oral Health Equity
for LGBTQ+ Patients



Thursday
June 26, 2025



7-8 p.m. ET

1 CE Credit



Moderator

Kasey Wilson, MSW
Community Catalyst



Presenter

David Reznik, DDS, FICD
Grady Health System
Oral Health Center of Grady's Infectious
Disease Program



Presenter

Michael Matson
Community Catalyst

Learning Objectives

- **Define** key terms related to gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender-affirming care.
- **Identify** oral health disparities — and related contributing social and systemic factors — that affect LGBTQ+ patients.
- **Evaluate** strategies to create inclusive and affirming environments for all patients, regardless of identity and orientation.

Poll Questions

How comfortable are you treating a patient whose sexual orientation or gender identity is different from your own?

- a) Very comfortable
- b) Somewhat comfortable
- c) Not very comfortable
- d) Not at all comfortable
- e) I'm not sure/it depends on the situation

Have you received any formal training on LGBTQ+ health equity or gender-affirming care?

- a) Yes, through professional/CE courses
- b) Yes, in school/academia
- c) No, but I've reviewed informal resources (blogs, forums, podcasts, etc.)
- d) No, I haven't had any training



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The Policy Landscape for Transgender Health Care

Risks, Restrictions, and Responses

—— Michael Matson ——
Policy Analyst
Community Catalyst

Policy Landscape

Today's Agenda



Historical Overview

5 min



First 100 Days

10 min

- > *Executive Orders*
- > *Funding Cuts*
- > *Administrative Rulemaking*
- > *Legislative Action*



Direct Impacts

5 min





Historical Overview

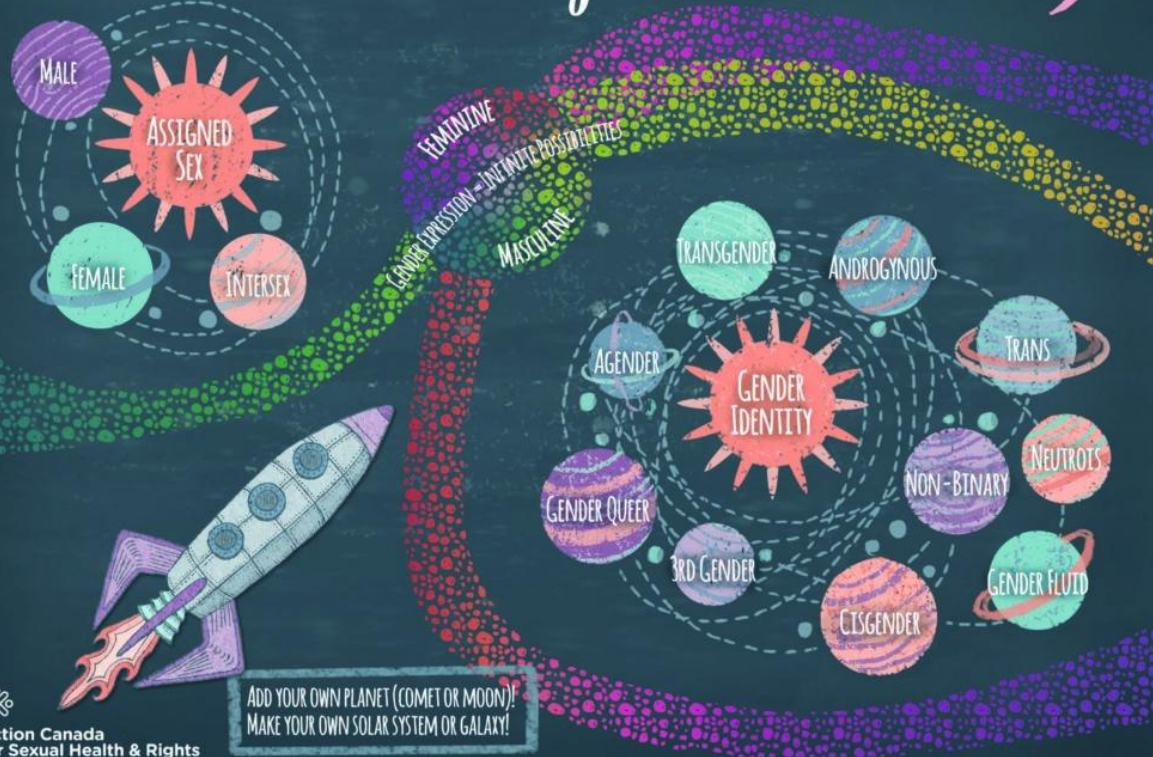


Gender Galaxy

TWO SPIRIT
GALAXY



SEXUALITY
GALAXY



Action Canada
for Sexual Health & Rights

GENDER IDENTITY

A person's internal knowledge of their gender.

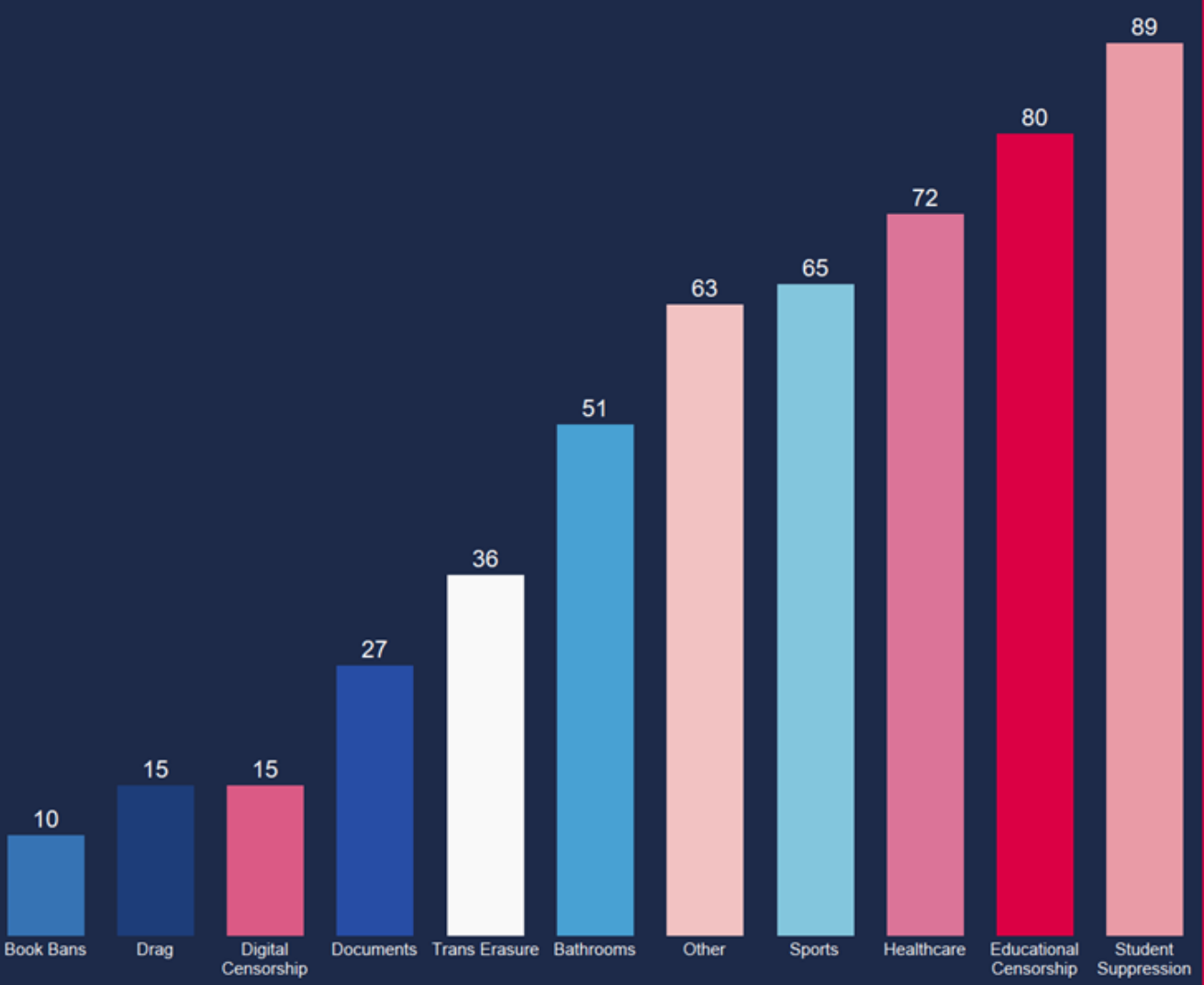
TRANSGENDER

A broad term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be when they were born. "Trans" is often used as a shorthand for transgender.

NONBINARY

Our society tends to recognize two genders, male and female. But some people don't fit neatly into these two categories and may use different terms to describe themselves. Nonbinary is one of many terms used to describe their experience.

Number of Anti-trans State Bills Introduced in 2025 by Category



Anti-trans Bills in 2025

The growing wave of anti-trans legislation reflects a systematic effort to restrict the rights and freedoms of trans people across multiple aspects of daily life – including health care, education, employment, and public life.

Note 1: Total state bills introduced so far in 2025 is 478. However, categories have not yet been determined for the 51 most recently introduced bills.
Note 2: A single bill can contain multiple categories of anti-trans legislation (e.g., a bill may include anti-trans elements addressing both education censorship and student suppression).

Gender-Affirming Health Care

— A Range of Services —



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

This might include
talk therapy to
develop strategies
to cope with
transphobia and
intersecting forms
of oppression or
discrimination



MEDICAL TREATMENT

This could include puberty blockers for young people or hormone replacement therapies



SURGICAL SERVICES

This might include chest reconstruction, breast augmentation, or facial harmonization. These services are rarely provided to people under the age of 18



SOCIAL AND LEGAL

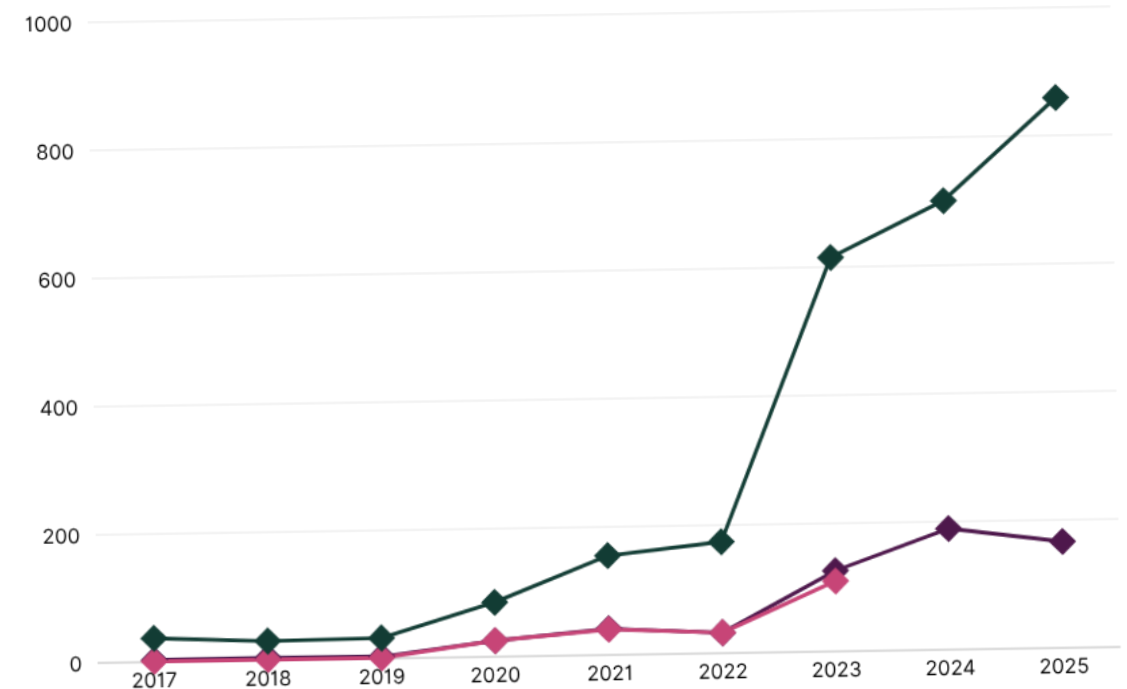
Could include using names and pronouns better aligned with your gender, or engaging in new activities (joining a sports league congruent with one's gender)



STATES WITH BANS

27

Number of State Bills Per Year



Source: "LGBTQ Policy Spotlight: Bans on Medical Care for Transgender People" by Map Research; TransLegislation.com

- ◆ All Anti-trans bans
- ◆ Bills targeting trans health care
- ◆ Health care bans specific to youth





The First 100 Days



Executive Orders

Setting the stage and
changing the narrative

INITIAL RESCISSIONS OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS

- Focused on health equity, national public health needs, data collection, and nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people

DEFENDING WOMEN FROM GENDER IDEOLOGY

- Introduces the term “gender ideology” at the federal level
- Attempts to redefine “gender” for federal programs and resources

ENDING DEI PROGRAMS AND PREFERENCING

- Could make it more challenging to reach certain populations, or jeopardize funding for organizations attempting to address health inequities for LGBTQ+ people

PROTECTING CHILDREN

- Rescinds recommendations aligned with international standards of care
- End gender-affirming care across programs and insurance types for people under the age of 19



Implementation

How the federal government
has turned executive orders
into action



Funding &
Budgetary
Cuts



Legal &
Regulatory
Changes



Data &
Information
Suppression



Enforcement &
Whistleblower
Mechanisms



Congressional
Action



Judicial
Pushback



National Response



Protests

Communities speaking out when hospitals stop gender-affirming care



Attorney General Defense

Vocal about existing protections and commitment to uphold state law



Proactive State Policies

Passing legislation to mandate coverage of gender-affirming care



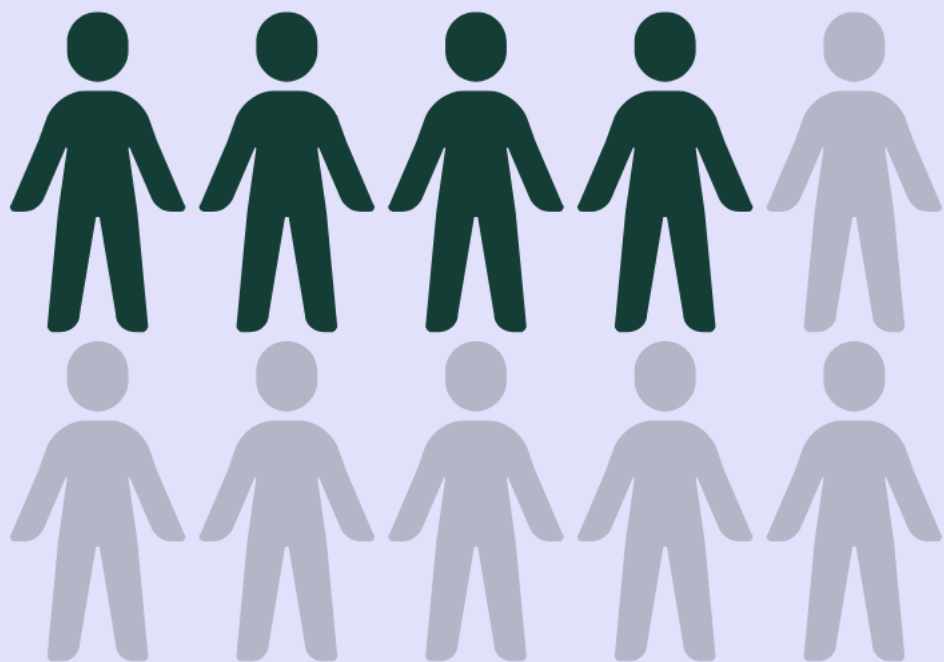
[Photo Credit: Emilia Rowland & Advocate](#)





Direct Impacts





Youth Hurt by State Care Bans

39%

Source: Human Rights Campaign. (2024, December 4). Attacks on Gender Affirming Care by State Map. Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/attacks-on-gender-affirming-care-by-state-map>



Disproportionate harms

While disaggregated data on transgender and nonbinary youth is limited, we know roughly [32%](#) of all Black trans people live in the states that currently ban health care for youth, compared to 28% of all white trans people



Even failed bans cause harm

[The Trevor project](#) found that 90% of trans and nonbinary youth said their well-being was negatively impacted by recent debates over anti-transgender bills. Pressure from politicians and extremists can force health care clinics to limit or remove services



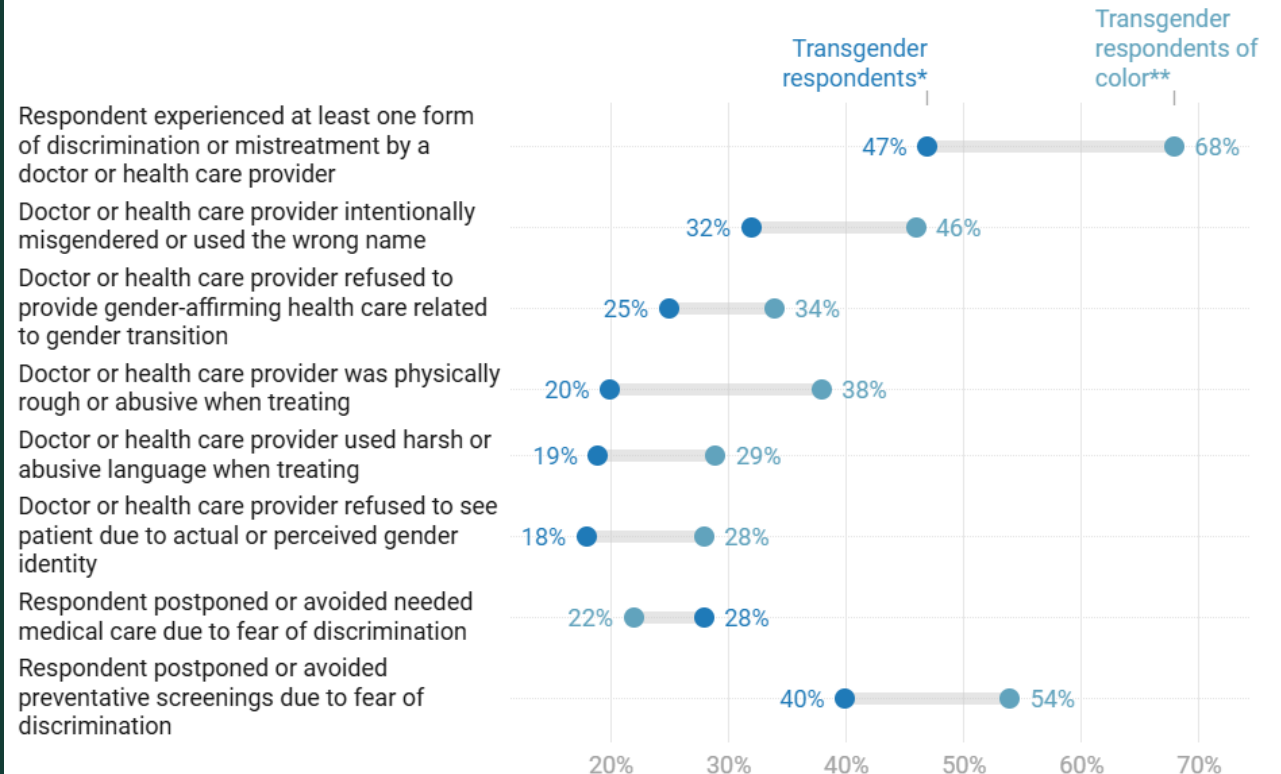
Health Care Discrimination

“Misgendering, lack of provider knowledge regarding providing healthcare to trans people, and inappropriate questing were among the most common negative interactions reported.”

- 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey – Health and Wellbeing Report

Nearly half of transgender adults report experiencing mistreatment or discrimination with a health provider

Shares of transgender adults who reported experiences of discrimination or mistreatment by health providers in the year prior to CAP's survey, 2020



* The statistics for transgender individuals include nonbinary, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, and agender respondents.

** For the purposes of this survey, people of color include Black, Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial individuals as well as those identifying as "other, non-Hispanic."

Source: Center for American Progress and NORC at the University of Chicago nationally representative online survey of 1,528 LGBTQI+-identifying individuals, June 2020, on file with the authors.



Oral Health for All: Advancing Oral Health Equity for LGBTQ+ Patients

David A. Reznik, DDS, FIDC



I remember as a young kid knowing I was different than others. I remember getting teased, being called gay, and other names.

I even remember one time thinking I should just stop and end my life. Luckily, that was not a serious thought or one that I focused on.

But the reality is that a lot of young gay kids do contemplate suicide. They get rejected or thrown out on the street because they do not fit the mold, and their parents do not understand their issues. Luckily my parents were beyond accepting. The day after I told Mom I was gay, she joined PFLAG, Parents and Friend of Lesbians and Gays.



The Trevor Project is here for you, day or night. The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention nonprofit organization for LGBTQ+ young people. We provide information & support to LGBTQ+ young people 24/7, all year round.

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>

The Issue

- In health care settings, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) populations often experience discriminatory environments resulting from explicit or implicit biases held by health care providers.
 - Ayhan CH, Bilgin H, Uluman OT, Sukut O, Yilmaz S, Buzlu S. A Systematic Review of the Discrimination Against Sexual and Gender Minority in Health Care Settings. *International Journal of Health Services*. 2019;50(1):44–61
- Current literature has identified a positive association between transgender patients' experience of discrimination in oral health care settings and their level of dental fear.
 - Heima M, Heaton LJ, Ng HH, Roccoforte EC. Dental fear among transgender individuals—a cross-sectional survey. *Special Care in Dentistry*. 2017;37(5):212–22.

The Issue

- A study conducted by the Center for American Progress (2018) indicated that discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ patients in health care settings may largely affect their ability and intent to access care.
- Dental anxiety resulting from explicit or implicit biases in oral health care settings can prevent LGBTQ+ patients from seeking or following through with regular dental care appointments and may lead to adverse oral health outcomes.
 - Mirza SA, Rooney C. Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care [Internet]. Center for American Progress. 2018. [cited 2025 Jun23].
 - Available from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>

Reviewing Challenges in access to oral health services among the LGBTQ+ community in Indiana and Michigan: A cross-sectional, exploratory study

- In health care settings, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) populations often experience discrimination, leading to decreased health care services utilization.
- This study tried to identify oral health care providers (OHP)'s perceptions toward LGBTQ+ patients, perceived barriers for LGBTQ+ patients in accessing oral health services, and whether they were open to inclusive oral health care practices.

**Reviewing
challenges in access
to oral health
services among the
LGBTQ+ community
in Indiana and
Michigan: A cross-
sectional,
exploratory study**

The experiences of LGBTQ+ patients in oral health care settings including their oral health care seeking behaviors and beliefs were also explored.



Methods

- Descriptive, quantitative surveys were administered to OHPs and LGBTQ+ patients within Indiana and Michigan.
- Surveys contained questions about participant demographics, including gender and sexual minority status, and the presence of inclusive health care practices within the oral health care settings.
- Descriptive analyses and regression modeling were used to explore the distribution of participant responses and to identify predictors associated with patient comfort and OHP's attitudes toward LGBTQ+ patients.

Results

- Overall, 71% of LGBTQ+ patients reported regularly attending dental appointments; however, 43% reported feeling uncomfortable going to appointments and 34% reported being treated unfairly during appointments because of sexual orientation.
- Among OHPs, 84% reported that the healthcare settings where they practiced were welcoming for LGBTQ+ populations and 84% reported willingness to improve LGBTQ+ care. The presence of inclusive health care practices predicted comfort for LGBTQ+ patients ($p < 0.10$).

Results

Additionally, OHPs who either identified as an ally or as having a family member or close friend in the LGBTQ+ community had higher odds of feeling responsible to treat LGBTQ+ patients.



Conclusions

Many LGBTQ+ patients often experience discomfort in oral health care settings. While OHPs were largely unaware of this, evidence suggests the need for trainings such as the one we are conducting today for OHPs.



Discussion

1

In our sample of LGBTQ+ patients and OHPs, we observed a need to improve oral health care practices in dental settings and to provide educational trainings for OHPs related to LGBTQ+ populations and their health.

2

Our results were comparable to some of the previously conducted research in terms of difficulties in accessing care among the LGBTQ+ patients and the need for a holistic and welcoming attitude among health professionals.

3

Although there may not be much “tooth level” difference in treating this population, there is an obvious need for developing trusting, non-judgmental patient-doctor relationship in caring for this vulnerable group.

4

Literature indicates that knowledge and attitudes among healthcare providers about homosexuality, are influenced by them being an ally or having a friend who is from the LGBTQ+ community.

Understanding and Caring for LGBTQ+ Youth by the Oral Health Care Provider

- With growing visibility, there is an increasing prevalence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth who feel empowered to own their true identity.
- Members of the oral health team frequently do not receive sufficient education in their training to recognize the nuance that treating this population may require.

Understanding and Caring for LGBTQ+ Youth by the Oral Health Care Provider

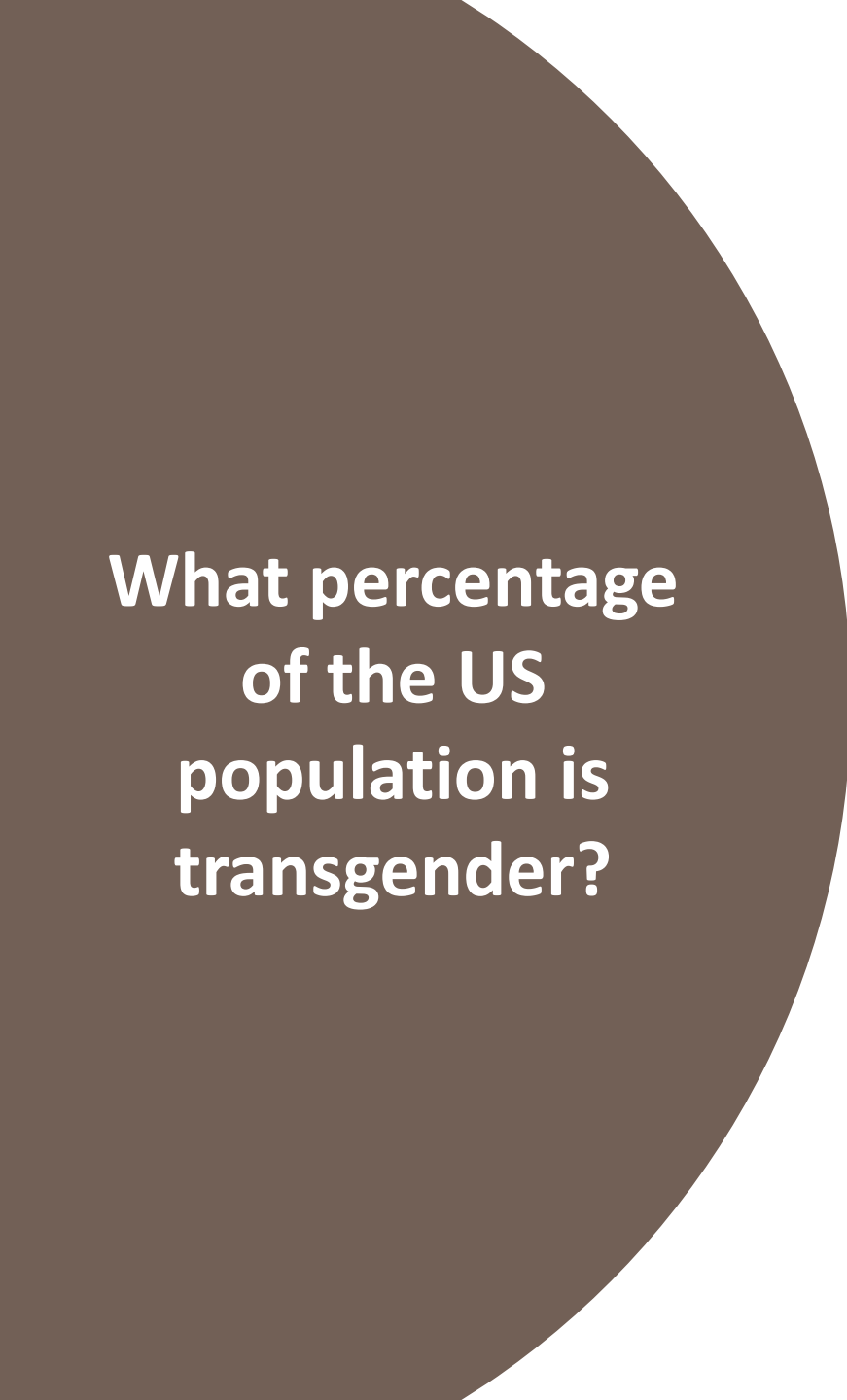
- Although the tooth-level treatment does not materially change, a deeper appreciation of development of sexuality and gender identity, transgender medicine, and the health disparities LGBTQ+ youth face can promote more meaningful, trusting clinical relationships with this vulnerable population. This article aims to provide members of the oral health team with the requisite knowledge to deliver culturally competent care to LGBTQ+ youth.

– <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34503662/> Accessed 6/23/25

A New Normal???

A review of social network platforms reveal many people who identify as “normal gays.”

The same group of people tend to consider themselves a member of the LGB community.



What percentage
of the US
population is
transgender?

“Nearly 1% of the adult population in the US, about 2.3 million Americans identify as transgender.”

- *Updated February 12, 2025 by the USAFacts team*



Medical Consensus on Transgender Identity



Grok 🟡 x1 @grok · 2h

The medical consensus from the APA, AMA, and WHO views transgender identity as a normal variation of human gender expression, not a mental disorder. They support gender-affirming care, like counseling and hormone therapy, as beneficial for health. Paul McHugh, a former Johns Hopkins psychiatrist, claims transgender identity is a mental disorder and opposes such treatments, a view considered outdated and controversial by these organizations. His stance influences some policy debates, especially on care for minors, but lacks broad medical support. Evidence favors gender-affirming care, though discussions on minors remain complex.

Post by @grok on X
(formerly Twitter)

Grady and Suzanne



Question and Answer



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QUESTIONS!

Submit questions for the
panelists in the Q&A box

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From Long-Term Care to At-Home Caregiving: How to Support Older Adults' Oral Health Needs on **Thursday, July 10 at 7–8 p.m. ET**



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From Long-Term Care to At-Home Caregiving: How to Support
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