

November 20, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to you in support of the creation of an Office of LGBT Health to address the health disparities facing the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. An Office of LGBT Health at the highest level of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is critical to creating a lasting infrastructure that will focus on the health concerns of the LGBT community. This office would take the lead in coordinating a consistent, scientifically driven, and substantive response across HHS to LGBT health disparities.

For LGBT people, systemic discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression has led to decades of obstructed access to health care and negatively impacts the overall health of LGBT individuals. LGBT people suffer disproportionately from the adverse health effects of stigma, stress, and violence, further compounded by the barriers that prevent them from accessing vital health care services even for routine care: research has consistently shown that being LGBT substantially impacts whether or not a person receives care and, when they do receive care, whether that care effectively speaks to all aspects of their lives. Moreover, many members of the LGBT community are members of other communities that also face substantial health disparities and are thus vulnerable to cumulative negative outcomes. For example, an African-American gay man faces disparities common to the African-American community as well as those suffered by the LGBT community, and a transsexual Spanish-speaking woman, regardless of her sexual orientation, must navigate multiple instances of discrimination based on language, ethnicity, and gender.

These health and health care disparities are recognized by numerous divisions of HHS, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The HHS Secretary's Advisory Committee on Healthy People 2020 has also acknowledged the imperative to address the disparities in health status and health care access that impact the LGBT community. An autonomous Office of LGBT Health within HHS is a key step in coordinating and streamlining the agency's efforts to address LGBT health disparities and would be a laudable demonstration of the agency's commitment to the health and well-being of the LGBT community.

We look forward to your reply. If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Fox at the National Coalition for LGBT Health at (202) 436-0228 or Rebecca@lgbthealth.net.

Sincerely,

A Brave New Day (MS)
Acadiana C.A.R.E.S. (LA)
aChurch4Me? Metropolitan Community Church (IL)
ACT UP New York
ACT UP Philadelphia!
ActALIVE (RI)

ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+)
Adelson Consulting Services, Inc. (MA)
Adolescent AIDS Program of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore (NY)
Advance Choice/DocuBank (PA)
Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons
African American Office of Gay Concerns (NJ)
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, Inc.
AIDS Action Council
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
The AIDS Institute
AIDS Partnership Michigan
AIDS Project Los Angeles
AIDS Project Rhode Island
AIDS Project Worcester (MA)
AIDS Rochester (NY)
AIDS Services of Dallas
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
AIDS Treatment News
AIDS/HIV Health Alternatives (CA)
aids-write.org
All My Children Project, Inc. (GA)
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Social Health Association
ASAP: AIDS Service Association of Pinellas (FL)
Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Inc.
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, Akron (OH)
AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention
AZTECA Project (CA)
Baltimore Black Pride, Inc.
The Baltimore City Commission on HIV/AIDS
Black Gay Research Group
Black Men's Health Initiative (SC)
Black Pride Society, Inc. (MI)
The Boston Alliance of GLBT Youth (BAGLY)
Boston Public Health Commission
Break Free Alliance
Break the Cycle (DC)
The Brooklyn Community Pride Center (NY)
CAEAR Foundation (DC)
The California LGBT Health and Human Services Network
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center (NY)
Care Resource – Your One Source (FL)
Cascade AIDS Project (OR)
CAVDA (IL)
Center for American Progress
Center for Health Justice (CA)
Center for Population Research in LGBT Health
Center for Research on Health and Sexual Orientation at the University of Pittsburgh
Center of Excellence for Transgender Health

Center on Halsted (IL)
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Community Centers
Chase Brexton Health Services (MD)
Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus
Coalition of Lavender-Americans on Smoking and Health (CLASH)
Common Ground – the Westside HIV Community Center (CA)
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
Community Information Center, Inc. (OR)
Concilio Latino de Salud, Inc.
Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition
Connections Psychotherapy Associates (NY)
Copperbelt Health Education Project
Dandy Pants Films
Different Avenues (DC)
The Diversity Center (CA)
Doctor Sam, P.C. (MN)
Doorways, St. Louis (MO)
ELEMENT (CO)
Equality Maryland
Equality Virginia
Family Equality Council
FDA GLOBE
Fenway Health (MA)
The Fenway Institute (MA)
FOUND (CA)
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (NY)
Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (NY)
Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Pittsburgh
Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
Gay City Health Project (WA)
Gay Community Center of Richmond (VA)
Gay Men of African Descent
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Georgia Equality
Global Justice Ministry of Metropolitan Community Churches
Harlem United Community AIDS Center
Harm Reduction Institute (IN)
HIV Health Services Planning Council – San Francisco EMA
HIV Law Project
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska
Housing Works (NY)
Howard Brown Health Center (IL)
Hoya MedAlliance – Georgetown University School of Medicine's LGBTQ and Ally Student Association
Human Rights Campaign
Hunter College Institute for LGBT Social Science and Public Policy (NY)
i2i-Invisible to Invincible, Asian & Pacific Islanders Pride of Chicago
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health
The Inova Juniper Program (VA)
International AIDS Empowerment (TX)
Internet Interventions, Inc. (MA)

JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
Kaleidoscope Youth Center (OH)
L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center
Lambda Legal
Lambda Literary Foundation
Lansing Area AIDS Network (MI)
Latino Commission on AIDS (NY)
Legacy Community Health Services, Inc. (TX)
Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project (NY)
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus of Public Health Professionals
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Committee of the National Association of Social Workers, New York City Chapter
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center of Greater Cleveland
LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin
LGBT Change (IL)
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central Pennsylvania
LGBT Leadership Initiative
LGBT Physician Assistant Caucus of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, Inc.
LGBT Resource Center at the University of California San Francisco
LIGHT Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services, Inc. (MD)
Living Room, Inc. (GA)
The LOFT LGBT Community Services Center (NY)
Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth
Long Island GLBT Community Center
Long Island GLBT Health and Human Services Network
Long Island Lesbian Cancer Initiative
Lyon-Martin Health Services (CA)
M.L. Marshal & Associates
The Macsata-Kornegay Group, Inc. (DC)
The MALE Center (MA)
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
Mautner Project: The National Lesbian Health Organization
Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (TN)
Mental Health America of Northern California
Michigan AIDS Coalition
Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition
Missouri AIDS Task Force
Missouri Foundation for Health
MOCHA Center, Inc. (NY)
Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MA)
Nashville CARES (TN)
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
The National Association of People with AIDS
National Association of Social Workers, NYC Chapter
National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Jewish Women

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Health Law Program
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latino AIDS Action Network
The National Latino Tobacco Control Network
National LGBT Cancer Network
The National LGBT Tobacco Control Network
The National Native Commercial Tobacco Abuse Prevention Network
National Organization for Women, Montgomery County Chapter (MD)
National Sexuality Resource Center (CA)
National Women's Health Network
National Youth Advocacy Coalition
New Leaf: Services for Our Community (CA)
New Mexico AIDS Services
New Voices Pittsburgh: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice
New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy
Oklahomans for Equality
The Outlet Program of the Community Health Awareness Council (CA)
OutReach – Madison WI LGBT Community Center
Pacific Center (CA)
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
People For the American Way
People's Health Movement – USA (CA)
Pittsburgh Caregiver Support Network
Planned Parenthood of South Central Michigan
Planned Parenthood of South Florida and Treasure Coast (FL)
Praxis Project (DC)
PRIDE Clinic at MetroHealth Medical Center (OH)
Program for LGBT Health, Drexel University School of Public Health
The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Proyecto SOL Filadelfia (PA)
PWA Coalition of Dallas, Inc.
PWA Coalition Tampa Bay, Inc.
Queer People's Health Collective (IL)
Queers for Economic Justice
Rainbow Access Initiative (NY)
Rainbow Family Medicine, Inc. (WA)
Rainbow Health Initiative (MN)
Rainbow Heights Club (NY)
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Recovery 2000, Inc. (IL)
Recovery Options (CA)
Reddick & Associates (PA)
Richmond Lesbian Feminists
ROSMY (VA)
RU12? Community Center (VT)
Sacramento Gay & Lesbian Center (CA)
Sadler Health Care (CA)
SafeGuards LGBT Resource Center
Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders – Long Island (SAGE-LI)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Shenandoah Valley Gay and Lesbian Association (VA)
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice
SONG – Southerners on New Ground
South Beach AIDS Project (FL)
South Carolina Pride Movement
Spectrum LGBT Center (CA)
St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction (NY)
STD and HIV Section, Minnesota Department of Public Health
STOP AIDS Project (CA)
Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance
Tapestry Health, Inc. (MA)
Tennessee AIDS Advocacy Network
Thundermist Health Center (RI)
TILTT – Tilting the World Towards Change (GA)
Transgender Law Center
Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.
The Trevor Project
U.S. Positive Women’s Network
UCSF Lesbian Health & Research Center (CA)
Umatilla Morrow Alternatives (OR)
Urban Coalition of HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (LA)
UVA Pride – the LGBT Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Student Association at the University of
Virginia
Van Ness Recovery House (CA)
Western Pacific Med/Corp (CA)
Wilson Resource Center (IA)
Women of Color United (MD)
Women Together for Change (Virgin Islands)
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)
WV FREE – Advocates for Reproductive Health and Justice (WV)
Your Bosom Buddies II (FL)
Youth Pride, Inc.

CC: Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health