



American Psychological Association Announces New Funding and Goals for Healthy Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students Project

The American Psychological Association is pleased to announce its entry into a new five-year, \$1.6 million cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH). The award will fund APA's Healthy Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students Project (HLGBSP), an initiative in APA's Public Interest Directorate that seeks to build the capacity of the nation's schools and youth-serving organizations to improve health and mental health outcomes for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. The HLGBSP was begun in 1998 and has been funded by the CDC since 1999.

The new funding was awarded under a CDC Program Announcement that aims to improve the health and well being of young people. The HLGBSP was funded under a category focused on reducing HIV infections among young men who have sex with men, particularly among African American and Latino young men. The HLGBSP takes the position that HIV prevention efforts that focus too narrowly on behavioral risks without consideration of the broader context in which those risks develop are likely to achieve limited success. As such, the project works on multiple levels—by strengthening individual HIV prevention interventions and by improving the broader psychosocial environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth.

Why is the HLGBSP Needed? LGB students are at significant risk for a variety of serious health problems. Data released from a national study of young people showed that youth who report same-sex attraction or sexual behavior also reported higher levels of emotional distress, greater use of alcohol and marijuana, and earlier sexual debut. Additional data from the CDC indicate that young men who have sex with men are at disproportionate risk for HIV infection, with Black and Latino sexually active young men at particularly high risk. Bisexual male youth appear to have a consistent pattern of higher HIV-risk behavior when compared to young men reporting same-sex only behavior, including multiple partners, unprotected intercourse, STD diagnosis, and injected drug use. Research indicates that adolescent females that identify as lesbian, bisexual or questioning are at an increased risk of unintended pregnancy.

The HLG BSP aims to accomplish three general goals over the next five years:

- First, the HLG BSP will build the capacity of youth-serving organizations across the country to provide HIV-prevention professional development to education agencies. The target population for this professional development will be school-based health and mental health service providers, and its purpose will be to increase their capacity to prevent HIV among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents, as well as among other young people who desire or engage in same-sex sexual behavior. The mechanism will be sponsorship of the CDC-cleared workshop *Preventing Health Risks and Promoting Healthy Outcomes among LGBQ Youth: A Training Workshop for School Counselors, Nurses, Psychologists, and Social Workers*. To date, the HLG BSP has sponsored this workshop 38 times, reaching an audience of 1,082 school professionals.
- Second, the HLG BSP will build the capacity of youth-serving organizations to prevent HIV among LGBQ youth by establishing linkages with HIV-prevention experts. Project staff will identify and work with a pool of Behavioral and Social Scientist Volunteers (BSSVs) to provide technical assistance to youth-serving organizations seeking to develop or enhance their HIV prevention programs for LGBQ youth. APA will solicit requests for capacity building assistance from LGBQ-focused and mainstream community-based and nonprofit youth-serving organizations. APA will facilitate, support, monitor, and evaluate the technical assistance linkages between youth-serving organizations and technical assistance experts.
- Finally, the HLG BSP will develop and disseminate resources that increase the capacity of youth-serving organizations to prevent HIV among young men who have sex with men (YMSM). These resources will be developed through a substantive needs assessment process that is based on a deliberative review of the scientific literature, key informant interviews, and a survey of organizations that serve—or aspire to serve—lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, particularly African American and Latino youth.

If you are interested in the services of the HLG BSP or would like more information, please contact Jo-Anne Fournier, Administrative Coordinator for the Project, at 202-336-5631 or ifournier@apa.org.

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare.

The APA Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Office has worked since 1975 to eliminate the stigma of mental illness which has been mistakenly associated with same-sex sexual orientation and to reduce prejudice, discrimination, and violence against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Major functions of the office include providing support to APA's Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns; liaison with the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues (APA Division 44) and with other APA groups that have an interest in lesbian, gay, and bisexual concerns; policy analysis; development and advocacy of APA policy; technical assistance, information, and referral to APA members, other professionals, policy makers, the media, and the public; and development and dissemination of publications and other information on lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns in psychology.

The HLG BSP and Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Office are housed within the Public Interest Directorate, which works to advance psychology as a means of promoting human welfare. Other programs within the Public Interest Directorate work on issues related to HIV/AIDS; adolescent health; aging; children, youth, and families; disability; ethnic minorities; urban issues; violence; women; and workplace health.