

Name: Brandon Wollerson

Commission: LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission

Title: Creating LGBTQ Health Equity

**Describe the issue facing your community or stakeholder group. In your role as Commissioner, what have you heard from your community about the issue?**

In a variety of listening sessions and other discussions hosted by the LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission as early as January 2018 and continuing through this budget cycle, community members have noted consistently that there is no dedicated position within Austin Public Health's Health Equity Unit to specifically address growing health disparities and inequities within Austin's LGBTQ population.

**What does the data tell us about the issue? Is there data on who is most impacted by the issue?**

According to polling conducted by Greater Austin has the third largest LGBTQIA+ population per capita in the USA.

According to the Healthy People 2020 initiative, LGBTQ health requires specific attention from health care and public health professionals to address a number of disparities, including:

- LGBTQ youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide

- LGBTQ youth are more likely to be homeless

- Lesbians are less likely to get preventive services for cancer

- Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs, especially among communities of color

- Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese

- Transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV/STDs, victimization, mental health issues, and suicide and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGB individuals.

- Aging LGBTQ individuals face additional barriers to health because of isolation and a lack of social services and culturally competent providers

- LGBTQ populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

On May 7, 2015, Austin City Council passed Resolution 20150507-027 focusing on health and economic equity, and APH was assigned the lead role related to the first part of the resolution focusing on health equity. As a part of this process, APH convened a primary stakeholder group and through this group, a comprehensive report was developed that specifically referenced recommendations to address ongoing intersectional issues of health disparities between LGBTQ+ communities of color in Austin. The report recommended a variety of short-term goals to address health disparities affecting communities of color in Austin, including LGBTQ health. The report addressed concerns that LGBTQ health equity is increasingly an intersectional issue

within communities of color who are likely to struggle with comorbidities, including but not limited to: HIV/AIDS and chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Additionally, according to this report, LGBTQ people of color experience a lack of access that is compounded by multiple forms of discrimination, and therefore experience additional barriers in access, quality and relevance of care.

**What is your recommendation for addressing this issue? Recommendations should focus on increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and equity**

City Council to fund, at \$85,000, an additional Program Coordinator position within the Health Equity Unit at Austin Public Health to address previously outlined health inequities and disparities within Austin's LGBTQ population.

**Strategic Outcome Area:** Health and Environment

**Within the HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT outcome, which indicator does your recommendation address?**

Accessibility to quality health care services (physical and mental)