2015

Northeast Pennsylvania

LG BTQA Community Health Needs Assessment Results

UPPER DELAWARE GLBT CENTER

rainbow alliance NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

LGBT HEALTH LINK THE NETWORK FOR HEALTH EQUITY LGB

A Program of CENTERLINK
This study assessed the prevalence of tobacco use, other chronic disease risk behaviors, and determinants of health in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and asexual (LGBTQA) communities in Northeast Pennsylvania, including Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties.

Brief, anonymous, Internet-based surveys were administered to LGBTQA people in a seven-county region in Northeast Pennsylvania, including Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties.

During a 6-week period from September-October 2015, LGBTQA participants were purposively sampled using both direct and indirect recruitment strategies. Direct recruitment strategies included sending personal emails and Facebook messages to LGBTQA people. Indirect recruitment strategies included geographically targeted and LGBTQA-targeted Facebook advertisements, as well as email blasts from the Upper Delaware GLBT Center and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rainbow Alliance.

Participants were informed that the survey responses they provided were being collected anonymously and that they could stop the survey or refuse to answer any questions at any time. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were given the option to be redirected to an unlinked database where they could input their contact information to be entered into a lottery drawing for one $50 gift card incentive.
Acknowledgements

This study was commissioned by the Upper Delaware GLBT Center with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Data were collected in partnership with Northeastern Pennsylvania Rainbow Alliance. Robert W.S. Coulter, M.P.H., served as the Statistical Data Analyst for this project: he conducted the data analyses and wrote the results. Scout, Ph.D., from LGBT Health Link, designed the questionnaire, helped guide survey administration, and drafted the recommendations for this report. Adrian Shanker from Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center provided technical assistance throughout the project.

Highlights

**Sociodemographic Characteristics**
In total, 522 LG BTQA individuals completed this survey. Nearly 70% of the sample identified as gay/lesbian, 17.6% identified as bisexual, and 7.5% as queer or pansexual. Additionally, 15.9% of the participants were transgender, 50.0% were cisgender men, and 33.3% were cisgender women.

**Health Care Access & Quality**
Health care coverage was highly prevalent in the sample (87.6%), and slightly less than the prevalence of health care coverage among Pennsylvania adults (which was 89.9% according to the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System [BRFSS]). About one-fifth (20.8%) of the sample had a health care provider react poorly to their LG BTQA status—and this varied by gender: transgender people (33.8%) were significantly more likely than cisgender men (17.1%) or women (21.2%) to have a provider react poorly. Additionally, transgender people (42.0%) were more likely than cisgender men (9.7%) and women (14.8%) to always or often fear a negative reaction by a health care provider. Nevertheless, three-quarters (74.9%) of participants were out as LG BTQA to one or more of their health care providers.
**LGBTQA Acceptance**

LGBTQA participants thought their friends were the most LGBTQA-accepting (79.2% thought their friends were very LGBTQA-friendly). Next most accepting were participants’ workplaces and birth families (49.3% and 47.0%, respectively, thought these groups were very LGBTQA-friendly). Schools and medical providers were not highly accepting overall (34.4% and 27.5%, respectively, thought these groups were very LGBTQA-friendly). Neighborhoods were the least LGBTQA-friendly places (21.5% thought their neighborhood was very friendly).

**Overall Health**

About two-thirds (66.5%) of participants reported their overall health status as good or very good. Importantly, participants’ self-reported overall health status was significantly greater if they reported greater overall LGBTQA acceptance across the domains specified above. Nearly all respondents were interested in incorporating more healthy living strategies into their lives.

**Body Mass Index**

According to participants’ body mass index (BMI), 39.1% were obese and 31.0% were overweight. Overweight/obesity was most prevalent among cisgender women (77.8%), followed by cisgender men (69.3%), and lowest among transgender people (56.3%). Among the general population of Pennsylvania adults, 30.2% of adults were obese and 33.9% were overweight (BRFSS, 2014), suggesting that the LGBTQA population in Northeast Pennsylvania may be slightly more overweight/obese than the general Pennsylvanian population. Importantly, about two-thirds of LGBTQA participants were interested in health eating (62.6%) and active living strategies (61.5%).

**Mental Health Treatment**

In the past 12 months, 29.2% of participants received psychological counseling or treatment. In their lifetime, more than half (53.6%) of the sample had taken medicine or received treatment for mental health problems.

**HIV among Cisgender Men and Transgender People**

HIV prevalence was significantly higher for cisgender men (9.8%) than transgender people (1.2%). Regular HIV testing was low. Excluding HIV-positive participants, 76.1% of transgender people and 58.0% of cisgender men did not receive an HIV test within the past year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that at-risk groups test for HIV at least once per year, and more often for those who engage in high-risk behaviors.
**Tobacco Use & Opinions**

In the past year, 43.4% of participants used any tobacco/nicotine products, which did not significantly vary by gender. Cigarette smoking was higher among LGBTQA participants than the general Pennsylvanian population (36.2% versus 19.9%, respectively; BRFSS, 2014). LGBTQA participants used smokeless tobacco (e.g., chew) slightly less than the general Pennsylvanian population (3.1% vs. 4.3%, respectively; BRFSS, 2014).

LGBTQA people had little knowledge about smoking disparities: 27.3% strongly or somewhat agreed that LGBTQA people smoke more than the general population. Also, 71.5% of LGBTQA participants were strongly or somewhat unappreciative that the tobacco industry advertises to the LGBTQA community; and 44.6% strongly or somewhat agreed that pride celebrations should be smoke-free.

LGBTQA smokers overwhelmingly wanted to quit (89.5%), with the largest group of those wanting to quit within the next six months. When asked how they would quit, willingness to use effective cessation techniques was low: 31.7% of smokers would go to their health care provider, 13.4% would enroll in a smoking cessation class or program, and 12.8% would use the quitline. Nearly one-fifth of smokers did not know where to go for cessation assistance.

**Cancer**

The lifetime prevalence of cancer was 7.3% among LGBTQA participants. This significantly varied by gender: cisgender men and women (9.2% and 8.0%, respectively) had higher lifetime cancer prevalence than transgender people (0.0%). Participants reported moderate levels of cancer screenings. Only 55.3% of the participants who were assigned female at birth reported being up to date with cervical Pap smears. Among participants 50 years or older: 65.7% were up to date with colonoscopies; 77.4% of those assigned female at birth were up to date with mammograms; and 75.9% of those assigned male at birth were up to date with prostate exams. Only 12.7% of cisgender women, 11.2% of cisgender men, and 2.4% of transgender people reported ever having had an anal Pap smear. LGBTQA participants believed there was a high need for a variety of LGBTQA-welcoming practices for cancer care, including survivor and caregiver support groups, inclusive hospital policies, and legal planning.

**Perceptions of LGBTQA Community Health Issues**

Participants perceived mental health, STDs/HIV, suicide, loneliness/isolation, and bullying to be the top health issues for the LGBTQA community.
Recommendations

Because tobacco use greatly affects the health of LGTBQA people, the lack of knowledge about LGTBQA smoking disparities and tobacco cessation programs are of particular concern. The following steps would help address this problem:

- Create LGTBQA-tailored smoking cessation groups;
- Train quitline providers to be LGTBQA friendly and affirming;
- Create LGTBQA-tailored quitline promotion campaigns to raise awareness for this cessation resource; and
- Create LGTBQA-tailored tobacco awareness campaigns to raise the knowledge level about LGTBQA smoking disparities and help people make healthier decisions.

Because many LGTBQA participants experienced LGTBQA-unfriendliness by a medical provider and perceived a high-need for LGTBQA-related cancer programs, enhancing the LGTBQA-friendliness of medical environments would have many benefits. The following steps would help address this need:

- Train medical providers to be LGTBQA culturally competent and to provide LGTBQA competent health care; and
- Design and disseminate LGTBQA-tailored materials that help make medical environments more LGTBQA-friendly.

To monitor the health of LGTBQA participants in Northeast Pennsylvania, LGTBQA health surveillance data should be routinely collected.

Results

In total, 522 LGTBQA individuals completed the survey. In this report, transgender is used as an umbrella term for the following individuals:

- People who identified as a trans man/woman or trans masculine/feminine
- People who identified as agender, bigender, demigirl, fluid, non-conforming, non-binary, genderqueer, or Two-Spirit
- People whose assigned sex at birth does not match their current gender identity (e.g., someone who was assigned male sex at birth and now identifies as female)
Results - Sociodemographic Characteristics

**Gender**

- Cisgender Women: 33.3%
- Cisgender Men: 50.0%
- Transgender: 15.9%
- Declined to state or did not respond: 0.8%

**Sexual Orientation**

- Gay/Lesbian: 69.5%
- Bisexual: 17.6%
- Queer: 1.9%
- Pansexual: 5.6%
- Asexual: 2.3%
- Straight or heterosexual: 2.5%
- Declined to state or did not respond: 0.6%
Would you describe your neighborhood as:

- Urban: 13.9%
- Suburban: 21.6%
- Rural/Small town: 64.5%

How would you describe your neighborhood?

- Less than 18 years: 3.9%
- 18-24 years: 18.4%
- 25-49 years: 42.0%
- 50-64 years: 29.9%
- 65 and older: 5.7%
Results - Sociodemographic Characteristics

What is your approximate average household income?

- Less than $25,000: 22.9%
- $25,000 to $49,999: 26.1%
- $50,000 to $74,999: 18.8%
- $75,000 to $99,999: 11.3%
- $100,000 and above: 20.9%

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school or less: 16.7%
- Some college: 22.4%
- Associate's or Technical Degree: 12.1%
- College degree or more: 48.8%
Do you have any kind of health coverage, including health insurance, prepaid plans such as HMOs, or government plans such as Medicare or Indian Health?

- **Yes**: 87.6%
- **No/Not sure**: 12.4%

Are you out to your doctors/healthcare providers as an LGBTQA person?

- **All of them**: 43.9%
- **Some of them**: 31.0%
- **None of them**: 25.1%
How knowledgeable are your providers about LGBTQ health?

- Not at all: 6.5%
- Not too: 15.5%
- Somewhat: 22.0%
- Knowledgeable: 27.5%
- Very: 18.0%
- Extremely: 10.5%

Do you fear a negative reaction by a healthcare provider if you come out as LGBTQ?

- Never: 23.5%
- Rarely: 25.4%
- Sometimes: 34.4%
- Often: 10.4%
- Always: 6.3%

Has a health provider ever reacted poorly when they learned you were LGBTQ?

- Yes: 10.4%
- Somewhat: 10.4%
- No: 71.6%
- Do not know: 7.6%
How Accepting is Your Workplace?

- Very friendly: 49.3%
- Somewhat friendly: 22.5%
- Neutral: 14.4%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 7.3%
- Very unfriendly: 6.4%

How LGBTQA-welcoming is your workplace?

- Very friendly: 34.4%
- Somewhat friendly: 24.8%
- Neutral: 24.8%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 9.2%
- Very unfriendly: 6.8%

How LGBTQA-welcoming is your school?

- Very friendly: 21.5%
- Somewhat friendly: 27.1%
- Neutral: 30.1%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 15.1%
- Very unfriendly: 6.2%

How LGBTQA-welcoming is your neighborhood?
Analysis of LGBTQA-welcoming responses:

**Birth Family:**
- Very friendly: 47.0%
- Somewhat friendly: 21.5%
- Neutral: 13.1%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 9.6%
- Very unfriendly: 8.8%

**Friends:**
- Very friendly: 79.2%
- Somewhat friendly: 13.1%
- Neutral: 3.6%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 2.8%
- Very unfriendly: 1.4%

**Medical Provider:**
- Very friendly: 27.5%
- Somewhat friendly: 28.4%
- Neutral: 36.7%
- Somewhat unfriendly: 5.5%
- Very unfriendly: 1.9%
Results - LGBTQA Acceptance
Top Health Issues for the LGBTQA Community

Results - Community Health & Wellness

COMMUNITY
Self-reported Health Status

Results – Personal Health & Wellness

- Very Poor: 0.8%
- Poor: 5.4%
- Okay: 27.3%
- Good: 45.0%
- Very Good: 21.5%
Have You Seen Wellness Campaigns Geared Toward LGBTQ Community?

- Never: 63.5%
- Sometimes: 34.4%
- Frequently: 2.2%

How interested are you in incorporating Healthy Living Strategies?

- Not at all: 2.7%
- Somewhat: 21.5%
- Very: 39.2%
- Extremely: 36.5%

Are you interested in...

- Tobacco-Free Strategies: 20.7%
- Health Eating Strategies: 62.6%
- Active Living Strategies: 61.5%
Are you now or have you ever taken medicine or received treatment for a mental health condition or emotional problem?

- Yes: 53.6%
- No: 46.4%

In the past 12 months, did you receive psychological counseling or treatment?

- Yes: 29.2%
- No: 70.8%
How many minutes per week do you engage in moderate or vigorous exercise?

Unable to exercise: 3.7%
0 minutes: 11.2%
1 to 49 minutes: 28.3%
50 to 99 minutes: 20.2%
100 to 149 minutes: 13.3%
150 minutes and above: 23.3%

In the past week, how many glasses, bottles, or cans of sugar-sweetened drinks did you have?

Zero: 36.9%
1-4: 37.2%
5-9: 13.6%
10-14: 6.3%
15 and above: 6.0%

On average, how many serving of vegetables do you consume per day (excluding potatoes)?

0: 5.8%
1: 30.6%
2: 35.6%
3: 14.8%
4: 7.1%
5+: 6.0%
Results - Healthy Eating & Physical Activity
Have you ever been tested for HIV?

- Yes: 69.4%
- No: 28.5%
- Not Sure: 2.1%

Among those who had an HIV test, when was their last HIV test?

- 0-3 Months Ago: 14.7%
- 4-6 Months Ago: 14.7%
- 7-12 Months Ago: 14.4%
- Over 12 Months Ago: 56.2%

What were the results of your last HIV test?

- Negative: 65.5%
- Positive: 5.0%
- Don't know: 1.7%
- Never had one: 27.7%
In the past year, how often did you consume 5 or more alcohol drinks/day?

- Never: 48.2%
- Once or twice: 25.0%
- Monthly: 13.1%
- Weekly: 10.2%
- Daily or almost daily: 3.5%
In the past year, how often have you used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons?

- Never: 85.9%
- Once or twice: 5.4%
- Monthly: 2.3%
- Weekly: 1.0%
- Daily or almost daily: 5.4%

In the past year, how often have you used illegal drugs?

- Never: 76.4%
- Once or twice: 12.2%
- Monthly: 3.3%
- Weekly: 4.2%
- Daily or almost daily: 3.9%
Have you used any tobacco products in the past year?

- No: 56.6%
- Yes: 43.4%

In the past year, how often have you used...

- Cigarettes:
  - Not at all: 63.8%
  - Some days: 11.3%
  - Everyday: 24.8%
- E-cigarettes:
  - Not at all: 82.9%
  - Some days: 13.3%
  - Everyday: 3.9%
- Hookah:
  - Not at all: 88.2%
  - Some days: 10.8%
  - Everyday: 1.0%
- Flavored Cigars or Cigarillos:
  - Not at all: 93.2%
  - Some days: 6.0%
  - Everyday: 0.8%
- Chew or Snuff:
  - Not at all: 96.9%
  - Some days: 1.4%
  - Everyday: 1.7%

On the days you smoke, how many cigarettes/cigars do you smoke?

- Less than one-half pack: 31.6%
- One-half pack: 21.5%
- One pack: 31.6%
- One and a half packs: 6.3%
- Two packs or more: 5.1%
- Not sure: 3.8%
How much do you agree with this statement:
I’m grateful the tobacco industry advertises to LGBTQA communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much do you agree with this statement:
LGBTQA people smoke more than the general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results - Tobacco Use & Opinions

How much do you agree with this statement: Pride celebrations should be smoke-free events

- Strongly disagree: 14.4%
- Somewhat disagree: 13.3%
- Neutral: 27.7%
- Somewhat agree: 14.0%
- Strongly agree: 30.6%
If you smoke, what are your intentions to quit?

- **Never expect to quit**: 10.5%
- **Might quit sometime, but not soon**: 28.1%
- **Want to quit in the next year**: 18.3%
- **Want to quit in the next six months**: 43.1%
If you smoke, where would you most likely go for assistance to quit smoking?

- Doctor or health care provider: 31.7%
- An LGBTQ organization: 9.1%
- Quitline: 12.8%
- Smoking cessation class or program: 13.4%
- I don't know where to go: 17.7%
- I would not go anywhere: 52.4%

What is your best guess as to how LGBTQ welcoming your state quitline is?

- Very unwelcoming: 3.7%
- Somewhat unwelcoming: 28.7%
- Somewhat welcoming: 54.2%
- Very welcoming: 13.4%
Among participants assigned female at birth, are you up to date with your cervical Pap smears?

- Yes: 55.3%
- No: 36.4%
- I do not know the screening recommendations: 8.3%

Among participants assigned female at birth aged 50 years or older, are you up to date with your mammography?

- Yes: 77.4%
- No: 22.6%
- I do not know the screening recommendations: 0.0%

Among participants aged 50 years or older, are you up to date with your colonoscopy?

- Yes: 65.7%
- No: 33.1%
- I do not know the screening recommendations: 1.2%
Among participants assigned male at birth and aged 50 years or older, are you up to date with your prostate exams?

- Yes: 75.9%
- No: 22.4%
- I do not know the screening recommendations: 1.7%

Among all participants, have you ever had an anal Pap smear?

- Yes: 82.6%
- No: 10.2%
- I don't know: 7.1%
# Results - Cancer

**How much do you think LGBTQ support groups are needed for cancer survivors?**

- Not needed: 1.3%
- Little need: 1.7%
- Medium need: 16.6%
- High need: 72.1%
- Don't know: 8.3%

**How much do you think LGBTQ-tailored cancer information are needed for cancer survivors?**

- Not needed: 2.3%
- Little need: 5.6%
- Medium need: 24.7%
- High need: 57.0%
- Don't know: 10.4%
How much do you think LGBTQ welcoming caregiver groups are needed for cancer survivors?

- Not needed: 1.7%
- Little need: 1.9%
- Medium need: 16.2%
- High need: 70.1%
- Don't know: 10.0%

How much do you think LGBTQ welcoming policies at hospitals are needed for cancer survivors?

- Not needed: 2.1%
- Little need: 1.7%
- Medium need: 12.5%
- High need: 74.7%
- Don't know: 8.9%

How much do you think LGBTQ legal planning at hospitals are needed for cancer survivors?

- Not needed: 2.1%
- Little need: 0.8%
- Medium need: 11.2%
- High need: 75.4%
- Don't know: 10.4%