

Media Release

Improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people

8 September 2017

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is calling on the primary health care sector to better respond to the health and mental health issues faced by LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) people.

In a position statement released today - available to download here (www.wapha.org.au/lgbti-position-paper/) WAPHA explains that sexual orientation and gender identity issues should be top of mind for all primary health care organisations and individual practitioners.

WAPHA's chief executive officer Learne Durrington says the evidence overwhelmingly confirms that the social exclusion, discrimination, stigma and marginalisation experienced by LGBTI people increases the risk of adverse impact on their health and mental health and creates barriers to accessing health and social care services.

"WAPHA's aim has always been to improve health equity for Western Australians, particularly for people at risk of poor health outcomes. The current environment of debate has promoted us to develop a definitive position and approach to health and wellbeing issues impacting LGBTI people.

"It is now widely recognised that LGBTI people experience significantly worse mental and physical health outcomes when compared with the wider community.

"This is no longer acceptable and everyone involved in caring for the health of LGBTI people should pause and think about how they can improve their understanding of the issues and respond sensitively and effectively.

"Whatever reduces discrimination and minority stress is a good thing, and can only lead to better health outcomes and, ultimately, a more cohesive society," Ms Durrington said.

WAPHA will be supporting its staff, commissioned service providers and others such as GPs and allied health professionals to promote better understanding and responsiveness to the needs of the LGBTI community and remove the barriers they face in accessing health care.

WAPHA's three core principles are to:

- Commission services that improve inclusion and healthcare access for our LGBTI communities;
- Value and celebrate diversity within our community and affirm the right to equality, fairness and decency for LGBTI Western Australians; and
- Ensure our workforce reflects the diversity within the communities it serves to provide better insight into policy and program development and the achievement of improved service outcomes for the community.

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About WAHPA: WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au