

LGBT Health Care

by Eric Senneville, PA

 **Elliot Health System**

A MEMBER OF SOLUTIONHEALTH

For many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) patients, coming out is perhaps one of the biggest hurdles in everyday life. As individuals come out to friends and family, some patients still struggle with coming out to their healthcare providers. Elliot Pediatrics and Primary Care at Riverside in Hooksett is helping the Elliot Medical Group take on the mission of making our clinics a more comfortable and culturally competent setting for our pediatric and adult patients.

LGBT patients have unique risk factors for many healthcare conditions such as cancers, communicable diseases and mental health concerns. Healthcare providers should and need to be aware in order to best prevent and treat these diseases. Individuals of the LGBT community may require different vaccinations, screenings for cancer, approaches to mental healthcare, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and Pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV (PrEP).

Recent national studies have shown that people who are LGBT are less likely to get routine primary care including annual exams, screening for sexually transmitted diseases and cancer screenings (i.e. pap smears and mammograms). Oftentimes, patients will not seek treatment when ill which results in more emergency visits. Transgender people are the most medically vulnerable population in the LGBT community. However, national studies have shown that when transgender patients receive healthcare from a provider that is competent in their unique needs; 94% of patients report an increased quality of life, 85% of patients feel more emotionally stable, 97% of patients report an improvement in overall well-being and the rate of suicide drops drastically from -29% to 0.8%.

An essential practice of LGBT medicine is the knowledge of their unique healthcare needs. This consists of assisting in finding specialists (i.e. mental healthcare, gender affirming hormonal treatment, gender affirming surgeries), and having individual and family visits. Healthcare providers also need to advocate for patients in healthcare, occupational, housing and academic settings.

In the Elliot Pediatrics & Primary Care at Riverside office, our staff, including everyone from the Patient Service Representatives to the healthcare providers, have received training on working with patients in the LGBT community. We have created a visual system to show our support by placing rainbow stickers and flags around the office and on our badges. We are committed to using preferred names and pronouns in all interactions with our patients from visits to phone calls. We understand the importance of affirming and accepting patients regardless of their gender expression or sexual identity. Since becoming more visible with the LGBT community, we have received many comments of positive feedback from our patients. To join our practice, call 603-641-5386.



Eric Senneville is an NCCPA board certified Physician Assistant currently working in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. He has both a Bachelor of Science in Medical Biology and Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of New England. He has a special interest in LGBT Medicine and attends annual national conferences on topics in LGBT primary care. He has experience and specialized training in working with transgender patients. His mission is to provide high quality primary care to patients of all ages, gender identity and sexual orientation. To book an appointment, please call 603-641-5386.

