

# **Discrimination in health care: LGBTQ patients**

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April 12, 2013

# What do we mean when we say “LGBTQ”?

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Transgender (vs. “Transsexual”)
  - Transman, Transwoman, FTM, MTF
- Intersex
- Questioning

# Meanings, cont...

- Sexual Orientation
- Homophobia
- Heterosexism
- Transphobia
- “Cis-”
- MSM (and WSW)
- Partner, Spouse, Significant Other

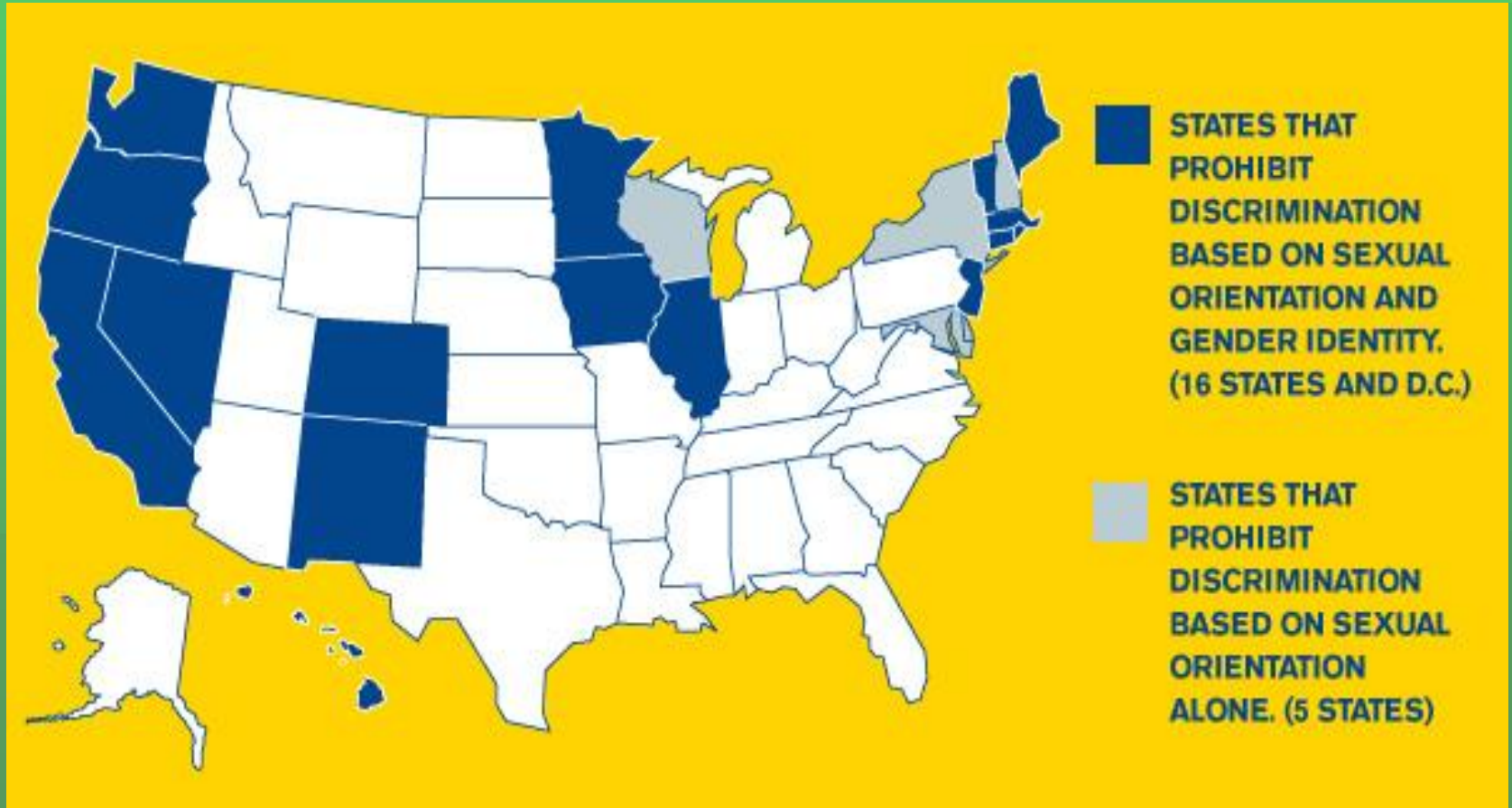
# **Discrimination? What kind of discrimination?**



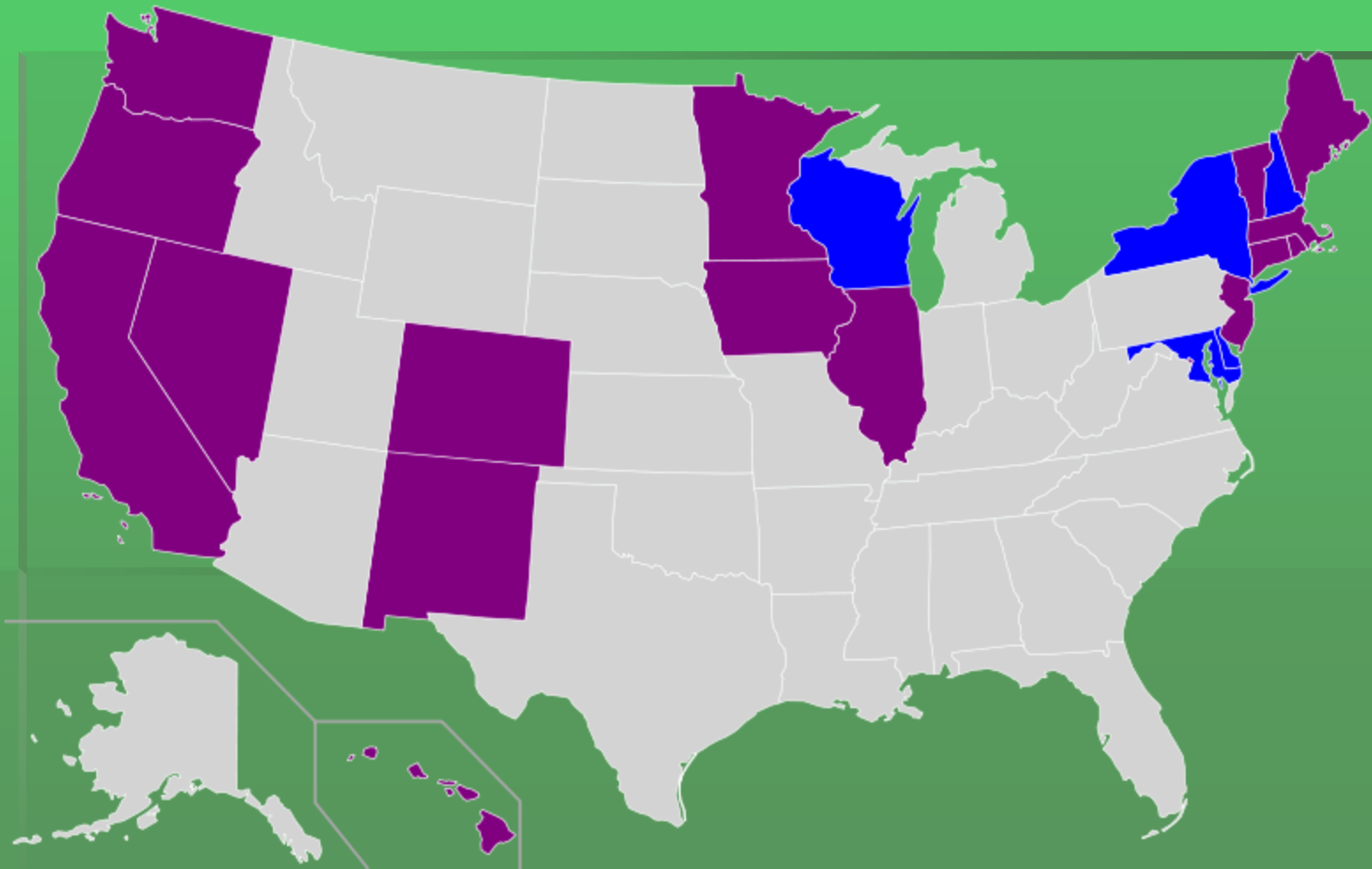
# Types of Discrimination

- Intrapersonal
  - Avoidance
  - Confrontation
  - Physical or Sexual Violence
- Institutional
  - Marriage (in)equality
  - Lack of job or housing protection
  - “looking the other way”—abuse by police, correctional staff, public figures
- Religious
  - “God hates fags”
  - Refusal to allow LGBTQ participation—in religious events or at locations such as a Catholic Hospital

# Institutional Discrimination



## A map of the United States with the states of Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia highlighted in red. The rest of the United States is shown in light gray.



# Microaggressions: “Death by a thousand cuts”

- Common everyday interactions that incorporate slights, insults or indignities, which communicate a humiliating message to a particular group
- Either intentional OR unintentional



# Microaggressions, cont...

- Common microaggressions directed at the LGBTQ community:
  - Use of “gay” to describe something bad
  - Staring at, pointing or laughing at a visibly LGBTQ person
  - Backhanded compliments: “But you don’t look gay!” “You’re too pretty to be a lesbian”
  - Refusal to be touched by a LGBTQ person

# Why?

- Cultural/Religious/Social norms
- We live in a very strictly gender binary society
  - When a baby is born...
  - Pink vs blue clothing, décor, bike, backpacks, etc.
  - “Boys don’t cry,” “Smile, sweetie!” “Sugar n’ Spice”
  - └ Identifying documents
  - └ Medical forms
- Little to no tolerance for any gender variance
  - “feminine” behavior from a male = gay

# Prove it! ( >6000 respondents in this survey)

Location	Denied Equal Treatment	Harassed or Disrespected	Physically Assaulted
Retail Store	32%	37%	3%
Police Officer	20%	29%	6%
Doctor's Office or Hospital	24%	25%	2%
Hotel or Restaurant	19%	25%	2%
Government Agency/Official	22%	22%	1%
Bus, Train, or Taxi	9%	22%	4%
Emergency Room	13%	16%	1%
Airplane or Airport Staff/TSA	11%	17%	1%
Judge or Court Official	12%	12%	1%
Mental Health Clinic	11%	12%	1%



# Injustice at every turn, cont...

- Up to 48% of TG respondents had postponed medical care
- 41% of survey respondents reported attempting suicide at least once
- < 2% of the general population has attempted suicide
- 55% of TG respondents reported being harassed when trying to seek accommodations at a homeless shelter
  - 22% report being sexually assaulted by shelter staff or clients

# Prove it! (Again!)

- 5000 respondents from the U.S
- LGBTQ & people living with HIV
- 8% of LGB respondents reported being denied medical care outright
- 27% of transgender respondents were denied care outright
- 19% of HIV patients were also denied care



# When Health Care Isn't Caring, cont...

- 56% of LGB, 70% of TG and 63% of respondents with HIV reported experiencing at least one harassing behavior while seeking medical care\*
  - \*Refusal of care, refusal to touch, harsh or abusive language, rough or abusive touch, blaming for health problems
- Transgender respondents reported higher levels of discrimination across the board, and LGBTQ people of color reported more discriminatory behaviors than white respondents.



# More health disparities

- LGBT youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide.
- LGBT 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.
- Elderly LGBT individuals face additional barriers to health because of isolation and a lack of social services and culturally competent providers.
- LGBT populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.
  - └ (Healthy People 2020)

# Effects of appropriate treatment for TG patients

Study	Pre-treatment	Post-treatment
Lundstrom 1984	Suicidality 20%	1-2%
Kuiper 1988	Suicide attempts 19% FTM 24% MTF	0% FTM 6% MTF
Cole 1997	Suicide attempts 21% FTM 12% MTF	0% FTM 0% MTF



# References

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