

# LIFELINE

PCOM Georgia's LGBTQIA Newsletter



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## A letter to all our readers:

PCOM Georgia's LGBTQIA Council and the Office of Diversity & Community Partnerships is composed of members who are dedicated to addressing issues of gender and sexual orientation diversity. This newsletter is a collaborative project with the goal of communicating important events, programs, information and resources for the LGBTQIA community at PCOM Georgia. We strive to provide a safe, inclusive space for people of all genders and sexual orientation on campus.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. In this and future editions, we hope to show you our commitment to serving all aspects of the LGBTQIA community.

With love and support,  
The LGBTQIA Council  
Office of Diversity and Community Partnerships

# 2020 Lavender Awards

On June 8, 2020, PCOM GA's LGBTQIA Council hosted its 2nd Annual Lavender Awards virtually. Started in 2019, the Lavender Awards recognizes individuals that have made the campus community a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ student, faculty, staff, and alumni.

This year, four individuals were recognized who have been instrumental to the Council's success this past year, demonstrating allyship and dedication in amplifying LGBTQ+ voices in the community.



## faculty

Drew Cates, PharmD  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Pharmacy



## staff

Leanne Henry-Miller, LPC, MFT  
Personal Support Counselor



## student

Anne Belocura, MS  
Biomedical Sciences  
Class of 2020



## community partner

Anna Lisa Derenthal, LPC, NCC  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
With speciality in Trauma, PTSD,  
and LGBTQ+ support



# Volunteering with Lost-N-Found Youth

On March 7, 2020, members of the LGBTQIA Council and PCOM Georgia Med-Alliance Student Organization volunteered to serve lunch to youth at Lost-n-Found Youth in Atlanta, GA.



Lost-n-Found Youth is an Atlanta-based nonprofit which exists to end homelessness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) and all sexual minority youth. Through advocacy and outreach activities, the Lost-n-Found team works tirelessly each day to end homelessness.

This was a very exciting event for PCOM to give back to the community of Atlanta. The LGBTQIA Council and PCOM Georgia Med Alliance organizations, under the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, plan to continue this volunteer partnership on a monthly basis.

Members who participated in the event included: Drew Cates, Candis McGraw-Senat, Lindsey Brown Caruthers, Darnae Parks, Kevin Bradford, Tyler Raeford, Shelly Restificar and Daryl Jackson.

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*I wish a program like Lost n Found had been around when I was a younger teen. They've done incredible work. Giving back to the LGBTQ+ youth was an uplifting and empowering experience.*

**Shelly Restificar**  
M.S. Biomedical Sciences



# The Impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ Community

As COVID-19 sweeps the world, affecting hundreds and thousands of people, multiple LGBTQ-led supportive groups seek to bring awareness to the unique health needs LGBTQ+ people will have throughout the pandemic.

## LGBTQ+ people work in highly affected industries

The Human Rights Campaign estimates there are nearly 14 million LGBTQ+ adults and 2 million LGBTQ+ youth in the United States.

More than 5 million work in jobs that are deemed essential, and therefore more likely to be impacted by COVID-19. This includes those working in restaurants and food services, hospitals, K-12 and higher education, and retail industries.

## LGBTQ+ are less likely to have health coverage

Having the ability to access medical care is essential to testing for COVID-19, as well as treating the symptoms of the disease. However, LGBTQ+ people are more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to lack health coverage or the monetary resources to visit a doctor, even when medically necessary.

## LGBTQ+ people are poorer

LGBTQ+ people also face significant economic disparities compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers, indicating that they will more often lack the resources they need to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Nearly 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ people are unemployed and are more likely to live in poverty than straight and cisgender people, meaning that they cannot always afford medical treatment or preventative health care measures.

About 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ adults in the United States (22%) live in poverty. Furthermore, Black (40%) and Latinx (45%) transgender adults are more likely to live in poverty than transgender people of any other race.

These high rates of unemployment and poverty may be linked to LGBTQ+ discrimination at the workplace.

**17%** of LGBTQ+ adults do not have health insurance coverage

**23%** of LGBTQ+ adults of color do not have health insurance coverage

**32%** of transgender adults of color do not have health insurance coverage

# The Impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ Community

## LGBTQ+ and Mental Health

Approximately 3.5% of the U.S. population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning (LGBTQ+). Of those, over 39% reported having mental illness in the past year, which is nearly 4.5 million people.

This health disparity can be linked to societal stigma and discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights.

LGBTQ+ people with mental conditions often find themselves fighting a double stigma. Many will experience prejudice based on their sexual and/or gender identity as well as the stigma associated with mental illness. Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people has been associated with high rates of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and suicide.

Older LGBTQ+ adults already experience higher rates of social isolation than straight and cisgender age peers. As individuals engage in social distancing during the COVID-19 crisis, social isolation has increased drastically. This can exacerbate underlying mental health issues in the older LGBTQ+ population.

With some of the nation's LGBTQ+ health and community centers temporarily shutting down in the midst of COVID-19, many people don't know where to turn as they face difficult questions or in need of support.

If you are concerned about risk of COVID-19 or believe you may have been near someone who has tested positive, check your local LGBTQ+ health or community center's website to view up-to-date advice. You can also check to see if their phone lines are open for consultation.

If you or anyone you may know are in need of mental health support during quarantine and need to find an LGBT+ affirming health provider, check out the following websites:

- [GLMA's health provider directory](#)
- [HRC's healthcare quality index](#)
- [CDC's database of LGBT-inclusive health clinics](#)
- [CenterLink's national LGBTQ+ center database](#)

If you are in need of counseling support, please do not hesitate to reach out to Leanne Henry Miller, LPC, MFT at [leannehe@pcom.edu](mailto:leannehe@pcom.edu).



# The Impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ Community

## People living with HIV + other chronic conditions

Compared to the general population, people with compromised immunity are at higher risk of developing serious or more serious COVID-19 illness.

Risk factors include older age and other chronic conditions such as HIV, heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

It is critically important that individuals living with HIV/AIDS take their medications every day and other steps to stay healthy, such as eating well, exercising, and avoiding tobacco and other substances.

At the present time, there is no specific information about the risk of COVID-19 in people with HIV. The risk from immune suppression is not known, but with other viral respiratory infections, the risk for people with HIV getting very sick is greatest in people with a low CD4 cell count and not on HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy or ART).

For cancer patients on chemotherapy, people with organ or bone marrow transplants and those who use high-dose steroids for autoimmune diseases, the risk for developing serious COVID-19 illness could be higher.

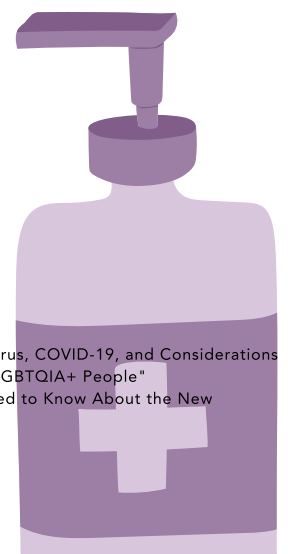
## Particular concerns for LGBTQ+ people

Recent research has shown higher rates of sedentarism, pre-diabetes, and diabetes among LGBTQ+ youth, which could lead to diabetes in later in life.

Older LGBTQ+ adults also experience higher rates of disability than heterosexual and cisgender elders.

Additionally, studies have shown that LGBTQ+ people are also more likely to smoke, vape, or use other substances. All of these conditions and risk behaviors could increase the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ people if they are exposed to COVID-19.

In order to prevent COVID-19 severely impacting vulnerable populations, it is important to exercise the CDC precautions, such maintaining social distance, thoroughly washing hands, and wearing a mask when going out to public spaces.



Sources:  
The Fenway Institute, "Coronavirus, COVID-19, and Considerations for People Living with HIV and LGBTQIA+ People"  
POZ, "What People with HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus"

# Standing for Black LGBTQ+ Lives

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA) communities know that liberation is not a given; it is fought for. We remember it was trans women of color who catalyzed a national movement.

As LGBTQ people from many races, many religions, and many colors, we know what it is to stand up for our inherent worth, our identities, our bodies, and to speak out against discrimination, harassment and violence."

Words from Jennifer Houston  
Director of External Affairs at Neighborhood Funders Group  
"LGBTQ Organizations Stand in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter"

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*What happens is that Black trans people are erased and made invisible in society, but then we actually disappear in our deaths.*

**Kei Williams**

founder of the Black Lives Matter global network and a national organizer at the Marsha P. Johnson Institute



Protestors marched from the Stonewall Inn to Union Square, holding aloft signs reading "Black Lives Matter" and "Transphobia is White Supremacy."  
(Cecilia Nowell)

*The racial  
disparity is real.*

As racially marginalized people, Black people already face biased policies and systems as they try to gain access to housing, jobs, places of leisure, and health care. As LGBTQ+ people, they may have an even greater likelihood of receiving unfair treatment linked to their sexual, gender, and racial identities.



Protestors begin to gather outside the Stonewall Inn.  
(Cecilia Nowell)

# Health Providers for Black LGBTQ+ Lives

At the wake of George Floyd's death, several protests have erupted across the United States and more than 15 other countries that call for justice and end to racial violence. However, the Black Lives Matter movement goes beyond just ending police brutality - it applies to health care too.

- A 2017 nation-wide survey comprising U.S. adults found that **LGBTQ+ people of color**, including Black, Latinx, Asian, and/or Indigenous, were **twice as likely to report discrimination** because of their LGBTQ+ identity, compared to their White counterparts.
- **LGBTQ+ persons who are socio-economically marginalized may face the compounded burden** of not being able to afford basic needs, such as housing, transportation, health care and food that is common privilege for those who have more financial access.
- It's been estimated that at some point in their lifetimes, **1 in 16 Black men and 1 in 32 Black women** will be diagnosed with HIV infection.
- While Black people only represent 13% of the United States population, they are accounted for an estimated 44% of all new HIV infections among adults and adolescents (aged 13 years or older).
- **72% of women living with HIV/AIDS are Black.**



Over 150 people, including students from PCOM Georgia, participated in the "White Coats for Black Lives" marches through Atlanta on the June 6-7 weekend. (Jada Schaffer)

- Black LGBTQ+ people, particularly **Black transgender women**, are subjected to **violence, brutality, and death** at a far greater rate than White LGBTQ+ people.
- In 2013, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs reported that **transgender people of color were 6 times more likely to experience physical violence from the police** compared to White cisgender people.
- In 2018, **26 Black trans people** were murdered due to their gender identity. This year, **Tony McDade** is believed to be the 12th and latest violent death of a transgender person in the United States.
- **Black LGBTQ+ people are at an increased likelihood of testing positive for and suffering as a result of COVID-19**, as they are more likely to be smokers and work minimum wage jobs.

Sources:

[www.blackaids.org](http://www.blackaids.org)

<https://thebridela.com/2020/05/how-covid-19-impacts-black-lgbtq-people/>

[www.thenation.com/article/archive/alicia-garza-stonewall-transgender/](http://www.thenation.com/article/archive/alicia-garza-stonewall-transgender/)

[www.them.us/story/why-black-trans-people-cant-trust-doctors-to-save-our-lives](http://www.them.us/story/why-black-trans-people-cant-trust-doctors-to-save-our-lives)



# Supporting Black LGBTQ+ Lives

The Black Lives Matter movement is a call for the medical community to enter the discussion and be a part of the solution in ending racial disparities. Changes need to be made to ensure we are providing our patients, especially the communities that are traditionally overlooked and underserved, the best possible care.



Beyond our school campus, we can also do our part in supporting the cause through donations or volunteer work with organizations that uplift the Black community in meaningful ways.

## **The Trevor Project**

is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ youth under age 25.  
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

## **Homeless Black Trans Woman Fund**

has provided Black transgender women in Atlanta with temporary housing, food, cell phones, and other necessities.  
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/homeless-black-trans-women-fund>

## **Okra Project**

is a collective that brings home-cooked, healthy, and cultural specific meals to Black transgender people across the country.  
<https://www.paypal.me/btsf>

## **Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative**

is a Black, trans-led broad based collaborative to restore an Atlanta where every person has the opportunity to grow and thrive without facing unfair barriers, especially from the criminal legal system.  
<https://www.snap4freedom.org>

## **Black AIDS Institute**

has made their mission to stop the AIDS epidemic in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing Black institutions and individuals in efforts to confront HIV.  
<https://blackaids.org>

## **Trans Women of Color Survival Fund**

assists with a range of financial needs for transgender women of color, with a focus on restorative justice and building socioeconomic growth and development for its members.  
<https://www.twocc.us>

## **For the Gworls**

raises money to assist Black transgender people's rent and gender affirming surgeries.  
<https://linktr.ee/FORTHEGWORLSPARTY>

## **Black Trans Protestors Emergency Fund**

supports Black transgender protestors with resources such as bail and medical care, and redistributes donated money to several Black trans-led organizations that are working to minimize violence against Black transgender individuals.  
Fund is made through PayPal and Cashapp.  
PayPal: [btfacollective@gmail.com](mailto:btfacollective@gmail.com)  
CashApp: \$btfacollective

Please feel free to share these resources to those who might be in need.