



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, OFFICE ON AGING: OLDER AMERICAN'S ACT 2006

ISSUE: INCLUDE SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY CATEGORIES AS A DESIGNATED AND MANDATED COMPONENT OF FEDERALLY FUNDED AGING RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

POLICY DESCRIPTION: OAA provides funding for the Administration on Aging to conduct research and collect data to assist the Administration on Aging to provide funding to state agencies to conduct their own research and data collection in a variety of areas, such as nutrition, elder legal services, and elder rights and protections. Currently, none of the research or surveys gather information on LGBT elders and the services provided/available to them, and the state agencies are not required to do research or data collection for LGBT populations. We don't know of any states that use Administration on Aging research funds to collect data on LGBT populations.

As stated in other background information for policy changes for LGBT elders are among the most vulnerable of the nation's aging populations and remain invisible and underserved by the federal support system. While LGBT elders are especially vulnerable for many reasons that make them disproportionately more dependant on public services, they often remain unseen and underserved. LGBT elders are more likely to age alone, without children to provide primary care giving, and with less financial resources to manage aging and chronic illnesses. It is estimated that one to three million Americans over 65 are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, based on a range of 3% to 8% percent of the population. By 2030, this part of the elder population will expand to approximately 2 to 6 million. These are best estimates based on extrapolation from little or no collected demographics on LGBT seniors. A lack of reliable national, state and local data means that the LGBT community's elders are being systematically left out of Area Planning documents and aging network agency planning. Processes that allocate monies partly based on need demonstrated by clear demographics trends and numbers are affected.

Without research and data collection it is near impossible for the federal government and then by extension state units on aging to plan for meeting the needs of LGBT seniors.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE: Agencies such as the Administration on Aging should create new regulations which stipulate that funding given to the state agencies for data collection is dependent up on collecting data on LGBT populations. A variety of agencies, such as the Administration on Aging, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and the Census Bureau should add to its data collection standards information counting and including LGBT people.

PROCESS FOR MAKING CHANGES: Many of such agencies have the authority to tie funds to the collection of data for sexual orientation and gender identity via administrative regulation because the enacting instrument doesn't limit which data may be collected as part of the funding provided, merely that those funds are to be used for data collection.