



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS UNDER THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

### **ISSUE: NEED TO INCLUDE QUESTIONS PERTINENT TO LGBT POPULATIONS IN FEDERAL HEALTH SURVEYS**

**POLICY DESCRIPTION:** Federal health surveys not only gather the most comprehensive data on the nation's people but also determine if and how disparities and differences among subpopulations are recognized and addressed. These surveys collect data on a range of demographic information, including age, sex, race, and socioeconomic status. These demographics are used in conjunction with behavioral data to determine funding and program priorities for federal, state, and local governments. Unfortunately, sexual orientation and gender identity questions are often omitted from surveys, leaving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities with insufficient tools to assess and improve their health.

There are no policies regarding LGBT data collection. Because instructions are not explicit that LGBT data be collected, it often is not. As a result, the LGBT community is largely ignored in setting funding streams, priorities and programs. For example, in Healthy People 2010 there are LGB indicators, but no data is collected to measure these indicators and the federal government and LGBT community are unable to see if we are improving the health of the LGBT community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE:** We recommend including specific populations under the duties of the National Center for Health Statistics.

This language can be found in US Code Title 42, Part 6A Public Health Service, Subchapter II General Powers and Duties, Part A Research and Investigations §242k National Center for Health Statistics.

Recommended amendments are in **CAPITAL LETTERS** below:

In carrying out subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary, acting through the Center, shall collect statistics on:



*A new beginning: Policy recommendations to improve the lives of LGBT people and eliminate discrimination from federal policies*

- A. the extent and nature of illness and disability of the population of the United States (or of any groupings of the people included in the population), including life expectancy, the incidence of various acute and chronic illnesses, and infant and maternal morbidity and mortality.

We recommend that the language be changed to read “In carrying out subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary, acting through the Center, shall collect statistics on:

- A. the extent and nature of illness and disability of the population of the United States (or of any groupings of the people included in the population **INCLUDING SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES**), including life expectancy, the incidence of various acute and chronic illnesses, and infant and maternal morbidity and mortality.”

**DESCRIBE THE PROCESS BY WHICH YOUR RECOMMENDATION CAN BE**

**IMPLEMENTED:** The National Center for Health Statistics is responsible for this recommendation.

The Center’s Director is Edward J. Sondik, Ph.D.