

The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2020

Contact: Danielle Faipler
860-240-8790

LGBTQ+ Health and Human Services Network Votes to Invest in Comprehensive LGBTQ+ Community Needs Analysis

HARTFORD — Following a Friday, September 11 virtual emergency meeting of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Health and Human Services Network, members voted via email to authorize the Connecticut Department of Public Health to obligate approximately \$17,000 of the Network's remaining \$143,000 budget to expand the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to include predetermined questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. The BRFSS is the largest conducted health survey system in the world and is coordinated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Connecticut's BRFSS is authorized by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

"In order to ensure the health and safety of members of the LGBTQ+ community, it is critical that we know where we are, how we are doing, and how we can bridge that gap in vital services for a community that for way too long has thrived, and suffered, in silence," said **Steven Hernández, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity**.

"It's surprising that these types of questions are not already included in the BRFSS since they would provide a better representation of Connecticut's LGBTQ+ community and would help to ensure our state is not missing critical services, supports, and opportunities," said **State Representative Jeff Currey (D – East Hartford, Manchester, South Windsor)**. "This is a step in the right direction, and one that I hope builds momentum to encourage other state agencies to collect more complete data to serve all groups and residents in Connecticut."

The Network also discussed using remaining 2021 fiscal year funds to award microgrants to client-facing LGBTQ+ organizations to address needs related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Network was established pursuant to section 207 of [Public Act 19-117](#) to make recommendations to the state legislative, executive, and judicial branches to enhance delivery of health and human services and foster a safer, healthier environment for LGBTQ+ individuals residing in Connecticut.

In May 2020, the Network contracted the Consultation Center at Yale to design and implement a community needs assessment to provide a comprehensive understanding of Connecticut's LGBTQ+ community within the following health and human services areas:

- Basic Needs;
- Housing;
- Transportation;

- Financial Resources;
- Medical Care;
- Mental Health;
- Addiction/Substance Abuse;
- Sexual Health and HIV Prevention;
- Legal Services; and
- Violence

Additionally, information about key demographics including age, race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, geography, ability, and economic status will be collected. Information obtained from the needs assessment will be used to fund or enhance programming to better serve the Connecticut LGBTQ+ community as determined by the Network.

###