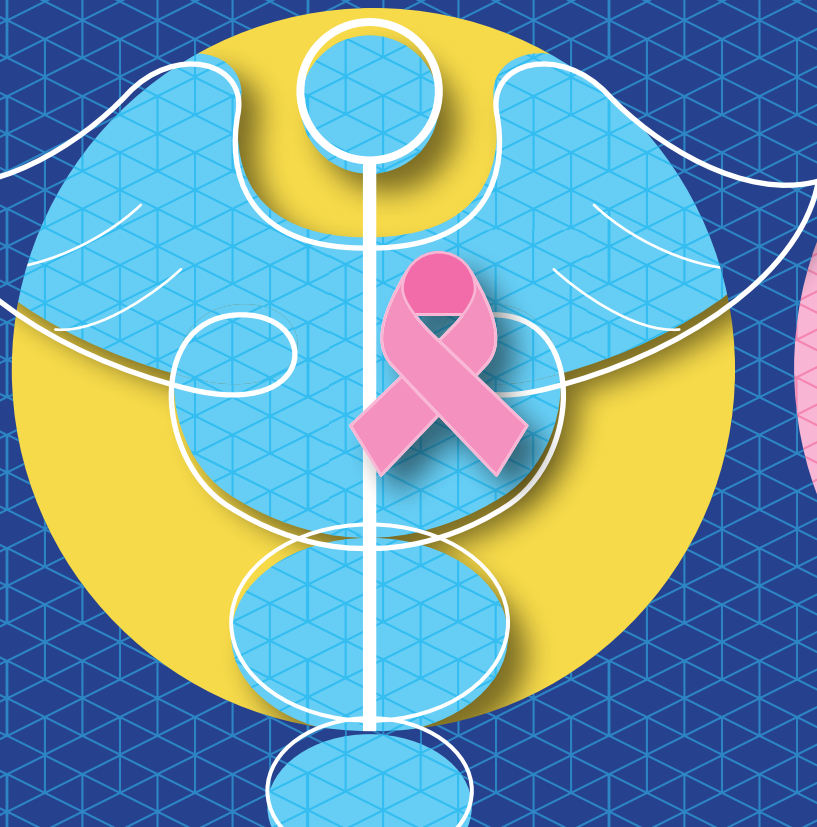
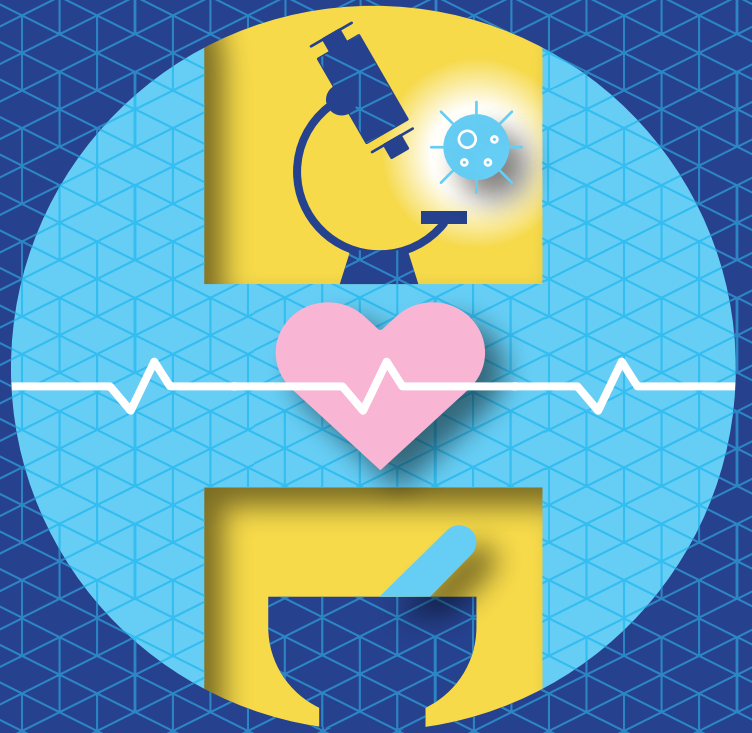




HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN  
FOUNDATION

# Healthcare Equality Index 2024

Over 1,000 Participants Promoting Equitable and Inclusive Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Patients & Their Families





## Executive Summary

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2007, the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) has been instrumental in transforming how healthcare facilities care for LGBTQ+ individuals. Over the years we have steadily strengthened the HEI criteria to align with best practices around inclusive LGBTQ+ healthcare. In the HEI 2024 we once again raised the bar and for our 2024 participants this was the most rigorous year yet.

At the same time, the fight for LGBTQ+ equality in America has never been more important. During the HEI 2024 survey cycle which spanned 2022 and 2023, nearly 900 anti-LGBTQ+ bills were introduced in more than 40 states across the country, and over 100 of them were passed and signed into law. More than a third of these bills explicitly targeted the transgender community, particularly trans and nonbinary youth. Many of these bills aim to limit or restrict access to gender-affirming care for transgender and non-binary minors, creating barriers to access safe and age-appropriate medical care. Due to this unprecedented spike in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation across the country, in 2023, for the first time in HRC's more than 40-year history, we officially declared a state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the U.S.

HRC's analysis of the 17th Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey, fielded in 2023 with over 14,000 LGBTQ+ adults from all 50 states and Washington, DC, found that nearly 80% of LGBTQ+ adults report that these gender-affirming care

bans make them feel less safe and 43% of LGBTQ+ adults reported that gender-affirming care bans impact the physical and/or mental health of themselves or their loved ones. The impact of this legislation combined with a history of discrimination in healthcare settings has the potential to cause even more LGBTQ+ people to delay or avoid healthcare settings which makes the work of the HEI even more critical.

Despite the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and rhetoric, we are pleased to report that healthcare facilities are not backing away from this vital work. For the first time, the HEI 2024 had more than 1000 participants. The HEI 2024 had 1065 healthcare facilities from across the U.S. that stepped up to take the HEI survey and to be measured on how many of the LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices they have in place across four criteria areas. This year, 384 participants met the more challenging criteria to earn the top score and the "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader" designation, while 462 participants earned the "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer" designation. Combined a total

of 79% of participants earned one of these esteemed designations showcasing their commitment to LGBTQ+ patient-centered care.

While there was a slight decrease in the percentage of facilities earning one of these top two designations due to the more rigorous criteria, we saw significant increases in the percentage of facilities adopting several key measures in the HEI, particularly in the area of Patient Self Identification and Data Collection. Detailed adoption percentages for surveyed policies and practices can be found in the report's findings section.

Overall, healthcare facilities nationwide are making significant strides in LGBTQ+ patient-centered care, implementing best practices, and staff training. The HRC Foundation commends participating facilities and encourages non-participants to utilize the HEI to enhance LGBTQ+ care and demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion.

# 1,065 Participants

48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico represented

- 183 Teaching Hospitals
- 44 Federally Qualified Health Centers (or Look-Alikes)
- 41 Pediatric Hospitals
- 33 Critical Access Hospitals

384 Leaders / 36%

462 High Performers / 43%



## By the Numbers

HEI 2024 Participants at a Glance

Facilities from more than **160** different non-profit, for-profit and public health systems / Systems with 15 or more participating facilities:

Department of Veterans Affairs	97
Advocate Health	50
CommonSpirit Health	45
Kaiser Permanente	39
UPMC	33
Northwell Health	26
Sutter Health	22
Intermountain Healthcare	18
NYC Health + Hospitals	18
Banner Health	17
Cleveland Clinic Health System	17

### Participants by Bed Size

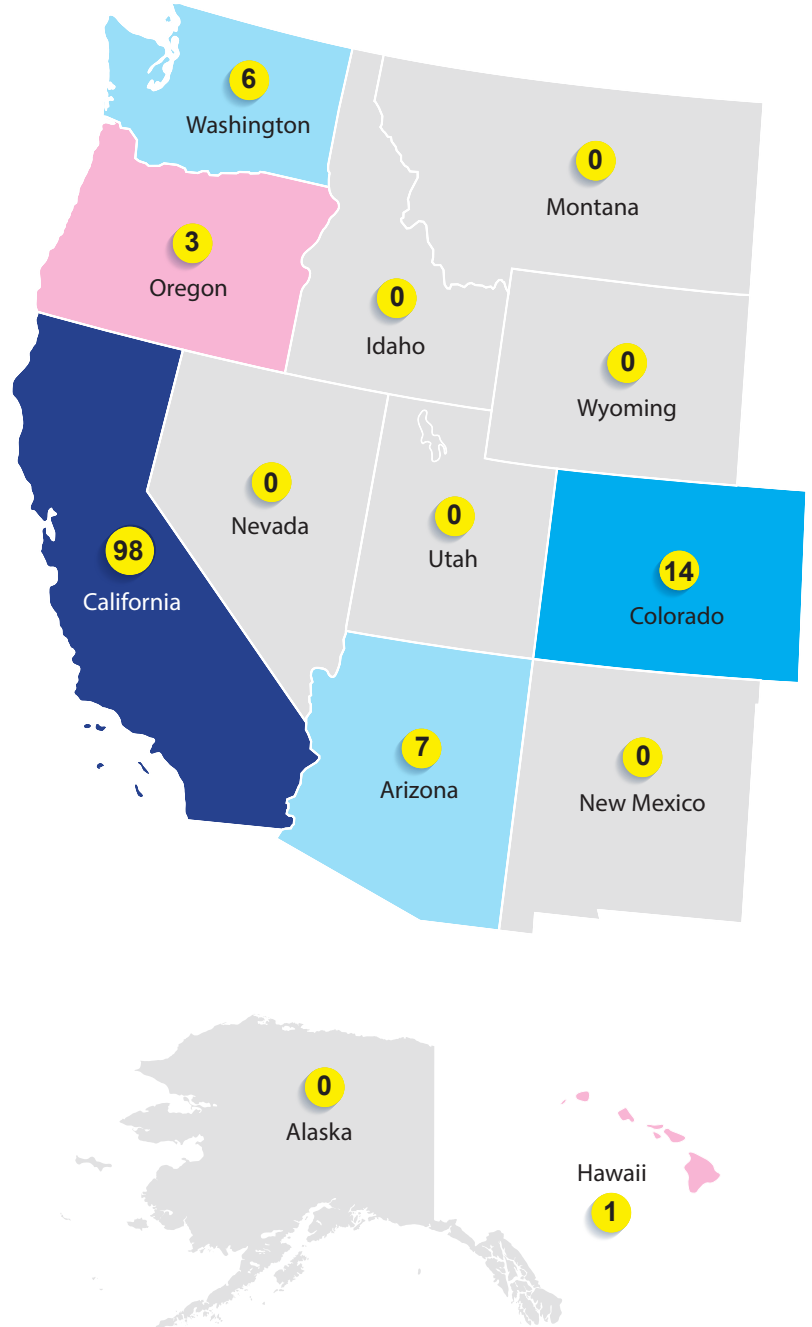
Healthcare facilities of all sizes participate in the HEI, including two dozen critical access hospitals with 25 beds or less, as well as more than a dozen of the largest hospitals in the nation with 1000 or more beds.

1-99	22%
100-199	21%
200-299	16%
300-399	11%
400-499	7%
500+	12%
Outpatient Only	11%





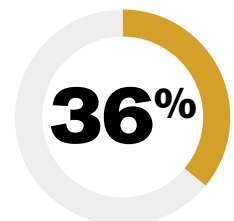
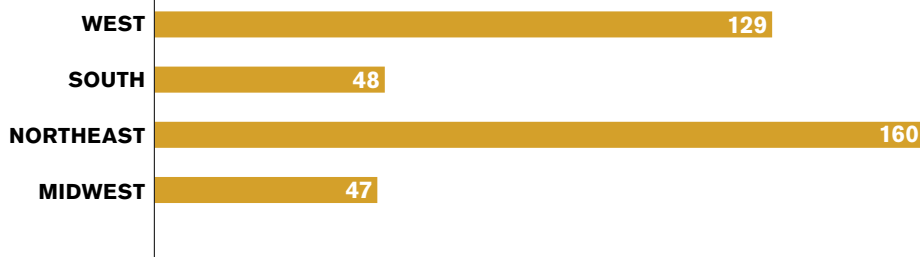
# HEI 2024 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders



HEI PARTICIPANTS ARE GIVEN A SCORE BASED ON HOW many LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices they have in place in four different criteria areas. The first criterion consists of the foundational elements of LGBTQ+ patient-centered care. The three remaining criteria are Patient Services and Support, Employee Benefits and Policies, and Patient and Community Engagement. Participants that have earned the LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader designation have received the highest score in each criterion and have demonstrated that they offer transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits to their employees to receive a top score of 100 points and earn this coveted designation. The criteria were more rigorous this year, challenging participants to reach this designation. Still, an impressive **384 (36%) of HEI 2024 participants met this higher standard and earned the LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader designation.**

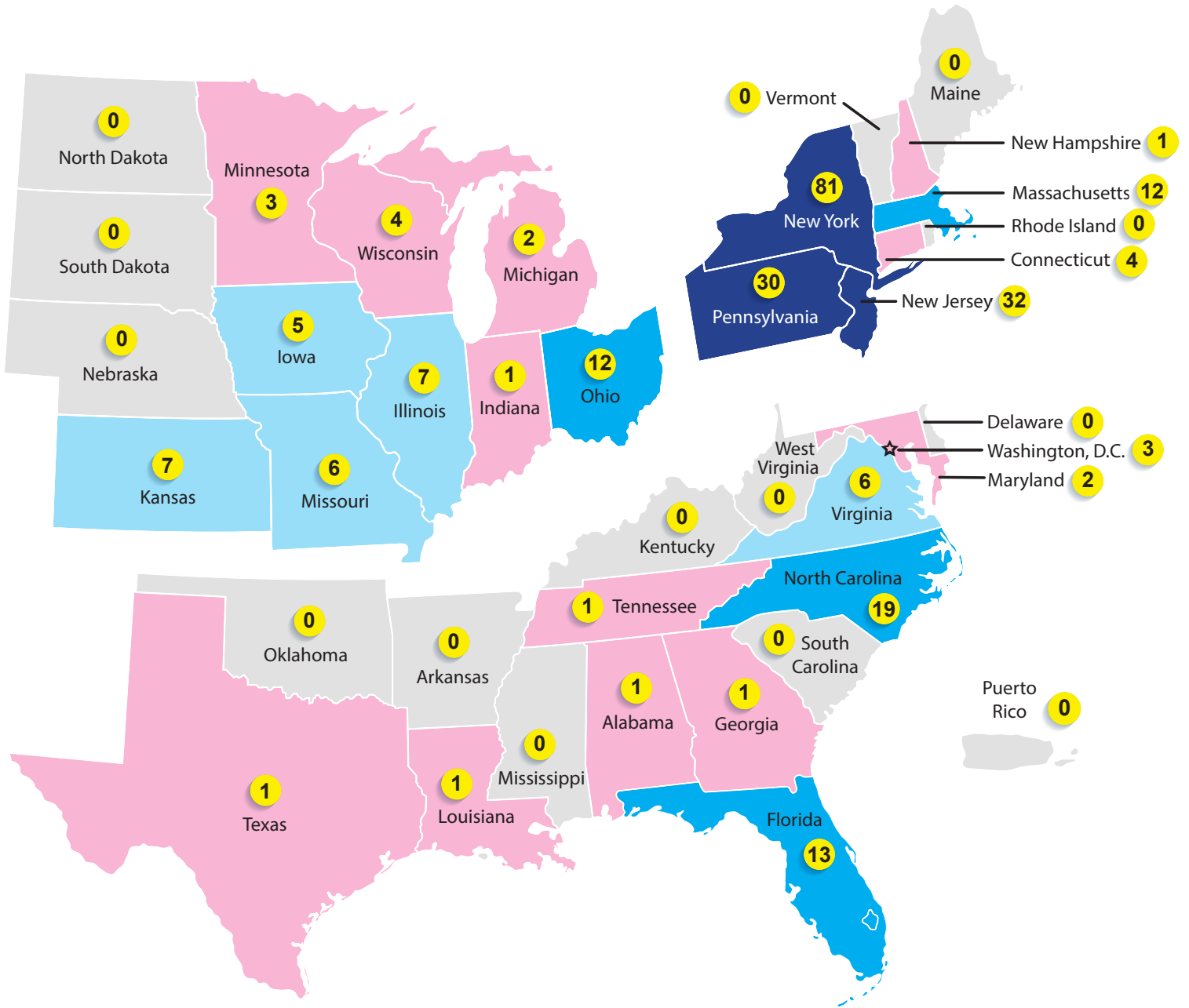
The full HEI 2024 report features a list of the 384 HEI 2024 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders. In addition to being celebrated in the HEI report, LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders receive a special logo and a toolkit of resources for outreach to LGBTQ+ residents in their service area.

### Leaders by Region



of 2024's participants met the more challenging criteria and earned the designation "2024 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader."





**Number of LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders**

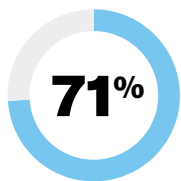


# Key Findings

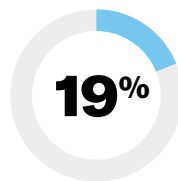
ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES you will find data points for some of the key findings from the HEI 2024. These findings come from the criteria on Patient Services and Support, Employee

Benefits and Policies, and Patient and Community Engagement. For the complete findings and more information about each of these data points, please see the full HEI 2024 report at [hrc.org/hei](http://hrc.org/hei).

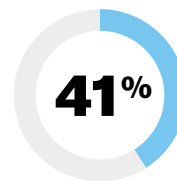
## LGBTQ+ Patient Services and Support



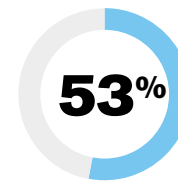
have an official plan for reducing health disparities that specifically includes LGBTQ+ patients in addition to race, ethnicity and linguistic concerns.



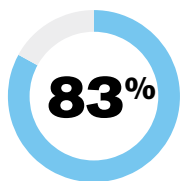
of HEI participants have dedicated LGBTQ+ clinics that are externally promoted.



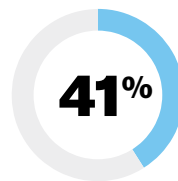
have an externally promoted LGBTQ+ focused office, point-person, patient advocate or ombudsman.



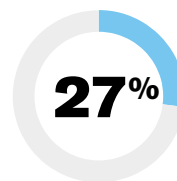
have a policy or policies that specifically outline procedures and practices aimed at eliminating bias and insensitivity, and ensuring appropriate, welcoming interactions with transgender patients.



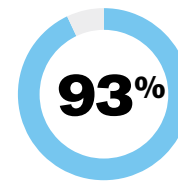
provide at least some specific services to meet the needs of transgender patients.



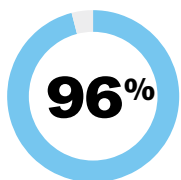
have an externally promoted multidisciplinary gender clinic for either adults and/ or youth.



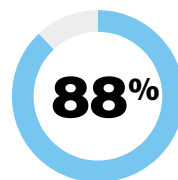
have an externally promoted specific program to provide patient navigation or advocacy services to transgender patients.



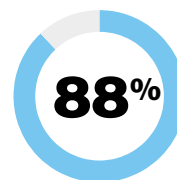
can explicitly capture a patient's sexual orientation in their electronic health records.



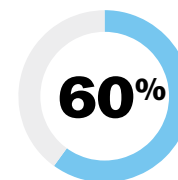
can explicitly capture a patient's gender identity in their electronic health records.



capture a patient's name in use if it differs from their legal name AND prominently display this name in a banner or pop-up so that front line staff and providers will see this information.

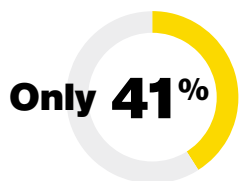


capture a patient's pronouns in use AND prominently display these pronouns in a banner or pop-up so that front line staff and providers will see this information.

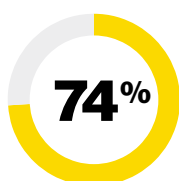


provide employees with training explicitly reminding them that LGBTQ+ status is confidential patient information.

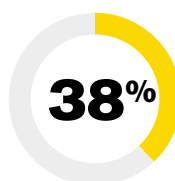
## Employee Benefits and Policies



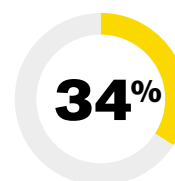
provide medical and comprehensive health benefits to domestic partners of benefits-eligible employees.



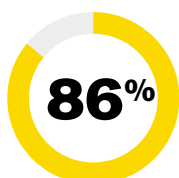
offer bereavement leave that allows employees to take time off following the death of a same-sex partner or their immediate family.



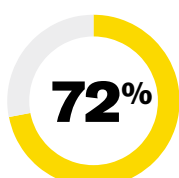
offer FMLA-equivalent benefits that allow employees to take family and medical leave to care for same-sex partners as well as the children of a same-sex partner, regardless of biological or adoptive status.



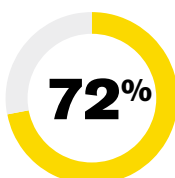
have paid leave benefits that allow employees to take medical and family leave to care for same-sex domestic partners as well as the children of a same-sex partner, regardless of biological or adoptive status.



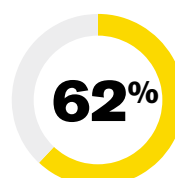
have an organization-wide diversity and inclusion office, diversity council or working group focused on employee diversity that specifically includes LGBTQ+ diversity as part of its mission.



have an officially recognized LGBTQ+ employee resource group.

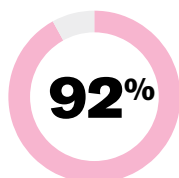


provide to all employees at least one health plan that explicitly covers medically necessary health services for transgender people, including gender transition-related treatment.

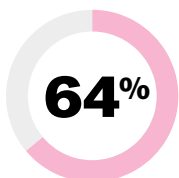


have written gender transition guidelines documenting supportive policies and practices on issues pertinent to a workplace gender transition.

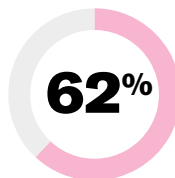
## Patient and Community Engagement



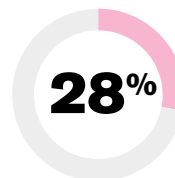
took part in or supported one or more LGBTQ+ related events or initiatives in their service area.



engaged in marketing or advertising to the LGBTQ+ community (other than sponsorships).



designed an LGBTQ+ specific logo for use in marketing materials, promotion of LGBTQ+ internal or external community events, or for providers and staff to wear to indicate that they are LGBTQ+ inclusive.



publicly supported LGBTQ+ equality under the law by speaking out on local, state, or federal legislation or initiatives.

## Why the HEI? To help LGBTQ+ patients find LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare facilities

In addition to being a valuable tool and resource for healthcare facilities, the HEI is used by LGBTQ+ patients and their loved ones to find facilities that provide equitable and inclusive care.

The list of LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders is published in the HEI report and the ratings for each participating facility are available on our website and promoted to HRC's more than 3 million supporters.

Consumers can easily search our online database or our interactive map to see how facilities near them rate — giving patients the ability to choose where they would like to receive care in their time of need.

To search the HEI, go to: [hrc.org/hei/search](https://hrc.org/hei/search)

## Why Participate?

- ✓ Learn best practices for LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion
- ✓ Provide patient-centered care to a long-overlooked group
- ✓ Take advantage of free online, on-demand staff training from expert sources that includes CME/CEU credits
- ✓ Enhance patient satisfaction ratings
- ✓ Ensure compliance with legal, CMS and The Joint Commission requirements
- ✓ Improve quality and safety
- ✓ Reduce risk of litigation, complaints and negative publicity
- ✓ Reach out to a highly loyal market segment
- ✓ Enjoy recognition for commitment to equity, inclusion & diversity from the nation's largest LGBTQ+ civil rights organization

## How to Participate

### What Organizations are Eligible?

The HEI is primarily intended for **inpatient facilities** that provide general medical and surgical care. However, specialty hospitals and **certain outpatient healthcare facilities** may request to participate in the HEI. Typically, a facility or organization must have **at least 100 employees to be eligible to participate**.

**Clinic organizations with multiple locations** such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQHC look-alikes, Planned Parenthood Affiliates and other similarly structured organizations are eligible to participate - however, they have special guidelines related to meeting the training criteria.

### To register to participate:

[thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/participation-request](https://thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/participation-request)

The survey period for the HEI 2026 will open in June 2025.

To download the full HEI 2024 report go to: [hrc.org/hei](https://hrc.org/hei)

Contact us: [hei@hrc.org](mailto:hei@hrc.org)

## OVER 1,000 ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS!

We continue to seek to be a part of HEI because the recognition holds us accountable to our mission to provide quality health care to all. We want to ensure that our services offer a safe environment that promotes compassionate and equitable services. It is also our responsibility as a community health center to stay abreast of issues surrounding the LGBTQ+ community to ensure that our services reduce health disparities and create access that results in improved health outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community.”

### Kerry Hydash

President & CEO  
Family HealthCare Network

I am proud that Children's Mercy sets an example for equitable healthcare. In an era when LGBTQ+ pediatric healthcare is too often politicized, it is essential that we continue to offer unwavering support and excellent care to our patients and their families.

### Michelle Wimes

SVP, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer  
Childrens Mercy Hospital and Clinics

The HEI brings tremendous value to our hospital — by giving us the tools and resources to promote our values to our patients, families and staff. We participate each year so that we can continue to improve care for LGBTQ patients, support our LGBTQ staff and strengthen our commitment to promoting diversity throughout Eastern State Hospital and UK HealthCare. We want our community to know that this is a safe and equal place to receive the hope and care that everyone deserves.

### Marc A. Woods, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer  
UK HealthCare-0Behavioral Health