

WHY THE LONG-TERM CARE EQUALITY INDEX?

DEMOGRAPHICS

Over 3 million Americans over the age of 50 identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+).¹ By 2030, studies project the population to reach 7 million.² While LGBTQ+ older people confront the same issues everyone else does when choosing aging services — where to live, how to afford rising costs of housing and healthcare, and how to stay connected to loved ones — the reality of life in long-term care for LGBTQ+ people can be drastically different from

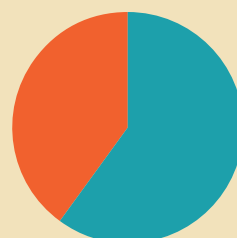
their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Stigmatization, lack of identity-affirming treatment and experiences of discrimination and violence can lead to avoiding necessary services, chronic stress and increased social isolation among LGBTQ+ older people. Additionally, approximately 20% of LGBTQ+ elders are people of color who as a group face increased health disparities, higher levels of stigma and have experienced more LGBTQ-related discrimination than their white counterparts, leaving them more at risk of not seeking or receiving the services they need.³

CONCERNS OF LGBTQ+ OLDER PEOPLE REGARDING LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORT

A recent national survey of LGBTQ+ older people by AARP found that more than 60 percent of those surveyed were concerned about how they would be treated in a long-term care setting, including fear that they might be refused or receive limited care; be in danger of neglect or abuse; face verbal or physical harassment; and have to hide or deny their identity once again.⁴ Many of today's LGBTQ+ elders, particularly those who have faced severe prejudice in their lives, have chosen to remain closeted to service providers. This in turn often leads to service providers that do not realize that they are serving LGBTQ+ individuals, so they don't take measures to make their facilities LGBTQ+ inclusive.

“WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS I WILL BE GOING INTO ASSISTED LIVING. DUE TO MY FINANCIAL SITUATION, I WILL HAVE TO SHARE A ROOM WITH ANOTHER MAN. THE THOUGHT OF GOING BACK INTO A CLOSET IS MAKING ME ILL. FRANKLY, I'M AFRAID OF TELLING ANYONE THAT I'M GAY.”

—Anonymous, 73 years old, Sylmar, CA



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of Older LGBTQ+ People
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THE LONG-TERM CARE EQUALITY INDEX (LEI)

SAGE, the world's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ older people, and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the nation's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for LGBTQ+ people, have joined to address these issues by launching the Long-Term Care Equality Index (LEI) to promote equitable and inclusive care for LGBTQ+ elders in residential long-term care and elder housing.

SAGE and HRC Foundation believe that most elder housing communities do not want LGBTQ+ older people to face discrimination or have to worry about the care that they will receive. But these communities may be unsure how to protect their LGBTQ+ residents from discrimination, provide them with optimal care and extend a warm welcome to allay their concerns. The LEI encourages and helps elder housing communities to adopt policies and best practices that provide culturally competent and responsive care to LGBTQ+ older people. More

than just an assessment, the LEI provides resources and technical assistance to bring these policies and practices to life.

An exploratory study by the HRC Foundation and SAGE revealed that there is great interest by aging-services providers to participate in the Long-term Care Equality Index initiative. Participating elder housing providers will benefit by:

- **Learning best practices for LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion;**
- **Access to quality training, education, and resources;**
- **Gaining assistance with meeting state and federal regulatory requirements, including the new CMS Phase III Requirements of Participation;**
- **Improved ability to develop culturally appropriate marketing for future clients, staff, and funders; and**
- **Public recognition as a leading provider of LGBTQ+ welcoming services.**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The LEI is intended for skilled nursing communities, assisted living communities, independent living communities, continuing care retirement/life plan

communities, memory care communities, free-standing hospice communities, and affordable senior housing communities. Housing organizations with multiple locations are eligible to participate. Interested communities can register at thelei.org/commitment-to-caring-pledge

A COMMITMENT TO LGBTQ+ INCLUSION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

“OUR LGBTQ RESIDENTS ARE GRATEFUL TO BE AFFIRMED IN THE MIDST OF THEIR COMMUNITY OF CARE AS THEY RECEIVE THE RESPECT AND SUPPORT FROM STAFF. WE HAVE ATTRACTED STAFF TO OUR ORGANIZATION, BOTH INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ AND ALLIES WHO PREFER TO WORK IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT.”

Rev. Beth Long-Higgins,

Vice President of Engagement

Director, Ruth Frost Parker Center for Abundant Aging
United Church Homes

A Long-Term Care Equality Index Participant



**Scan the QR Code
to receive the
Long-Term Care
Equality Index
2023 Report!**
(release May '23)

Learn more at [theLEI.org](https://thelei.org) ↗

- 1 Gallup. (2023). "Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity, by Generation, 2022" Gallup Poll Social Series.
- 2 SAGE & National Resource Center on LGBT Aging. (2021). Facts on LGBT Aging. Retrieved from <https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/sage-lgbt-aging-facts-final.pdf>
- 3 The Center for American Progress. (2021). Discrimination and Experiences Among LGBTQ People in the US: 2020 Survey Results. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-experiences-among-lgbtq-people-us-2020-survey-results/>
- 4 Houghton, A. (2018). Maintaining Dignity: A Survey of LGBT Adults Age 45 and Older. Washington, DC: AARP Research.