

Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing & Center on Halsted
Annual National LGBTQ Health Conference



Conference Report

May 2017

ISGMH & Center on Halsted host 5th Annual National LGBTQ Health Conference

Center on Halsted and Northwestern University's Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing were deeply pleased to host the 5th annual 2017 National LGBTQ Health Conference. As a Northwestern University-wide institute, ISGMH is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals and communities through multidisciplinary research, community engagement, and training. Center on Halsted is the Midwest's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and securing the health and wellbeing of SGM people of Chicagoland. SGM includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gender-non-conforming people—anyone whose sexual or gender identity does not conform to social majority categories of sexual orientation and gender.

Over 250 scientists, public health professionals, students, and healthcare providers braved the rain for the 5th Annual National LGBTQ Health Conference on April 28–30, 2017. The goal of the conference was to create a dialogue between researchers and practitioners and to foster professional development and networking opportunities. The conference focused on six themes, namely HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Adolescent Health, Violence and Trauma, Suicide and Mental Health, and Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and LGBTQ Health. Over a quarter of the attendees received travel scholarships meant to increase the participation in science by traditionally underrepresented groups, such as women, transgender and gender non-conforming people, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, among others.

Conference attendees enjoyed keynote addresses from Dr. Laura Kann, senior scientist and chief of the School-Based Surveillance Branch in the Division of Adolescent and School Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Ilan Meyer, Williams Distinguished Senior Scholar of Public Policy at the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy. Participants attended plenary sessions featuring Dr. Karen Parker, director of the National Institutes of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office, and Dr. Bianca Wilson, Rabbi Barbara Zacky Senior Scholar of Public Policy at the Williams Institute.



On Friday and Saturday, participants had the option of attending sessions on a wide range of topics, including “Contemporary Issues Around LGBTQ Adolescent Health,” “HIV Related Stress, Disclosure, and Prevention,” and “Trans and GNC Health & Well-Being.” Saturday's poster session featured more than 75 posters showcasing LGBTQ health topics from a wide variety of perspectives. Throughout the weekend, attendees used the hashtag #LGBTQHealthConf to post photos, pose questions, and share presentation takeaways.

In addition, early career professionals, scholars, and graduate students were invited to attend a Professional Development Institute that was hosted on Sunday at the Center on Halsted. Attendees chose to join the service track or research track for presentations, workshops, and lunch with industry experts, funded scholars, and National Institutes of Health program officers.

On Cover: Dr. Héctor Torres of Center on Halsted and Dr. Brian Mustanski of the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing welcoming participants to the conference.

We are pleased to share a quote from Dennis Li, PhD, MPH, a postdoctoral research fellow at ISGMH and a conference participant, who expressed what the conference meant to him.

“It is astonishing to see how much the National LGBTQ Health Conference has grown in just a year and a half. My first time attending was in October 2015. It was a small meeting compared to the massive American Public Health Association conference that immediately followed, but for a student like I was at the time, the impact was far greater. The diversity of topics that all focused on sexual and gender minority health opened my eyes to a lot more avenues of research and practice than I had previously been exposed to, and it was at that conference where the establishment of ISGMH was first announced.

Echoing my feelings from last time, this conference was especially beneficial for students and early-career professionals not only because of the specific emphasis on professional development but also because of the interdisciplinary nature of the theme. I enjoyed hearing perspectives from social work, medicine, basic sciences, public health, psychology, and queer and gender studies, which is often missing from our more field-specific meetings. For anyone looking to get into or cultivate research on sexual and gender minority health issues, if this conference isn’t on your radar already, it should be. I look forward to what new elements the National LGBTQ Health Conference will add in the future.”

Our Appreciation

ISGMH and Center on Halsted would like to thank conference speakers and volunteers, and the sponsors for their support in making this conference possible. ISGMH and Center on Halsted look forward to continuing to bridge research and practice in order to improve the health and wellbeing of sexual and gender minority communities.

The conference was sponsored by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, The Calamus Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Northwestern Medicine, Third Coast Center for AIDS Research, and Northwestern University’s Office of the Provost. Additional photos and the conference schedule will remain on the conference webpage at www.isgmh.northwestern.edu/conference.

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