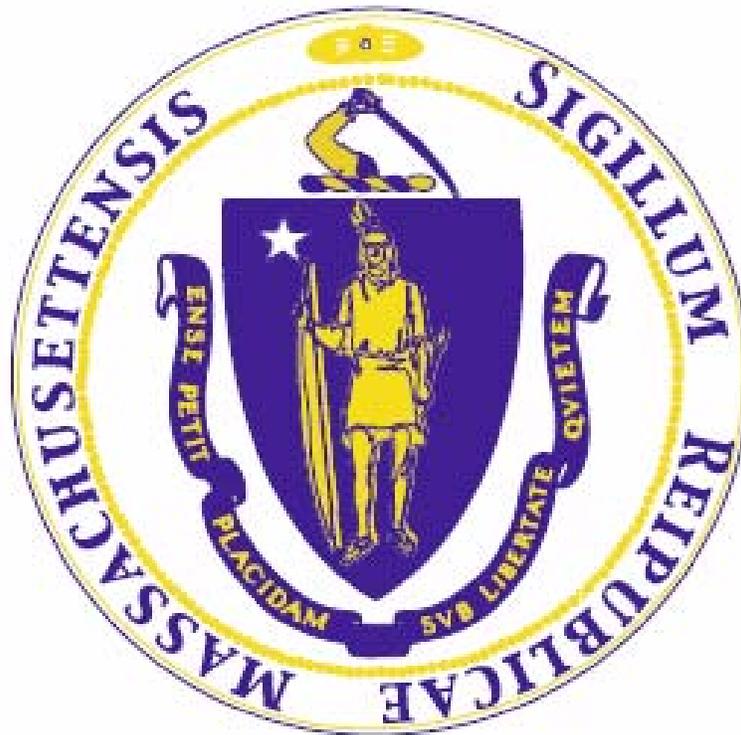


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth

Annual Report



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Letter from the Chair

2010 will mark the second year the new Massachusetts Legislative Commission on GLBT Youth has issued recommendations for policies that focus on GLBT youth and students.* 2009 has seen a severe economic downturn that works against our goal to stabilize and expand resources that support GLBT programs and services. Based on our experiences in this past year and as we move forward, the Commission will provide our larger vision as a context for these recommendations.

This is a turning point in addressing the health, safety and welfare of GLBT youth in the Commonwealth. The fight for same-sex marriage captured the public's attention for several years, ultimately securing a particular, fundamental right for GLBT people in Massachusetts. The pending "Act Related to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes" promises to extend protections against discrimination to include gender identity, a key step for securing legal protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Despite this progress, these rights and protective measures on their own cannot solve the complex health and safety issues that face the youth whose welfare is the focus of our work. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, as well as behavior, identity, and gender expression, is a key structural factor in many young people's lives. A deeply entrenched, toxic and discriminatory environment for GLBT youth manifests itself in varied ways.

This is why the Commission adopts a public health approach. The Commission believes and asserts that an approach rooted strongly in public health is the only way to address these systemic and pernicious barriers to population health. GLBT youth are a population that suffers poor health outcomes as a result of discrimination, harassment, violence, and suicide. Addressing this disparity should be a primary focus of all state violence and suicide prevention programs.

Within this public health framework, addressing health disparities based on race and ethnicity is also a key priority. This reflects standard, well-established national public health policy. It is based on widely accepted data and our lived experiences in the United States. It has been well-documented that youth of color experience worse health and safety outcomes than their white counterparts. Eliminating disparities based on race and ethnicity among GLBT youth is an integral part of good public health policy. The Commission expects and recommends that government funders will target programs and services working to eliminate disparities for GLBT youth of color as a primary goal.

The needs of transgender youth also warrant greater attention. This group's needs have gone unassessed, creating fundamental barriers to understanding and addressing them. The Commission believes this population experiences violence and homelessness with

* Note: This year, as we transition to a regular schedule of filing annual reports on January 15th and annual recommendations on June 2, we file our FY2010 recommendations as our annual report. A report on the results of our FY 2009 recommendations will be submitted January 15, 2010.

alarming high frequency, compelling us to better survey and meet their needs. Identifying, understanding and addressing the health and safety needs of transgender youth is another major goal of the Commission.

Furthermore, our young people are defining themselves and living lives that reflect the diversity of the people of the Commonwealth and even surpass the identity label “GLBT.” Current approaches and ideologies about these young people may create barriers to changing policy to improve their health and safety. In these recommendations, the Commission attempts to comprehensively describe the youth and students on whose behalf we work, beyond a traditional GLBT label that may fail to include all, especially the most vulnerable.

The Commission, seeing the dynamic changes that are underway, is working with its partners to adopt a five year vision of addressing these structural factors and creating a public health system that can adapt to and support our youth and students. This frankly means operating on a different level and in different ways than those on whose shoulders this Commission stands. The Commission values and appreciates the 40 year history of trailblazing GLBT youth work in Massachusetts, and the progress that our community activists, providers, government allies, and the former Governor’s Gay and Lesbian Youth Commission have made in Massachusetts. All who came before us, and those who continue to work with us today, would agree that GLBT youth need and deserve better. This requires challenging the status quo. This means changing how we do the work.

The Commission calls for structural changes in order to create population based improvement to GLBT health. Providing services to GLBT youth/students, but failing to address root causes and structural problems is not enough. Currently, the level and allocation of resources for GLBT youth work severely limit the capacity for structural impact. There needs to be a long-term strategy combined with adequate resources to address root causes and create structural change.

It also must be acknowledged that many programs that serve GLBT youth struggle with minimal, insufficient budgets that prevent them from operating as effective public health interventions and from offering comparable levels of service with other fully funded youth development programs. This situation, which is likely to worsen in the short term, is not the fault of youth providers, public or private funders, or community supporters; in fact, they deserve credit for efforts building and maintaining the GLBT youth services infrastructure that does exist, often in extremely hostile and challenging political and economic times, with few resources. At the same time, the Commission cannot be content with this situation, nor should any stakeholder; therefore we call on our appointing organizations, youth, students, educators, school administrators, Gay/Straight Alliance advisors, providers, parents, families, funders, and the community to persevere and increase their important work, making the case for critical, life-saving resources, especially given the heightened health risks GLBT youth and students face.

These aspirations also require formalizing our measures of program success, in line with good public health practice. Again, this is not to suggest that programs currently aren’t

doing good work. But to better meet the GLBT youth population needs, we must embrace a data-driven and dynamic process that can document program impact and value, as well as adapt to new situations as they arise. This is a significant shift in how the work of GLBT youth programs are measured that goes hand-in-hand with realizing GLBT youth programs as adequately funded public health interventions. In these recommendations we call for some short-term enhancements that can be accomplished at little or no cost.

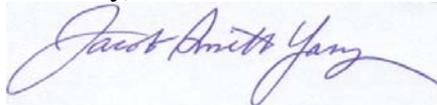
These recommendations seek to enhance and formalize collaborative and reporting relationships with the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The Commission appreciates each department's staff efforts to communicate and work with us, and looks forward to continuing this work.

This year and next do not appear to be times for expansion, given the economic downturn. Levels of state GLBT youth funding were modestly raised to \$550,000 at DPH and \$300,000 at DESE in FY 2009, only to see a \$150,000 9c cut to the DPH line item and a hiring freeze that prevented the hiring of a DESE Safe Schools Coordinator. While staff at each department have worked with the Commission to minimize the impact of these cuts and maintain services to GLBT youth, this has put stress on GLBT youth service infrastructures. This cannot, however, mean abandoning this work and these aspirations. If anything, it demands that we adhere to the long view and work to maintain and build the foundation so that we can be ready as the economy recovers. The Commission looks forward to using this time to move beyond historical identity-based silos and interest groups, as well as to engage in broader youth policy work that has important implications for GLBT youth.

A final, essential note: The Commission believes policy development must be transparent. Funding, evaluation and allocation decisions must be justifiable and based on evidence, public health policy and serious deliberation. For the Commission to accomplish its Legislative mandate, this requires that agencies work with us to take a coordinated and comprehensive view of the health and safety disparities impacting GLBT youth and students. Specifically, this means that within an agency, all GLBT youth/student programs must be considered together, and not fractured or limited by bureaucratic divisions such as appropriations, procurement or funding source/bureau.

We remain committed to respectful work with and within our community, with government and with other partners, and look forward to working together in common purpose through the Commission framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Smith Yang". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth

Use of Terms and Definitions

Youth/Students of Color

The Commission defines youth of color broadly, to include those groups that have a specific, racialized, and longstanding relationship to systems of racism in the United States. We also encourage the inclusion of groups of color with ethnic and cultural backgrounds which position them for experiences of racism.

When discussing GLBT youth/students as a population, it is important to recognize that youth/students of color may not fit or define themselves according to “commonsense” or prevailing definitions of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (Silenzio 2003, 867-871). When using the term GLBT, the Commission is referring to more than sexual identity per se.

Defining and measuring GLBT youth populations can be difficult with most instruments relying on sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, or a combination of the three. (Robin, Brener, Donahue, Hack and Goodenow 2002, 349-355) (Austin, Conron, Patel, and Freedner 2007, 55-65) While the Commission urges the continued use of the term “GLBT”, it recognizes that this term should not be read to suggest only youth/students identifying as GLBT, but also include youth/students who would be represented by broader measures such as orientation and same-sex sexual behavior. We believe that a broader understanding of this term takes into account the complexity of sexual identity development and allows for more culturally specific descriptions of populations than a reliance on identity alone. (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter 2008, 266-282) (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter 2004, 215-228) (Harper, Jernewall, and Zea 2004, 187-199).

Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Youth/Students

The Commission recommends the consistent use of as broad a definition of transgender as practicable. Gender norms are complexly influenced by broader cultural norms and those cultural norms affect self perception and perception by others. Additionally, transgender is a relatively new and rapidly evolving term, with no set standards for social science measurements and survey instruments. Because of these factors, we recommend that transgender should be defined to include both identity and behavioral measures around gender, including gender expression and identity closely attached to gender expression. This avoids what the Commission believes is a dangerous risk of excluding transgender youth/students of color and other gender non-conforming youth/students with the application of a narrower definition of transgender.

FY 2010 Commission Recommendations to the Massachusetts Great and General Court

1. Funding for GLBT Youth Programs in the FY 2010 Budget

The grave economic conditions the Commonwealth is experiencing, and corresponding sharp state revenue shortfalls, make the Commission's efforts to increase funding of GLBT youth programs particularly challenging this year. The current fiscal state has not, however, shaken our commitment to make the strong case for adequate resources that allow programs to meet the health, welfare and safety needs of this vulnerable population. In FY 2009, despite modest increases, community programs that do lifesaving work with GLBT youth still struggled with inadequate resources.

Recommendations

Given the economic context, the Commission's FY 2010 appropriations recommendation is for funding at the same levels as FY 2009. We note that these levels are not adequate to meet current GLBT youth needs, but would importantly maintain current service levels. For FY10, the Commission recommended that the Legislature approve:

1. Amendment to the Department of Public Health Line Item 4590-0250, to maintain level funding consistent with FY 2009 budget amount of \$550,000, with the proposed language:

“...provided that not less than \$550,000 shall be allocated for the commission on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (glbt) youth, and that no less than \$400,000 of this allocation be used to address the recommendations of said commission for reduction of health disparities for sexual minority youth, and that the department shall report to said commission its progress on January 1, 2010, and that no less than \$150,000 of this appropriation shall be expended for the administrative expenses of the commission on glbt youth...”

2. Amendment to the Department of Early and Secondary Education Line Item 7010-0005, to maintain level funding consistent with FY '09 budget amount of \$300,000, with the proposed language:

“...and provided, further, that the department, in collaboration with the commission on gay and lesbian youth established by section 67 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, shall allocate not less than \$300,000 for programming following the commission on gay and lesbian youth’s recommendations for the reduction of suicide, violence, and other health disparities for GLBT youth.”

To date, the Commission has worked with Legislators in both the Senate and House of Representatives on amendments to each body’s Ways and Means Committee budget to preserve GLBT youth funding. Concurrently, the Commonwealth’s financial projections for FY 2010 have worsened. The amendments, approved as of this date, allow for expenditures on GLBT youth services, but not at specified amounts. The amount of funding ultimately available for GLBT youth services is not clear, but likely to be at levels significantly lower than in FY 2009.

In the House, lead sponsors of GLBT youth amendments were Representative Carl Sciortino (DPH) and Representative Alice Wolf (DESE). In the Senate, lead sponsors were Senator Cynthia Stone Creem (DPH) and Senator Anthony Galluccio (DESE). We appreciate and thank them for their leadership on meeting GLBT youth needs.

Please see attached fact sheets regarding these recommendations.

2. Extending Anti-discrimination Protections to Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth

Transgender people in Massachusetts have reported losing their jobs, being harassed by landlords, feeling unsafe in their own schools and even being turned away from local emergency rooms. Passage of “An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes” in this legislative session is the top Commission legislative priority. This

measure has been re-introduced for the 2009 legislative session in the House by Representative Carl Sciortino and Representative Byron Rushing (House Bill No. 1728) and in the Senate by Senator Benjamin Downing. (Senate Bill No.1687). This bill will make explicit the Commonwealth's commitment to providing people of diverse gender identities and expressions equal protection under the law. It sends a clear message that everyone should be able to work, go to school, and live without fear in Massachusetts. Civil rights and formal equality are related to improved health outcomes (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009). The Commission has identified transgender youth as a priority population and urges strengthening of current Massachusetts law to protect this vulnerable group.

Recommendation

- A. The Commission strongly urges the Legislature to pass An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes (House Bill No.1728 /Senate Bill No.1687) this session.

Please see attached letters supporting An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes.

3. Supporting Effective Anti-Bullying Measures

The enactment of strong anti-bullying legislation is vital to protecting all youth in schools; GLBT youth, who are especially vulnerable, deserve clearly identified protection. The Commission has reviewed several pending Massachusetts anti-bullying measures and generated recommendations to legislators regarding any proposed measures.

Recommendations

- A. Enumerated categories are a key element in ensuring that the legislation will fully protect GLBT students. Enumeration of protected categories within the definition of bullying is essential. We strongly urge that enumeration be included in any

anti-bullying measure. “The strength of an enumerated law or policy is that it underscores not only that ALL students are protected, but also those students that research shows are most likely to be bullied and harassed and least likely to be protected by generic school laws and policies” (GLSEN. 2005). Absent this, we believe the measure cannot effectively address the needs of GLBT youth and problematically will preclude school-based efforts to do so. Sample language to be incorporated in a measure’s definition of bullying is provided below:

“Is reasonably perceived to be based on a student’s actual or perceived: race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, familial status, marital status, socioeconomic status, mental disability, physical disability, sensory disability, physical attribute or any other distinguishing characteristic.”

- B. The Commission also urges the incorporation of a process by which data on specific incidents of bullying toward individuals in protected groups shall be annually collected by each public school. This data would be reported to DESE and any other appropriate state agency for review, in order to track annual patterns and trends, so that they can be assessed and addressed.

- C. At minimum, any measure should establish state administrative consequences for a school or district’s failure to adhere to the legislation (GLSEN, 2007). The Commission urges the inclusion of sanction language that would make any district or school failing to comply with the measure’s terms ineligible to receive state funds.

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FY10 Commission Recommendations for DPH GLBT Youth Programming

In 2006, the Commission began making recommendations to the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as part of a long-term strategy to address the health needs of GLBT youth. The Commission's goals include: strengthening public health infrastructures; improving population outcomes by emphasizing improved evaluation and surveillance; and refocusing policy to address the needs of the most vulnerable GLBT youth—GLBT youth of color and transgender youth.

The Commission will incorporate these recommendations into its 2010 Annual Report, will publish the recommendations on its website, and will use them to evaluate programs and policies in FY2010.

Recognizing a need for regular communication and collaboration between the Departments and the Commission, we request verbal progress reports on all recommendations, to be shared with the Commission in quarterly meetings, reporting dates to be determined jointly by Department and the Commission. We also request written progress reports on a biannual basis, to be submitted to the Commission on March 1, 2010 (covering July 2009-December 2009) and September 1, 2010 (covering January 2010-June 2010). These additional written reports will be the key supporting evidence for our annual evaluation of programs and policies.

1. Eliminating Disparities Based on Race and Ethnicity for GLBT Youth

A primary goal of the Commission is to reduce the significant health disparities between GLBT youth of color and other GLBT youth. One in three residents of the United States self-identify as either African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, or multiracial. By 2050, this number is expected to increase to one in two. The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration definition of health disparities is: "population-specific differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to health care." In the U.S., health disparities are well documented in communities of color as compared to whites. Even when comparing groups of similar socioeconomic status, communities of color have higher incidences of chronic diseases, higher mortality, and poorer health outcomes. The evidence of racial/ethnic health disparities is well-established and compelling. Yet attention to racial/ethnic disparities has only increased modestly. It has also been suggested that lack of awareness that this problem exists, or misunderstanding the nature of the problem, can make it difficult to direct resources to address the problem (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008).

The intersection of race, sexual orientation, and gender expression creates unique challenges for GLBT youth of color. (Brown II, 2005; Gutierrez, 2004; McCready, 2004). For example:

- Discrimination based on sexual and gender identity or expression may be magnified by racism.
- Racism or ethnocentrism may prevent GLBT youth of color from accessing resources targeted at GLBT youth, generally.
- Communities or identities organized around race, ethnicity, or culture may provide a source of support or self-understanding of comparable value to identities organized around sexuality or gender.
- Complex cultural norms within communities of color, racism within predominantly white GLBT communities and the media, and racial and ethnic biases within the larger society regarding sexuality and gender may all shape how youth of color understand terms such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender; at what point in life youth of color come to identity with those terms, if at all; and the values youth of color place upon sexual identity and gender identity or expression.

The Commission encourages the definition of youth of color to be construed broadly to include those groups that have a specific, racialized, and longstanding relationship to systems of racism in the United States. It also encourages the inclusion of groups of color with ethnic and cultural backgrounds which position them for experiences of racism. However, while racism may drive health disparities, we believe that interventions targeting GLBT youth of color must be developed based on and responding to ethnicity and cultural background, not race.

While health disparities likely flow from structural racism, interventions should be targeted by ethnicity taking into account other measures of relative health burdens within populations. For example, if the DPH becomes aware of a health disparity among African Americans, the Commission recommends that the Department investigate where the disparity is most pronounced and if there is an overlay of ethnicity and target appropriately—a program would not be the same for a multi-generational African American youth and a second generation Somali youth even though both may experience the effects of structural inequity based on race. Effective targeting of youth of color takes into account multiple contextual factors—availability of primary care, access to health care centers, etc.

Defining and measuring GLBT youth populations can be difficult with most instruments relying on sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, or combinations of the three. (Robin, Brener, Donahue, Hack, Hale, and Goodenow, 2002, 349-355; Austin, Conron, Patel, and Freedner, 2007, 55-65) Although the Commission embraces the term “GLBT youth,” it recognizes that this term should not be read only as youth who identify as GLBT, but also include youth who would be represented by broader measures, such as same-sex attraction and behavior and gender expression. Taking into account the complexity of sexual identity development allows for more culturally specific descriptions of populations than a reliance on identity alone. (Rosario, Schrimshaw and

Hunter 2008, 266-282; Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter 2004, 215-228; Harper, Jernewall, and Zea 2004, 187-199).

When discussing GLBT youth as a population, it is also important to recognize that youth of color may not fit or define themselves according to simplistic or prevailing definitions of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. (Silenzio 2003, 867-871)

The Commission encourages the Department to consider racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression as intersecting realities for GLBT youth of color. The identity matrices of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression cannot be separated into mutually exclusive categories (Collins, 2004).

Recommendations

- A. Youth of color should be a primary focus of Department GLBT youth programming.
- B. Establish new targeted criteria for funding future programs that identify and address GLBT youth of color experiencing the greatest health disparities, based on race and ethnicity.
- C. Ensure that funded programs demonstrate cultural competency in the design and provision of services and programs. Interventions targeting GLBT youth of color must be developed based on and responding to ethnicity and cultural background.

2. Addressing Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth Needs

Transgender is a relatively new and rapidly evolving term, with no set standards for social science measurements and survey instruments. Gender norms are complexly influenced by broader cultural norms and those cultural norms affect self-perception and perception by others. Transgender should be defined as broadly as possible to include both identity and behavioral measures around gender, including gender expression, and identity closely attached to gender expression. This broadened definition will also

minimize the risk of the exclusion of transgender youth of color through narrow characterizations of transgender. Again, the Commission encourages the Department to consider racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression as intersecting realities for GLBT youth of color. The identity matrices of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression cannot be separated into mutually exclusive categories (Collins, 2004).

Transgender youth have not been effectively measured because this population has not been previously included in surveillance efforts. Based on anecdotal information from school staff and providers, the Commission believes that this population experiences alarmingly high instances of discrimination, harassment, physical threats, violence and homelessness. Attempting to measure the level of violence transgender youth face is further complicated by the reality that this population does not have the legal protections afforded other members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. It is therefore likely that discrimination and violence against transgender and gender non-conforming youth is underreported. Addressing these disparities is another major goal of the Commission.

Recommendations

- A. Ensure that transgender youth are a strong focus of Department activities.
- B. Establish new, targeted criteria for funding future programs that identify and address transgender youth experiencing the highest levels of discrimination, physical harassment, violence, and homelessness, particularly transgender youth of color.
- C. Ensure that funded programs demonstrate competency in working with transgender youth in the design and provision of services and programs.

3. Surveillance

The Department has been a national leader in gathering and analyzing data related to GLBT students. However, the overall data resulting from past and current surveillance of

GLBT youth populations is limited. The Department, working with the Commission, should make effective surveillance of GLBT youth populations a priority.

Public health systems cannot achieve their goal—improved population health—without a clear and reliable assessment of public health problems. Lack of data is a fundamental problem in addressing the health needs of GLBT youth. Comprehensive surveillance is essential to identify disparities and guide program development to target populations with the greatest need. The limitations of current surveillance, including an inability to measure needs related to transgender youth, is problematic.

Recommendations

- A. Develop and consistently use as broad a definition of transgender as practicable.
- B. Ensure transgender youth populations are measured.
- C. Use multiple measures to identify GLBT youth.
- D. Ensure that GLBT youth are measured in every setting, not only school settings.
- E. Include both race and ethnicity measures in data collection.
- F. Investigate the use of existing data sources, including digital sources (Brownstein, Freifeld and Madoff 2009), for surveillance.
- G. Maintain privacy of GLBT youth; ensure all surveillance is HIPAA compliant.
- H. Develop partnerships with other EOHHS departments to ensure consistency when aggregating data.
- I. Dedicate research and staff resources to improving data collection and surveillance.

4. Homelessness

Homelessness is a serious issue for GLBT youth; further data are needed to clarify the current scope of the problem so that we can begin to address solutions. It is critical that services and programs addressing this issue do so with a focus on the needs of youth of color and the needs of gender non-conforming youth. The Commission and DPH should work in conjunction or coordination with the state agencies charged with responding to

homelessness—the Departments of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and Housing and Community Development (DHCD), as well as the Interagency Council on Homelessness—to assure that GLBT youth homelessness is addressed.

Recommendations

- A. Identify the scope and severity of the problem of homelessness in GLBT youth populations, particularly youth of color and gender nonconforming youth.
- B. Develop a plan to include this issue in ongoing Department efforts to improve public health surveillance of GLBT populations.
- C. Create a plan to ensure services meet the needs of GLBT homeless youth, specifically youth of color and gender non-conforming youth, over the next 3-5 years.

5. Currently Funded Programs

Safe Spaces for GLBT Youth is a DPH program committed to providing opportunities for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth to develop their full potential in a safe and supportive environment.

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Group Network of Massachusetts is a DPH-funded, statewide support and development partnership of community-based direct service organizations which exist to ensure that “queer and questioning” youth from the Commonwealth have access to a broad array of supports, services and opportunities.

Recommendations

- A. Designate a DPH contact for communication, collaboration and reporting regarding The GLBT Youth Group Network of Massachusetts.
- B. Describe and cite the youth development models that are serving as the bases for the Safe Spaces and GLBT Youth Group Network programs.

- C. Work with a capacity builder to provide funded programs with technical assistance and training relating to evaluating program impacts and effective and faithful implementation of youth development model programs.
- D. Develop and institute evaluation protocols to measure impact of currently funded programs, with breakdowns on impacts based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and transgender/gender expression.
- E. Incorporate programs into a comprehensive public health strategy to prevent violence.
- F. As any changes in funding or opportunity to renegotiate scope or other terms of grants and contracts arise, including any decision to extend, apply the following prioritized order to resource allocation:
 - i. to those programs targeting transgender youth of color
 - ii. to those programs targeting GLBT youth of color
 - iii. to those programs targeting transgender youth generally
 - iv. to other funded GLBT youth programs

The Department will then provide its rationale for funding decisions related to these Commission priorities.

6. Commission Administration

The work of the Commission is key to securing and maintaining GLBT youth resources. Recommendations and annual reporting from the Commission guide the Commonwealth's efforts to meet the needs of GLBT youth. The Commission looks to build a strong infrastructure for GLBT service provision and address structural factors that compromise the health and safety of GLBT youth in Massachusetts. Commissioners are unpaid volunteers; the critical work of this commission cannot be achieved without staffing and funds to cover training and basic expenses.

Recommendations:

Support Commission Administration, including:

- A. Provide non-employee consultant expenses for a full-time executive director and part-time administrative assistant.
- B. Cover costs of mandatory full commission meetings, including, but not limited to: security; rental costs; meeting materials; travel costs for staff and commissioners; expenses related to set-up and logistics of all mandatory meetings; software subscriptions for Commission mandatory meeting-related communication; honoraria for Commission presenters and speakers; and postage and delivery of meeting-related materials.
- C. Cover costs of three trainings per year for commissioners.

Other expenses for administering the Commission are not included. Financial management/bookkeeping, office space, utilities, occasional office supplies, and various other minor expenses incurred by staff, would continue to be generously provided without charge by the Department. The Commission is grateful for this support.

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FY10 Commission Recommendations for DESE GLBT Student Programming

In 2006, the Commission began making recommendations to the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as part of a long-term strategy to address the health and safety needs of GLBT students. The Commission's goals include: strengthening public health infrastructures; improving population outcomes by emphasizing improved evaluation and surveillance; and refocusing policy to address the needs of the most vulnerable GLBT students—GLBT students of color and transgender students.

The Commission will incorporate these recommendations into its 2010 Annual Report, will publish the recommendations on its website, and will use them to evaluate programs and policies in FY2010.

Recognizing a need for regular communication and collaboration between the Departments and the Commission, we request verbal progress reports on all recommendations, to be shared with the Commission in quarterly meetings, reporting dates to be determined jointly by Department and the Commission. We also request written progress reports on a biannual basis, to be submitted to the Commission on March 1, 2010 (covering July 2009-December 2009) and September 1, 2010 (covering January 2010-June 2010). These additional written reports will be the key supporting evidence for our annual evaluation of programs and policies.

1. Eliminating Disparities Based on Race and Ethnicity for GLBT Students

A primary goal of the Commission is to reduce the significant health disparities between GLBT students of color and other GLBT students. One in three residents of the United States self-identify as either African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, or multiracial. By 2050, this number

is expected to increase to one in two. The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration definition of health disparities is: "population-specific differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to health care." In the U.S. health disparities are well documented in communities of color as compared to whites. Even when comparing groups of similar socioeconomic status, communities of color have higher incidences of chronic diseases, higher mortality, and poorer health outcomes. The evidence of racial/ethnic health disparities is well-established and compelling. Yet attention to racial/ethnic disparities has only increased modestly. It has also been suggested that lack of awareness that this problem exists, or misunderstanding the nature of the problem, can make it difficult to direct resources to address the problem (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008).

The intersection of race, sexual orientation, and gender expression creates unique challenges for GLBT students of color. (Brown II, 2005; Gutierrez, 2004; McCready, 2004). For example:

- Discrimination based on sexual and gender identity or expression may be magnified by racism.
- Racism or ethnocentrism may prevent GLBT students of color from accessing resources targeted at GLBT students, generally.
- Communities or identities organized around race, ethnicity, or culture may provide a source of support or self-understanding of comparable value to identities organized around sexuality or gender.
- Complex cultural norms within communities of color, racism within predominantly white GLBT communities and the media, and racial and ethnic biases within the larger society regarding sexuality and gender may all shape how youth of color understand terms such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender; at what point in life students of color come to identify with those terms, if at all; and the values students of color place upon sexual identity and gender identity or expression.

The Commission encourages the definition of students of color to be construed broadly to include those groups that have a specific, racialized, and longstanding relationship to systems of racism in the United States. It also encourages the inclusion of groups of color with ethnic and cultural backgrounds which position them for experiences of racism. However, while racism may drive health disparities, we believe that interventions targeting GLBT students of color must be developed based on and responding to ethnicity and cultural background, not race.

While health disparities likely flow from structural racism, interventions should be targeted by ethnicity taking into account other measures of relative health burdens within populations. For example, if DESE becomes aware of a health disparity among African Americans, the Commission recommends that the Department should investigate where the disparity is most pronounced, if there is an overlay of ethnicity, and target appropriately—a program would not be the same for a multi-generational African American student and a second generation Somali student even though both may experience the effects of structural inequity based on race. Effective targeting of students of color takes into account multiple contextual factors—availability of primary care, access to health care centers, etc.

Defining and measuring GLBT youth populations can be difficult with most instruments relying on sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, or combinations of the three. (Robin Brener, Donahue, Hack, Hale, and Goodenow 2002, 349-355; Austin Conron, Patel, and Freedner 2007, 55-65) Although the Commission embraces the term “GLBT students,” it recognizes that this term should not be read only as students who identify as GLBT but also include students who would be represented by broader measures such as same-sex attraction and behavior. Taking into account the complexity of sexual identity development allows for more culturally specific descriptions of populations than a reliance on identity alone. (Rosario Schrimshaw, and Hunter 2008, 266-282; Rosario et al 2004, 215-228; Harper Jernewall, and Zea 2004, 187-199).

When discussing GLBT students as a population, it is also important to recognize that students of color may not fit or define themselves according to simplistic or prevailing definitions of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. (Silenzio 2003, 867-871)

The Commission encourages the Department to consider racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression as intersecting realities for GLBT students of color. The identity matrix of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression cannot be separated into mutually exclusive categories (Collins, 2004).

Recommendations

- A. Make students of color a primary focus of Department GLBT student programming.
- B. Establish new targeted criteria for funding future programs that identify and address GLBT students of color experiencing the greatest health disparities based on race and ethnicity.
- C. Ensure that funded programs demonstrate cultural competency in the design and provision of services and programs. Develop interventions targeting GLBT students of color based on and responding to ethnicity and cultural background.

2. Addressing Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Student Needs

Transgender is a relatively new and rapidly evolving term, with no set standards for social science measurements and survey instruments. Gender norms are complexly influenced by broader cultural norms and those cultural norms affect self-perception and perception by others. Transgender should be defined as broadly as possible to include both identity and behavioral measures around gender, including gender expression, and identity closely attached to gender expression. This broadened definition will also minimize the risk of the exclusion of transgender students of color through narrow

characterizations of transgender. Again, the Commission encourages the Department to consider racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression as intersecting realities for GLBT students of color. The identity matrices of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression cannot be separated into mutually exclusive categories (Collins, 2004).

Transgender students have not been effectively measured because this population has not been previously included in surveillance efforts. Based on anecdotal information from school staff and providers, the Commission believes that this population experiences alarmingly high instances of discrimination, harassment, physical threats, violence and homelessness. Attempting to measure the level of violence transgender students face is further complicated by the reality that this population does not have the legal protections afforded other members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. It is therefore likely that discrimination and violence against transgender and gender non-conforming students is underreported. Addressing these disparities is another major goal of the Commission.

Recommendations

- A. Ensure that transgender students a strong focus of Department activities.
- B. Establish new, targeted criteria for funding future programs that identify and address transgender students experiencing the highest levels of discrimination, physical harassment, violence, and homelessness, particularly transgender youth of color.
- C. Ensure that funded programs demonstrate competency in working with transgender students in the design and provision of services and programs.

3. Surveillance

The Department has been a national leader in gathering and analyzing data related to GLBT students. However, the overall data resulting from past and current surveillance of

GLBT student populations is limited. The Commission is committed to, working with the Department to make effective surveillance of GLBT student populations a priority.

Public health systems cannot achieve their goal—improved population health—without a clear and reliable assessment of public health problems. Lack of data is a fundamental problem in addressing the health and safety needs of GLBT students. Comprehensive surveillance is essential to identify disparities and guide program development to target populations with the greatest need. The limitations of current surveillance, including an inability to measure needs related to transgender students, is problematic.

Recommendations

- A. Ensure that data on sexual minority status, race and ethnicity are included and broken out in every report of the YRBS. Publish this data bi-annually so it is accessible to the public.
- B. Continue to work with the Department of Public Health on surveillance issues based on the Commission’s recommendations to DPH on surveillance (C-K below) which are also directed to DESE.
- C. Develop and consistently use as broad a definition of transgender as practicable.
- D. Ensure transgender youth populations are measured.
- E. Use multiple measures to identify GLBT youth.
- F. Ensure that GLBT youth are measured in every setting, not only school settings.
- G. Include both race and ethnicity measures in data collection.
- H. Investigate the use of existing data sources, including digital sources (Brownstein, Freifeld, and Madoff 2009), for surveillance.
- I. Maintain privacy of GLBT youth; ensure all surveillance is HIPAA compliant.
- J. Develop partnerships with other EOHHS departments to ensure consistency when aggregating data.
- K. Dedicate research and staff resources to improving data collection and surveillance.

4. Expand Scope of Programs Beyond Limited Focus on Suicide and Violence

The mandate of the Commission is to examine every avenue to ensure the overall health and safety of GLBT youth and students in the Commonwealth. Public school students comprise a majority of that population; schools are a primary intervention point for GLBT student issues.

The appropriation has been limited by DESE to issues of violence and suicide in past years, but the Commission finds compelling reasons to expand the focus. This is particularly the case as we consider that health disparities between GLBT students and non-GLBT students have remained constant and troubling in such categories as substance use and sexual activity (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1996-2008). Health disparities between GLBT students of color and white GLBT students are also a key issue. This narrow interpretation and restriction significantly compromises comprehensive efforts to meet the needs of at-risk GLBT students.

Recommendation

- A. Expand the scope of funded activities to include not only suicide and violence, but all of the health needs of GLBT students, including those related to substance use and sexual activity.

5. Expand Scope of Programs to Include Elementary and Middle Schools

At the elementary school level, GLBT-related problems manifest themselves in gender stereotyping, name-calling, and bullying. (Renold, 2002). Sometimes the targets of aggression are the children of same-sex couples (Rivers, Poteat, and Noret, 2008).

Analysis of a recent national poll of middle school students observed, “77% of respondents report that students in their schools have a negative attitude toward people

who are or are thought to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual, suggesting that educators need to protect this vulnerable group of students” (National Association of Secondary School Principals 2007).

Middle schools in Massachusetts do not currently participate in the YRBS as administered by the DESE. However, research indicates that homophobic victimization takes a serious toll, even at middle school level ages (Poteat and Espelage, 2007; Rivers and Cowie 2006).

Recommendation

- A. Include elementary and middle schools in the Safe Schools Program as a necessary context and foundation for effective prevention work. (See next section.)

6. Safe Schools Program

The Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students was founded in 1993 by DESE and the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, responding to evidence indicating increased levels of suicidality and other risk behaviors among gay and lesbian students. This program provides a range of services designed to help schools implement Chapter 76, Section 5 (the *Massachusetts Student Anti-Discrimination Law*), the State Board of Education's *Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students*, and the *Access to Equal Educational Opportunity Regulations* (603 CMR 26.00). The Safe Schools Program has a mandate to increase school safety and prevent suicide and violence related to gay and lesbian students, but the omission of “bisexual” and “transgender” students compromises its scope and impact in meeting the pressing and related needs of all GLBT students.

Recommendations

- A. Hire a full-time coordinator for the Safe Schools Program by Sept. 1, 2009. The Safe Schools Program Coordinator develops policy recommendations to improve program design and evaluation.

- B. Focus on the needs of GLBT students of color. This may include staff training, grants or other initiatives. As any changes in funding or opportunity to renegotiate scope or other terms of grants and contracts arise, including any decision to extend, apply the following prioritized order to resource allocation:
- v. to those programs targeting transgender youth of color
 - vi. to those programs targeting GLBT youth of color
 - vii. to those programs targeting transgender youth generally
 - viii. to other funded GLBT youth programs

The Department will then provide its rationale for funding decisions related to these Commission priorities.

- C. Generate information and evaluation to better identify and meet the needs of GLBT students. Delineate the criteria by which the Department measures and evaluates outcomes of Safe Schools programs by October 30, 2009. Ensure inclusion of racial, ethnic, and gender identity data.
- D. Identify Populations: Determine what populations are being served by GSAs and which populations are being left out in the GSA approach to GLBT student support, with special focus on racial and ethnic disparities by Jan. 31, 2010,.
- E. Ensure Diversity: Ensure that a diverse spectrum of GLBT students are offered support as GLBT adolescents in the context of school groups and programs that traditionally focus on race and ethnicity by June 30, 2010.
- F. Advisor Sexuality Training: Ensure that GSA and other group advisors are adequately trained and mentored on issues of sexuality and gender identity/expression by June 30, 2010.
- G. GSA Directory: Establish a reliable directory of GSAs and other relevant groups or programs and their advisors, as well as communications technology (i.e. a listserv) to support their work by November 15, 2009.

7. Explicit Inclusion of Bisexual and Transgender Students

Historically, the Department officially referred to “gay and lesbian students,” irrespective of the fact that bisexual and transgender students have always been a part of the target

population. This exclusion compromises efforts to address the full range of needs and issues facing the GLBT student populations of the Commonwealth.

Recommendation

- A. Ensure the addition of the terms “bisexual” and “transgender” in all mention of “gay and lesbian” by the DESE, including, but not limited to curricula, regulations, grant opportunities, and training documents by Sept. 1, 2009

FY 2010 Commission Recommendations for DESE in conjunction with the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Although the Commonwealth added “sexual orientation” to M.G.L. c. 76 § 5 in 1993, the Board of Education retreated from this pioneering effort with delayed implementation of regulatory protection and limited language. In 2000, when the Board of Education added “sexual orientation” to 603 C.M.R. 26.00 et. seq., it removed all robust protections from the regulatory language. The 2000 regulatory changes in the curricula regulation (26.05) switched from language requiring schools to “present in fair perspective the culture, history, and contributions of persons and groups” to the current language, “[a]ll public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for human and civil rights of all individuals... .” Additionally, regulations concerning active efforts and complaint procedures were completely rewritten in 2000. The current regulations, which only require compliance with state and federal non-discrimination law, are much more limited than the earlier regulations.

While the 2000 Board of Education had initially proposed and nearly passed a more comprehensive regulatory scheme, it then changed the language in the end to more formalistic protections that are now in place. The regulations originally proposed required teachers to “counteract” stereotypes based on sexual orientation in classroom materials

but were changed to require “balance” and “context.” Prior regulations had required teachers to review materials for sex-role and racial group stereotyping and counteract that stereotyping through materials that depicted individuals in positive and counter-stereotypical roles. Concerned that such affirmative regulatory language would “undermine the moral and religious training [children] receive at home” the Board of Education limited the language (Moynihan, 2000). The resistance to affirming different sexual identities and orientations led to fewer regulatory protections for individuals on the basis of sex and race. Ultimately, though promulgated to protect students identified or perceived as gay and lesbians from harassment and stereotyping, the regulations in their limited form provide few affirmative protections for any students.

When the Board of Education added “sexual orientation” to 603 C.M.R. 26.00 et. seq. in 2000, they removed all robust protections from the regulatory language. Moving forward, it is imperative to re-establish affirmative DESE protections and obligations. In addition to revisiting the 2000 regulatory change, additional mechanisms include the Curriculum Frameworks and Teacher Licensure Standards.

1. Access to Equal Opportunity Regulations

Recommendation

- A. The Commission will work with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to revise the Access to Equal Opportunity regulations, 603 C.M.R. 26.00 et. seq. and/or create new regulations that comprehensively protect and affirm students based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (in addition to other protected categories, per state law).

2. Curriculum Frameworks

Curriculum Frameworks are an important way that appropriate GLBT content may be integrated into learning. They hold great promise for shifting the hostile environments facing GLBT students in schools and classrooms.

In 1995, the Social Studies Frameworks committee recommended to the Board that students analyze the “individual and cultural components of identity,” including sexual orientation. Regrettably, the entire identity proposal was rejected by the Board of Education. Currently, only the Health Framework includes references to sexual orientation and GLBT-related content (Massachusetts Dept. of Education, 1999)

Recommendation

- A. Review both the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks in all subject areas to ensure adequate inclusion of GLBT-related content, with emphasis on topics of race, ethnicity, and gender identity and expression within the GLBT community. Consult with members of the Commission before public hearings are held on any set of Frameworks, beginning with the Language Arts Frameworks in 2009.

3. *Teacher Licensure Standards*

In 1994, the Board of Education reformed their certification standards. Equity competencies then required that a teacher master “effective strategies within the classroom and other school settings to address discrimination based on each student’s race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic class, or disability” (*Competencies for Certified Educators*, 1995 Massachusetts Dept. of Education Certification Regulations, 7.11.). They also stipulated that a qualified administrator “accepts and respects individual and group differences with regard to gender, language, race, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic background, and values.”

Because of this categorically enumerated language, sexual orientation was interpolated into related certification provisions regarding current equity issues for students and their equal treatment, freedom of expression, self-esteem, unique developmental and cultural needs, and family backgrounds.

In 2000 the Board of education revised the standards to eliminate all enumerated multicultural equity criteria, substituting language that stresses academic rigor and

collective citizenship. (e.g., "[The certifiable teacher] encourages all students to believe that effort is a key to achievement." "Helps all students to understand American civic culture, its underlying ideals, founding political principles and political institutions, and to see themselves as members of a local, state, national, and international civic community" (603 CMR 7.08, sec. 2d).

Recommendation

- A. Ensure that DESE licensure standards (esp., 603 CMR 7.08, *(c) Manages Classroom Climate and Operation and (d) Promotes Equity*) protect the welfare of all GLBT students as explicitly addressed in an elaborated nexus of racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

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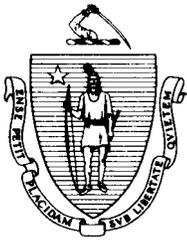
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth
 Administrative Office
 c/o MA DPH - 250 Washington Street – 3rd floor, Boston MA 02108
 (617) 624-5495 www.mass.gov/cgly

FY10 Budget * DPH line Item 4950-0250

Request:

Co-sponsor Rep. Sciortino’s amendment to DPH line item 4950-0250.

Contact Rep. Sciortino’s office: 722-2400 or Daniel.Glasser@state.ma.us or the State Clerk.

Line-item language: “provided further, that not less than \$550,000 shall be expended for the commission on gay and lesbian youth;”
 and by striking from the item the figure “\$13,415,743” and replacing it with the figure “\$13,965,743”.

The amendment funds GLBT community-based programs and services at \$550,000.

NEED: Both in and out of schools, GLBT youth are at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts than school-age peers. GLBT youth, especially youth of color, are at high risk for violence and weapons threats. Those who are forced from their homes, because of sexual orientation, end up on the street or in homeless shelters, hostile environments for GLBT Youth.

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH:

FACT: It is estimated that 30% of all youth suicides are GLB youth.

GLB youth are 2-3 times more likely than heterosexual youth to make a specific plan for suicide and four times as likely to have made a suicide attempt in the past year. *Source: MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey*

FACT: GLBT youth and youth of color experience much higher rates of physical violence.

Up to 46 percent of GLBT youth of color report experiencing physical violence related to their sexual orientation. Nearly 45 percent of youth of color were verbally harassed in school regarding sexual orientation and race/ethnicity. GLB youth are 4 times more likely to be threatened with a weapon by peers. *Source: The National School Climate Survey*

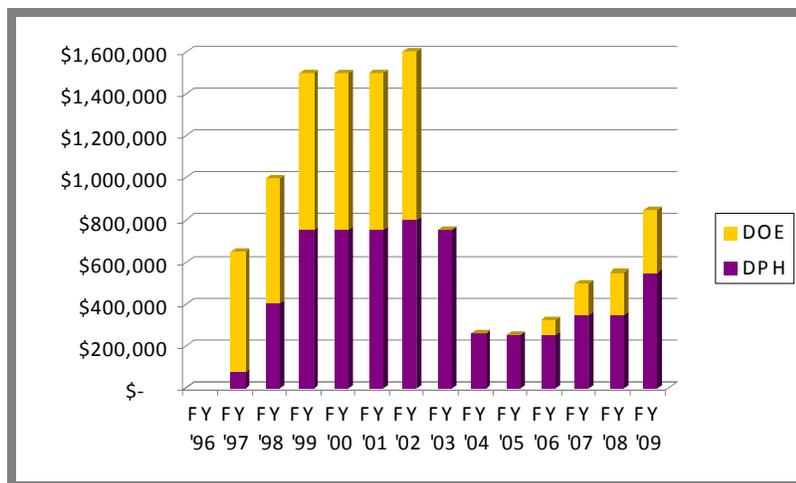
FACT: 1 in 4 GLBT youth are forced from their homes when they come out to their families.

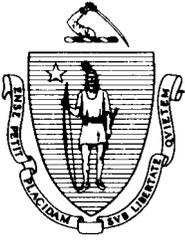
In one study, 26 % of gay teens who came out to their parents/guardians were told they must leave home; studies have also found that family violence follows a young person’s disclosure to parents. It is estimated that up to 42% of Massachusetts homeless youth identify as GLBT; 150-300 GLBT youth seek shelter in Boston alone.

Source: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

FY2010 Funding for DPH GLBT youth programs and services (\$550,000) will:

- 1) Provide a targeted GLBT violence prevention curriculum for use by skilled trainers.
- 2) Develop evidence-based models to address homelessness for GLBT youth.
- 3) Expand community programs for GLBT youth support across all regions of the state.





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FY10 Budget * MA Commission on GLBT Youth

Request: Co-Sponsor Sen. Creem’s Amendment #494 to support the GLBT Youth Commission

DPH Line Item 4950-0250: "provided further that funds shall be expended for the support of the commission on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth, and shall be used to address the recommendations of said commission for reduction of health disparities for GLBT youth."

NEED:

- Environmental factors put GLBT youth at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts.
- GLBT youth of color are at high risk for violence and weapons threats.
- Youth forced from their homes because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity often end up on the street or in Massachusetts homeless shelters, which are hostile environments for GLBT Youth.

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH:

FACT: It is estimated that 30% of all youth suicides are GLB youth.

GLB youth are 2-3 times more likely to make a plan for suicide; 4 times as likely to make suicide attempts in the past year.
Source: MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

FACT: GLBT youth, especially youth of color, experience much higher rates of physical violence.

46% of GLBT youth of color report experiencing physical violence related to their sexual orientation. Nearly 45% of youth of color were verbally harassed or threatened with weapons in school, regarding their sexual orientation.
Source: The National School Climate Survey

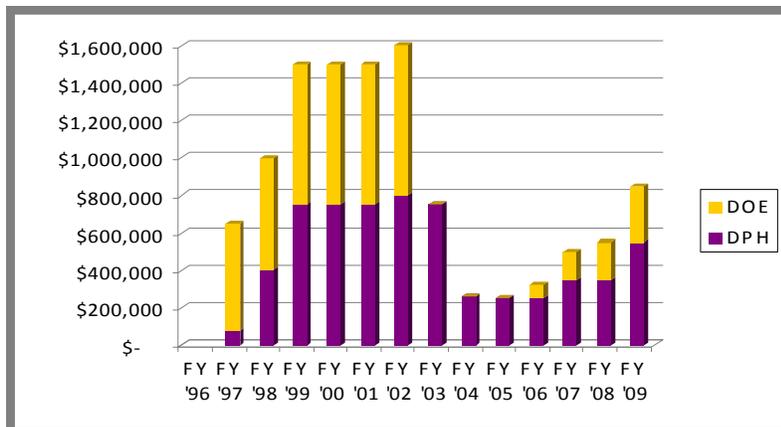
FACT: 1 in 4 GLBT youth are forced from their homes when they come out to their families.

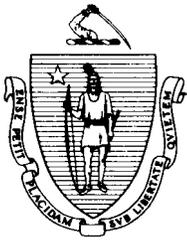
26% of gay teens who came out to their parents or guardians were told to leave home; violence often follows this disclosure. Up to 42% of MA homeless youth identify as GLBT; those identifying as transgender are at highest risk.
Source: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

FY2010 DPH GLBT youth programs and services will:

- 1) Develop a targeted GLBT violence prevention curriculum for use by skilled trainers.
- 2) Study and pilot evidence-based models that address homelessness for GLBT youth.
- 3) Expand community programs for GLBT youth support across all regions of the state.
- 4) Provide peer leadership and mentoring training for GLBT youth support.

Historical Funding Levels for DESE and DPH GLBT Youth Funding:





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth
 Administrative Office
 c/o MA DPH - 250 Washington Street – 3rd floor, Boston MA 02108
 (617) 624-5495 www.mass.gov/cgly

FY10 Budget * DESE line Item 7010-0005

Request:

Co-sponsor Rep. Wolf’s amendment to DOE line item 7010-0005.

Contact Rep. Wolf’s office: 722-2810 or Kathleen.Hornby@state.ma.us

Line-item language: “provided, that the department, in collaboration with the commission on gay and lesbian youth established by section 67 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, shall allocate not less than \$270,000 for programming following the commission on gay and lesbian youth’s recommendations for the reduction of suicide, violence, and other health disparities for sexual minority youth”.

The amendment sets funding for GLBT Safe Schools programs at \$270,000.

NEED: An epidemic of Anti-LGBT Harassment & Violence in MA schools creates a hostile culture for GLBT youth. Both in and out of schools, GLBT youth are at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts and violence than their peers.

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH:

FACT: GLBT Youth of Color experience a much higher rate of physical violence.

Up to 46 percent of GLBT youth of color report physical violence related to their sexual orientation. GLBT youth of color are 3 times more likely to be injured in physical fights at school. *Source: 1999-2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey*

FACT: GLB Youth are 4 times more likely to miss school than their heterosexual peers.**

Nearly 45 percent of youth of color were verbally harassed in school regarding sexual orientation and race/ethnicity.

FACT: 92% of students surveyed hear anti-GLBT slurs frequently or often in school.**

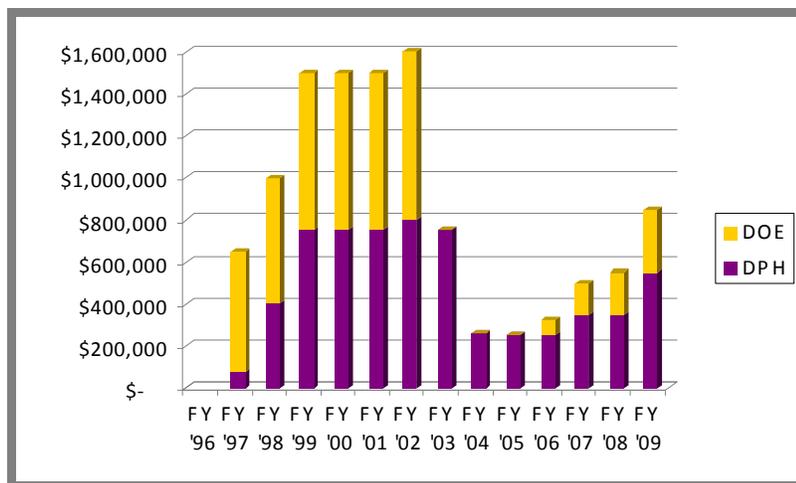
84% of GLBT youth are verbally harassed, and 83% report faculty/staff failed to intervene.

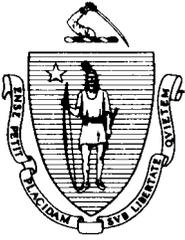
FACT: After coming out as GLBT, the grade point averages of students decline by .5, from 3.1 to 2.6 GPA.**

***Source: Gay and Lesbian Safe Schools Education Network (GLSEN)*

FY2010 Funding for DOE GLBT Safe Schools Programs (\$270,000) will:

- 1) Support existing middle/high school GSA’s (Gay-Straight Alliances) and expand to create new ones.
- 2) Provide statewide Technical Assistance to schools in promoting safe and healthy school climates.
- 3) Provide conferences, workshops and trainings for teachers in all MA school districts.





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FY10 Budget * DESE Safe Schools Program

REQUEST: Co-Sponsor Senator Galluccio’s Amendment #334 for the Safe Schools Program

DESE Line Item: 7010-0005: “. . .and provided further that the department, in collaboration with the commission on gay and lesbian youth established by section 67 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, shall allocate not less than \$300,000 for programming to ensure public schools’ compliance with the board of elementary and secondary education’s recommendations, which take into account the commission’s recommendations, for the support and safety of gay and lesbian students and the implementation of related suicide and violence prevention efforts and reduction of health disparities for GLBT youth”

NEED:

- **Bullying, intimidation and threats of violence create a hostile environment for GLBT youth.**
- **GLBT youth are at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts than heterosexual youth.**
- **Hostility in school environments compromises GLBT youth school attendance and performance.**

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH

FACT: 92% of students surveyed hear anti-GLBT slurs frequently; 86% experience harassment first hand.

FACT: GLB Youth of Color are 3 times more likely to be involved and injured in physical fights at school.

FACT: 61% of students report feeling unsafe at school; 83% say that faculty and staff fail to intervene.

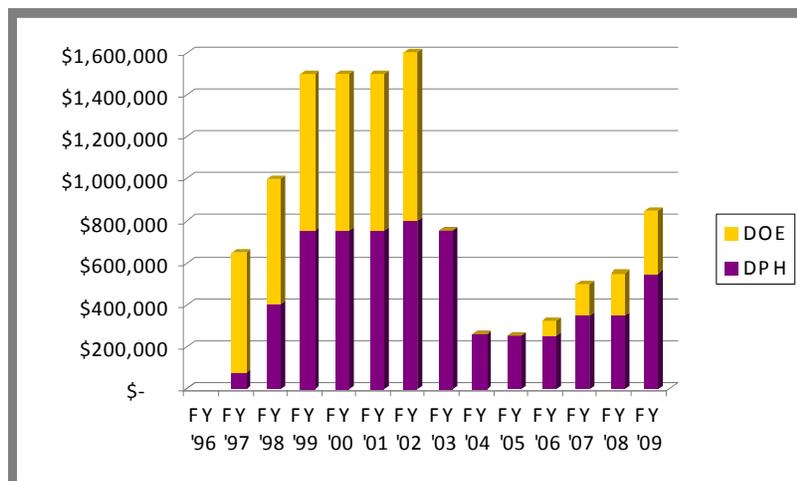
FACT: GLB Youth are 4 times more likely to miss school, as a result of fear and harassment, than their peers.

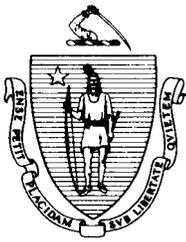
** Source: 2007 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey*

FY2010 Funding for DESE GLBT Safe Schools Programs (\$300,000) will:

- 1) Reduce incidents of violence and self harm associated with unsafe school environments by promoting GSAs and supporting teachers in establishing physically and emotionally safe learning environments.
- 2) Provide statewide Technical Assistance to schools in promoting safe and healthy school climates.
- 3) Provide conferences, workshops and trainings for staff in all MA school districts.

Historical Funding Levels for DESE and DPH GLBT Youth Funding:





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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JACOB SMITH YANG
CHAIR

ELENI A. CARR
VICE-CHAIR

GRACE STERLING STOWELL
VICE-CHAIR

12 May 2009

The Honorable Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
House Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House – Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative O'Flaherty:

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (Commission) strongly supports passage of House Bill 1728, "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," introduced by Representatives Carl Sciortino and Byron Rushing. The legislation is fundamentally compatible with our purpose as a Commission. It would expand protections in school and community settings for transgender youth and youth whose gender expression differs from what is stereotypically expected of males and females. The legislation will also provide clarification to our authorizing statute and is in the best interest of GLBT youth and the Commission.

Transgender and non-transgender students are often bullied and even assaulted because of their gender expression. According to the 2009 GLSEN Report, Harsh Realities: "Transgender students face much higher levels of harassment and violence than LGB students. And these high levels of victimization result in these students missing more school, receiving lower grades and feeling isolated and not part of the school community". For many, these instances are pervasive, hostile school and community environments result in emotional and psychological trauma. The impact can be devastating, as we saw with the tragic suicide of 11-year old Carl Joseph Hoover Walker in Springfield this year. H. 1728 would strengthen the ability of schools to protect students from this kind of violence. This law would make clear that it is illegal for public schools to discriminate on the basis of a student's gender identity or expression. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) has already interpreted state law to protect all people, including transgender persons, from discrimination based on gender identity or expression. By making this protection explicit, uniform and clearly visible in the law, it is easier for us to design policies that follow the law.

The Commission is committed to the health and safety of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, and this legislation assists in that mission. Again, we urge you to pass H. 1728.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Smith Yang".

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

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GRACE STERLING STOWELL
VICE-CHAIR

12 May 2009

The Honorable Representative Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State House - Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker DeLeo:

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (Commission) strongly supports passage of House Bill 1728, "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," introduced by Representatives Carl Sciortino and Byron Rushing. The legislation is fundamentally compatible with our purpose as a Commission. It would expand protections in school and community settings for transgender youth and youth whose gender expression differs from what is stereotypically expected of males and females. The legislation will also provide clarification to our authorizing statute and is in the best interest of GLBT youth and the Commission.

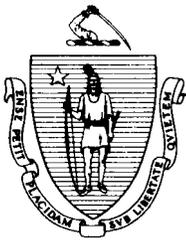
Transgender and non-transgender students are often bullied and even assaulted because of their gender expression. According to the 2009 GLSEN Report, Harsh Realities: "Transgender students face much higher levels of harassment and violence than LGB students. And these high levels of victimization result in these students missing more school, receiving lower grades and feeling isolated and not part of the school community". For many, these pervasive, hostile school and community environments result in emotional and psychological trauma. H. 1728 would strengthen the ability of schools to protect students from this kind of violence. This law would make clear that it is illegal for public schools to discriminate on the basis of a student's gender identity or expression. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) has already interpreted state law to protect all people, including transgender persons, from discrimination based on gender identity or expression. By making this protection explicit, uniform and clearly visible in the law, it is easier for us to design policies that follow the law.

The Commission is committed to the health and safety of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, and this legislation assists in that mission. Again, we strongly urge your support in the passage of H. 1728 and we thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Smith Yang".

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

Administrative Office

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JACOB SMITH YANG
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ELENI A. CARR
VICE-CHAIR

GRACE STERLING STOWELL
VICE-CHAIR

12 May 2009

The Honorable Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House – Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem:

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (Commission) strongly supports passage of Senate Bill 1687, "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," introduced by Senator Benjamin Downing. The legislation is fundamentally compatible with our purpose as a Commission. It would expand protections in school and community settings for transgender youth and youth whose gender expression differs from what is stereotypically expected of males and females. The legislation will also provide clarification to our authorizing statute and is in the best interest of GLBT youth and the Commission.

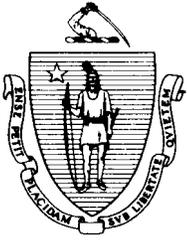
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The Commission is committed to the health and safety of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, and this legislation assists in that mission. Again, we urge you to pass S. 1687.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Smith Yang".

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

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CHAIR

ELENI A. CARR
VICE-CHAIR

GRACE STERLING STOWELL
VICE-CHAIR

12 May 2009

The Honorable Senator Therese Murray
Senate President
State House - Room 330
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Murray:

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (Commission) strongly supports passage of Senate Bill 1687, "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," introduced by Senator Benjamin Downing. The legislation is fundamentally compatible with our purpose as a Commission. It would expand protections in school and community settings for transgender youth and youth whose gender expression differs from what is stereotypically expected of males and females. The legislation will also provide clarification to our authorizing statute and is in the best interest of GLBT youth and the Commission.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Smith Yang".

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

Acknowledgements

The Commissioners and staff who wrote and edited these recommendations include: Eleni A. Carr, Arthur Lipkin, Lisa Perry-Wood, Jason A. Smith, Theodore C. Mattocks, Judith Vreeland and Jacob Smith Yang.

The Commission would like to thank Chase Strangio for her additional research and writing.

The Commission would also like to thank the following Commonwealth of Massachusetts employees that have assisted the development of these recommendations with their input: John Bynoe and Sarah Slautterback of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Stewart Landers, Carlene Pavlos, and Paula Tessier of the Department of Public Health (DPH).