COVID-19 COMMUNITY IMPACT SURVEY: SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND TRANSGENDER EXPERIENCE

Presented by: Sabrina Selk
Topic Leads: Caroline Stack and Amy Flynn

Results as of June 8, 2021
This webinar is meant to be watched after you have already seen the CCIS Introduction Webinar. The introduction contains important background information explaining how to interpret these results, how we did the survey, and how to frame these findings with a racial justice lens so that we can all turn the CCIS data into action!

Visit http://mass.gov/covidsurvey for more!
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Many groups that were critical in the success of this effort and gave important input on the development and deployment of the survey:

- Health Resources in Action (HRiA)
- John Snow International (JSI)
- Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps and their work with local boards of health and on social media
- Mass in Motion programs, including Springfield, Malden, and Chelsea
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance
- The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
- The Immigrants’ Assistance Center, Inc
- Families for Justice as Healing
- City of Lawrence Mayor’s Health Task Force
- The 84 Coalitions, including the Lawrence/Methuen Coalition
- Boys and Girls Clubs, including those in Fitchburg and Leominster and the Metro South area
- Chinatown Neighborhood Association
- Father Bill’s
- UTEC
- MassCOSH
- Stavros Center for Independent Living
- Greater Springfield Senior Services
- Center for Living and Working
- DEAF, Inc.
- Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Viability, Inc.
This webinar will share some key findings from the COVID-19 Community Impact Survey (CCIS) around the pandemic’s impacts on the LGBTQ+ community. The goal is that these findings:

- Inform immediate and short-term actions
- Identify ways to advance new, collaborative solutions with community partners to solve the underlying causes of inequities
- Provide data that stakeholders at all levels can use to "make the case" for a healthy future for ALL.

Remember to watch the CCIS Introduction Webinar for important background, tools, and tips to frame these findings with a racial justice lens to turn the CCIS data into action!

Visit http://mass.gov/covidsurvey for all things CCIS!
POPULATION SPOTLIGHT:
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Transgender Experience
June is Pride Month.

The Pride Parade honors the Stonewall Riots of 1969, led by Black, Transgender, and Nonbinary activists like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

Boston held its first Pride Parade two years later.

Since 1971, MA has made overall admirable progress in social, cultural and legislative advances to promote LGBTQ+ protections:

- Sexual orientation nondiscrimination law for employment, housing and public accommodations (1989)
- Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students (1992)
- Creation of Special Legislative Commission on LGBT Aging (2014)
LGBTQ+ youth and adults experience inequities in multiple domains: housing, employment, healthcare access, chronic disease, mental health, discrimination, and violence.

People in MA continue to commit acts of violence against individuals within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly against trans-identified individuals and against people of color.

MA continues to lag behind other states in responding to the needs of the Transgender community.

Already in 2021, at least 27 transgender or nonbinary people have been killed by violent means nationally.¹

This persistent exclusion forces people into survival mode: LGBTQ+ folks may have to disown their sexual orientation and gender identity for fear of losing access to essential supports and services.

These exclusionary conditions, and the resulting inequities, have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Actions are needed now: to aid this community in recovery, to address inequities, and to prevent this from happening again.
Systems of oppression impact the social determinants of health inequities:

- Classism, racism, ableism etc.
- Heteronormativity, Heterosexism, Homophobia, Transphobia, Sexism

Diagram:
- Education
- Job Opportunity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Environmental Exposure
- Health Behaviors
- Access to Health Services
- Safe & Affordable Housing
- Reducing Violence

Health Outcomes
Heternormativity, heterosexism, transphobia, and other oppressions act at multiple levels:

INTERNALIZED
- Conforming to normative views of relationships
- Following heteronormative scripts of binary masculinity/femininity

INTERPERSONAL
- Family rejection
- Bullying
- Domestic violence

INSTITUTIONAL
- Lack of affirmative medical care
- Denial of insurance coverage for trans-specific care
- Gatekeeping through gendered stereotypes or required therapist approval

STRUCTURAL
- Discrimination in legal benefits, tax codes, immigration policies
- Exclusion of those of trans experience from bathroom access, education, & sports opportunities
Despite the dominant perception that LGBTQ+ health inequities in MA have all been addressed through the implementation of progressive LGBTQ+-supportive laws and policies, the data show that Massachusetts LGBTQ+ adults and youth continue to be systematically discriminated against and excluded from the systems that drive the social determinants of health, causing inequities in multiple domains. This persistent exclusion, and the resulting impacts on health, have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.
Through intentional outreach efforts conducted by CCIS partners, LGBTQ+ adults and youth participated in the survey at unprecedented rates:

### 4,102 Adults (aged 25+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying as:</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual and/or pansexual</td>
<td>1,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay or lesbian</td>
<td>1,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Of transgender experience (n=242) or not sure of transgender experience (n=108)**
- **And/or of non-binary, genderqueer, or not exclusively male or female gender (n=312); questioning gender (n=53); and other gender (n=26)**

### 923 Youth (aged 14-24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying as:</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual and/or pansexual</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay or lesbian</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>923</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Of transgender experience (n=103) or not sure of transgender experience (n=36)**
- **And/or of non-binary, genderqueer, or not exclusively male or female gender (n=124); questioning gender (n=31); and other gender**

*Suppressed due to low sample size.

- **Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) survey questions:**
  - Developed under the guidance and recommendation of the MDPH SOGI Data Standards Group.
  - 3 separate measures: sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender experience
  - The development of SOGI data collection and analysis recommendations are part of an on-going process that will continue to incorporate lessons learned and feedback of community members.

Thank you to our community partners and the MDPH SOGI Data Standards Group for this effort.

* Suppressed due to small count
The pandemic has inequitably impacted LGBTQ+ youth and adults across multiple domains affecting the social determinants of health.

Addressing any domain in isolation will not work.

- Economic Stability
- Access to Healthcare
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Housing Stability
- Social Inclusion and Support
Employment: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities

Employment support and equitable benefits are needed to address job loss, hour reduction, and lack of employment protections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>What we can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Discrimination within social services, hiring practices, and places of employment affect adult job stability. | Lack of Paid Sick Leave:  
  - Among currently employed adults: 14 - 20% of nonbinary and trans-identified adults reported not having paid sick leave  
  Job Loss:  
  - 1 out of 5 working adults of trans experience and nonbinary gender identity lost their job (vs. 1 out of 10 cisgender and 1 out of 10 male)  
  Reduced Hours/Took leave:  
  - Out of employed adults, nonbinary (20%) and bi/pansexual (20%) adults and adults of trans experience (23%) were more likely to report reduced hours of work/took leave (1.5-1.6 x as likely) when compared to male, straight, and cis-gender adults, respectively | Policy & organizational change  
  - Address any gaps in state/federal paid sick leave benefits  
  - Promote job opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth²  
  - Provide career readiness resources for LGBTQ+ youth and adults who face barriers to employment² |

LGBTQ individuals are more likely to experience risk factors as youth that are associated with unstable employment:²

- Homelessness
- School bullying
- Lack of proper ID
- Carceral system involvement
Economic Stability: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities

Economic resources are needed now to mitigate financial impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>What we can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Exclusion from social determinants of health leads to exclusion from the economy.</td>
<td>• More than 1 out of 2 BTQA/NB adults were worried about paying a bill in the next few weeks</td>
<td>Resource Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homelessness, bullying, discrimination affect youth education and future employment.</td>
<td>• Over 30% of trans, NB, asexual, bi/pansexual, and adults questioning gender or sexual orientation worried about getting food in the next few weeks</td>
<td>• Trans, non-binary, asexual, and bi/pansexual adults were up to 1.4x as likely* as cis-, male, and straight adults, respectively, to request free or cheaper food and other supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family rejection and experiences in the foster care system can cause LGBTQ youth and adults to have fewer savings to draw from in an emergency.</td>
<td>• Out of youth 18+ who reported they may not continue their education in the fall, NB youth were over 2x as likely as male youth to name tuition expenses as the reason for discontinuing</td>
<td>Policy &amp; organizational change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compared to respective reference groups. Trans-identifying respondent rates were compared to not trans [cisgender] respondent rates; nonbinary or questioning gender rates were compared to male gender rates; asexual, bisexual and/or pansexual, lesbian or gay, queer, or questioning rates were compared to straight [heterosexual] rates.
### Housing Stability: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities

**Safe, stable housing is needed now.**

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<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>What we can do</th>
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</table>
| - Economic and employment instability affects one’s ability to attain or maintain safe housing. | - LGBTQA and NB adults were 2x as likely* to report worrying about needing to move for any reason in the next few weeks.  
- BTQA and NB adults were up to 4x as likely* to be worried about needing to move because of having trouble paying rent/mortgage  
- LGBTQA and NB adults were 2-10x as likely* to report worrying about needing to move because of conflict with family/roommates  
- LGBTQ youth were 2 – 5x as likely* to report experiencing violence in their household during COVID | - LGBTQA/NB adults and LGBQ youth were up to 3x as likely* to report that a safe place to stay if they had to move would be helpful now  
- Provide LGBTQ+ cultural competency training to staff and providers of shelter and housing programs  
- Promote safety and privacy of LGBTQ+ youth and/or those transitioning genders in shelters  |

*Compared to respective reference groups: Trans-identifying respondent rates were compared to not trans [cisgender] respondent rates; nonbinary or questioning gender rates were compared to male gender rates; asexual, bisexual and/or pansexual, lesbian or gay, queer, or questioning rates were compared to straight [heterosexual] rates.

"My housemate was openly transphobic to me. They have since moved out, but the tension was at times hard to bear during the shelter-in-place.”
In the CCIS, the top reasons for which LGBTQ adults or those questioning gender/sexual orientation identified for their delayed healthcare were†:

1. Appt. cancelled or delayed (61%)
2. Worried about getting COVID (31%)
3. Worried about cost/insurance coverage (12%)
4. No private place for phone call/video chat (10%)
5. Didn’t have safe transportation (8%)

†Within LGBTQ+ group described, ranking of reasons differed by sexual orientation, gender, and trans experience.

Impact

- BTQ and NB adults and adults questioning gender or sexual orientation were more likely to report delaying any health care (up to 3x*)
- LGB and NB youth were up to 6.2x as likely* to be very worried about getting medicine
- Out of adults reporting delayed routine care, BTQ and NB adults were more likely to delay a sexual/reproductive health concern (up to 6x*)
  - 1 out 5 trans adults who delayed routine care reported delaying sexual/reproductive health care
- Among those who had never been tested for COVID, LGBTQ adults were up to 5.7x as likely* to report never getting tested because they didn’t know where to go

What we can do

- Increase access to technology needed for telehealth services: 1 out of 4 trans & NB adults reported needing technology resources (up to 1.7x that of cisgender and male adults, respectively)
- Train healthcare and social service providers on LGBTQ cultural competency
- Improve outreach of health services to LGBTQ youth and adults (e.g., through using social media and dating apps)

LGBTQ adults and youth need affirming, accessible healthcare.

Resource Provision

- Increase access to technology needed for telehealth services: 1 out of 4 trans & NB adults reported needing technology resources (up to 1.7x that of cisgender and male adults, respectively)

Policy & organizational change

- Train healthcare and social service providers on LGBTQ cultural competency
- Improve outreach of health services to LGBTQ youth and adults (e.g., through using social media and dating apps)

Delayed Care: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities

LGBTQ residents experience barriers to healthcare due to discrimination and the lack of:

- Insurance coverage
- Technology needed for telehealth
- Affirming accessible care

"I was denied care on the basis of being transgender and disabled . . . or refusal to make disability accommodations and cannot find anyone to help me so I can get the care I need"
**Behavioral Health: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities**

**Accessible, affirming mental health and substance use resources are also needed now.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>What we can do</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Violence, victimization, and family rejection increase LGBTQ individuals' risk of needing mental health and substance use support&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LGBTQQA and NB adults were up to 3x as likely* to report:</td>
<td>Resource Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discrimination during previous care and the lack of affirming accessible care, insurance coverage, &amp; technology needed for telehealth affect LGBTQ folks’ ability to access this behavioral health support.</td>
<td>• 15+ days of poor MH in past 30 days</td>
<td>• LGBA, NB, and trans-identified adults who reported substance use requested substance use resources at rates up to 1.7x that of straight, male, or cisgender adults, respectively, who reported substance use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many LGBTQ adults expressed financial barriers to accessing mental health care:</td>
<td>• 3+ PTSD-like reactions to COVID</td>
<td>• Among those with persistent poor mental health†: trans, queer and questioning sexual orientation adults were 3-5 x as likely* to request suicide resources as male and straight adults, respectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Therapy is frankly too expensive. I had to stop previous sessions since insurance doesn't cover it.&quot;</td>
<td>• 68% of NB adults reported 15+ poor MH days in past 30 days</td>
<td>Policy &amp; organizational change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 83-84% of NB and queer youth reported feeling sad or hopeless for 2+ weeks in past year</td>
<td>• Train healthcare and social service providers on LGBTQ cultural competency&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor mental health and substance use may have been exacerbated by the pandemic’s impact on delayed care:</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT adults and youth reported delaying care for stress, nervousness or anxiety, or depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Out of trans adults who delayed urgent care, 50% delayed care for severe stress/depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Out of trans youth who delayed care, 67% delayed care for stress/depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Among lesbian, gay and/or transgender adults who reported past-month substance use, those who reported delaying healthcare were up to 1.4x as likely to report that their substance use had increased during COVID than those who had not delayed any healthcare.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>*Compared to respective reference groups: Trans-identifying respondent rates were compared to not trans [cisgender] respondent rates; nonbinary or questioning gender rates were compared to male gender rates; asexual, bisexual and/or pansexual, lesbian or gay, queer, or questioning rates were compared to straight [heterosexual] rates. †Persistent poor mental health = 15+ days of poor mental health in past month.</sup>
**Social Inclusion: Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Communities**

We need to prioritize social inclusion and support in our families, schools, and communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>What we can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Discrimination</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Resource Provision</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ experience interpersonal, organizational, and structural exclusion daily:</td>
<td>• BTQA and NB adults and those questioning their sexual orientation were up to 4x as likely* to report experiencing intimate partner violence during COVID</td>
<td>• Tailored social supports for LGBTQ folks:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LGBTQ youth were more likely to report:</td>
<td><strong>“social support events for transgendered people”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Experiencing violence at home during COVID (2-5x)</td>
<td>• Mentorship for LGBTQ youth:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Being very worried about social interactions &amp; connection to community (up to 2x)**</td>
<td>• Bi and/or pansexual, queer and non-binary youth were up to 2x as likely* to report that an adult mentor would be helpful right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social services for older adults:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Among adults aged 65+: gay, lesbian (43%) or questioning (61%) adults were more likely to request <a href="#">online services for older adults</a> — including social services — than straight adults 65+ (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Policy &amp; organizational change</strong>:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum in public schools</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Expand staff trainings on LGBTQ inclusion and competency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize gender identity diversity in workplaces</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborate to address family rejection in LGBTQ youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthen protections against bullying of LGBTQ youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Compared to respective reference groups: Trans-identifying respondent rates were compared to not trans [cisgender] respondent rates; nonbinary or questioning gender rates were compared to male gender rates; asexual, bisexual and/or pansexual, lesbian or gay, queer, or questioning rates were compared to straight [heterosexual] rates.

**Notes:**

- "Difference between queer and straight youth was not significant at p<0.05 level.
- "Being trans and gay I experience microaggressions. People pointedly do not 'notice' me when I am waiting to be helped. Sometimes they are openly rude."
- "I am a lesbian and I have been publicly targeted, harassed and threatened due to my sexual orientation."
Within the LGBTQ+ community, some groups, particularly those at the intersections of oppressions, have experienced more severe impacts.

Transgender, nonbinary, and queer adults and youth

Compared to cis, male, and straight respondents, respectively, individuals identifying as trans, nonbinary, and/or queer:

- Were 2x as likely to have lost their job during COVID (adults)
- Were more likely to report experiences of violence during COVID:
  - 6-9% of youth reported experiencing violence at home†
  - Adults were up to 3x as likely to report experiencing intimate partner violence

People of color

- POC reported experiences of racism, heterosexism, and homophobia
- Gay or lesbian adults who were AI/AN, Hispanic/Latinx, Black nH/nL, or Multiracial nH/nL were up to 2x as likely to report worrying about any expense in the next few weeks than gay or lesbian white adults.

Older LGBT Adults

- Among LGBQA adults, those 65+ were up to 4x as likely to live alone as those under 65
- Gay or lesbian and questioning sexual orientation older adults were up to 2x as likely to request services for older adults, including social services, than straight older adults.

*Two concierges routinely discriminate both my husband and I, for being inter racial and gay.*

†Difference for non-binary youth was not significant from male youth at p<0.05 level.
Resources that meet basic needs, including those that address mental & behavioral health, are needed now to aid recovery.
Policy and systems-level changes are needed to address structural determinants:

Develop strategies to recruit and retain a workforce of educators diverse in gender identities and sexual orientation.

Provide comprehensive, youth-directed transition support for LGBTQ youth aging out of the foster care system.

Increase residential placement of LGBTQ youth with LGBTQ-affirming residential placements.

- Education
- Job Opportunity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Environmental Exposure
- Health Behaviors
- Access to Health Services
- Safe & Affordable Housing
- Reducing Violence

Train health, social service, and educational providers in LGBTQ cultural competency.

Expand SOGI data collection for physicians and in electronic health records (EHRs).

Utilize social media and dating apps to improve health service outreach to LGBTQ youth.

See the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth: 2021 Report and Recommendations at https://www.mass.gov/annual-recommendations for further recommendations. The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth is an independent state agency originally established as a commission of the Governor.
LGBTQ+ adults and youth have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, particularly POC and persons of trans experience.

We need to prioritize inclusion of LGBTQ+ residents in all areas – families, schools, state entities, healthcare, social services, and data systems –

1) To support pandemic recovery, and

2) To address the conditions that contributed to these inequitable impacts

3) To promote optimal health and quality of life of LGBTQ+ individuals and families
KEY TAKEAWAYS: LGBTQ+ RESIDENTS

- Continued and new initiatives to **collect and utilize SOGI data** is critical to ensure an equitable COVID-19 recovery and to prevent future harm
- Short-term **resources tailored for LGBTQ+ community** are needed NOW: financial, housing, mental health, healthcare, substance use, social inclusion
- Long-term **policy, system, and legislative change** is necessary to create a social environment fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals
Thank you.

References

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit http://mass.gov/covidsurvey for more information on how residents of Massachusetts have been impacted by the pandemic and how we can all work together to turn these data into action!