

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- Indicate commitment via Letter of Intent
- Receive application link
- Complete application
- Receive designation once application is completed with a perfect score
- BCBSRI LGBTQ Safe Zone-certified practices will be listed on bcbsri.com
- BCBSRI LGBTQ Safe Zone practice sites will be provided with a plaque and window clings for their office door(s) and window(s), specifying the year of certification

For supporting resources and information, contact:

diversity@bcbsri.org



BCBSRI LGBTQ SAFE ZONE PROGRAM CONTACTS

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9/20 IER-429515

LGBTQ Safe Zone Program

A Guide for Healthcare Practices





Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI) LGBTQ Safe Zone certification encourages community healthcare providers—physical, mental, and dental—to openly identify themselves as supporters of LGBTQ patients. This certification also reflects one of BCBSRI’s primary goals of fostering environments in which LGBTQ members feel welcome and safe in their health community.

BACKGROUND¹

A national survey of nearly 5,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals showed:

- **70%** of transgender or gender non-conforming and **56%** of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) patients surveyed have experienced some type of discrimination in healthcare
- **73%** of transgender respondents and **29%** of LGB respondents reported they believed they would be treated differently by medical personnel because of their LGBT identity
- **52%** of transgender respondents and **9%** of LGB respondents reported they believed they would be refused medical services because of their LGBT identity

REQUIREMENTS

Training

Each staff member has completed cultural competence training for LGBT care in the last 12 months. Training may include classroom learning, e-learning, and/or relevant conferences. Examples include (but are not limited to):

Webinars and online training

- On-demand webinars provided by The National LGBT Health Education Center²
- Anthem’s “Creating an LGBT-Friendly Practice”
- Remote training provided by Human Rights Campaign

On-site trainings

- “Reexamining LGBT Healthcare,” provided by the National LGBT Cancer Network
- LGBTQ Cultural Competence Workshop, provided by the Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health

Conferences

- RI Trans* Health Conference
- Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference
- GLMA Annual Conference

Forms

- Allow for patient’s legal and preferred names
- Allow for patient’s preferred pronouns
- Allow for “other” option for patient’s gender

Physical space

- At least one gender-neutral bathroom is available for patient use
- Practice sites will clearly post their patient non-discrimination policy (i.e., patient’s bill of rights) including the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity or expression”

Procedures

- Patients are called from the waiting room in a gender-nonspecific way
- Staff members follow procedures for using the patient’s preferred name and pronouns, which may be different than patient’s legal name and sex
- Staff follows procedures for handling a patient’s sexual orientation or gender when referring the patient to another provider (as appropriate)
- Clinical practices are reviewed annually to ensure providers are not assuming a patient’s gender, marital/partnered status, and/or sexual activity



¹When Health Care Isn’t Caring: Lambda Legal’s Survey of Discrimination Against LGBT People and People with HIV. New York: Lambda Legal, 2010. Available at: <http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/when-health-care-isnt-caring>

²These webinars are on-demand, free, and open to the public, and provide free CME/CEU credits for those who register.