

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, D.C.

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Testimony on Bill 21-0168, “LGBTQ Cultural Competency Continuing Education Amendment Act of 2015”

Committee on Health and Human Services

October 28, 2015

Good morning, Chairperson Alexander and Councilmembers Grosso and Nadeau. I am Rick Rosendall, President of the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance, which was founded in 1971.

GLAA is pleased to support Bill 21-168, the LGBTQ Cultural Competency Continuing Education Amendment Act of 2015, which would amend existing continuing education requirements for licensed clinical healthcare providers in the District to include two credits of instruction on cultural competency or specialized clinical training focusing on LGBTQ patients.

Culturally competent care¹ is especially important in our community, which continues to face disparities in health resulting from stigma; substance abuse and other coping strategies; a reluctance to seek medical care due to discrimination and the fear of it; and the disproportionate impact of STDs. Lack of culturally and clinically competent care contributes to these disparities.² The problem is particularly acute in the transgender community, where one in five are denied healthcare due to their gender identity. One in four trans people postponed care due to discrimination and disrespect by providers.³

Despite the District’s strong policies against discrimination, our community, which is more than ten percent of the District’s population, remains at risk.

Bill 21-168 will ensure that licensed healthcare providers in the District receive the cultural and clinical competency instruction needed to provide quality healthcare for LGBTQ patients.

Finally, regarding the scope of this bill: why is it limited to LGBTQ? For one thing, only so much can be covered meaningfully in two credits worth of training time. More crucially, our community faces the particular challenges of invisibility. If we are subsumed under a generic, all-encompassing category, we are effectively excluded. The obstacles that members of our community all too often face in seeking healthcare have to be named and described if they are to be overcome.

Thank you. I am available to answer any questions.

¹ *Best Practices in Creating and Delivering LGBTQ Cultural Competency Trainings for Health and Social Service Agencies*, Cultural Competency Coordination (2014), http://cancer-network.org/downloads/best_practices.pdf

² *When Health Care Isn’t Caring: Lambda Legal’s Survey on Discrimination Against LGBT People and People Living with HIV*, Lambda Legal (2010), <http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/when-health-care-isnt-caring>

³ Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011, http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf