

LGBT Senior Housing and Care Case Statement:

Seniors are one of the most marginalized groups in our culture. LGBT seniors are the most vulnerable of this group especially when it comes to health care services and safe and welcoming housing opportunities. There are currently 2.4 million Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender people in the United States 65 years and older. By 2030 that number is expected to grow by 50%.

The New Jersey LGBT community has grown exponentially over the past decades, especially in the Green Hill Senior Living 12-mile radius target market, the suburban communities in and around Essex County. New Jersey is appealing to the LGBT community due to its progressive public policies, schools and communities, its robust advocacy groups, the variety of housing stock, open spaces and easy access to city centers.

The LGBT Senior Housing and Care Needs Assessment Survey and the AARP LGBT Senior Survey both identify FEAR as the main concern of aging LGBT seniors when considering senior living communities or nursing homes. The three top tier concerns include LGBT seniors who currently live openly fear they will have to go 'back into the closet' to avoid discrimination, harassment or assault. That their partners, allies, family members and friends will not be safe and welcomed in the community where they live. That they will not have access to healthcare from providers who are experienced in serving the needs of the LGBT community.

2018 LGBT Senior Housing and Care Working Group:

Donna Lazartic MBA, LNHA Green Hill Inc. President/Executive Director

Amy Simon [A Simon Says, LLC](#) President

Bianca Mayes MPH, CHES [Garden State Equality](#), Health and Wellness Coordinator

David Rosen, [Hudson Pride](#) Program Director, MSW, Rutgers Educator

Gordon Sauer, SAGENJ, Hudson Pride LGBT Senior Resource Center

Graeme Davis, Health Advocacy Network, [Hyssop Housing](#)

Taryn Patterson, [Leading Age](#)

Kelly Kent, [SAGE Usa](#)

LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program Goals:

- To collaborate with senior care industry leaders and LGBTQIAA community stakeholders to create a model of best practice in long-term care housing and services for LGBTQ seniors of all economic levels, race, religions, and cultures.
- To advocate for, implement and share this model across the aging services field.
- To ensure that LGBT elders, their families, caregivers, and allies are well-served and feel at home in senior living communities, senior service agencies and with senior service providers.

2017 LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program Accomplishments:

- [Launched the LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program.](#)
- Held the [LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program Roundtable.](#)
- [Established the LGBT Senior Housing and Care working and advisory group](#) with Garden State Equality, SAGENJ, Advocacy Health Network, HYSSOP Housing, and RWJBH.
- Hosted monthly working group conference meetings.
- Developed the concept for the LGBT Senior Housing and Care Expo.
- Began work on the LGBT Senior Housing and Care Needs Assessment Survey.
- Began the LGBT Senior Housing and Care public relations campaign.

2018 LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program Accomplishments:

- Initiated an online LGBT Senior Housing and Care [Knowledge Sharing Platform](#) at <https://www.green-hill.com/lgbt-senior-housing-care/> where users can find research, resources and follow our programmatic journey.
- Initiated Social Media Campaign

- Completed the [LGBT Senior Housing and Care Needs Assessment Survey](#) with 226 NJ respondents. Released survey, analyzed and produced Needs Assessment Survey final report.
- Produced the [1st Annual LGBT Senior Housing and Care Expo](#) hosted by Green Hill Inc. Expo included 5 educational sessions, vendors, and networking opportunities for over 75 participants.
- Green Hill Inc became the 1st senior living community in New Jersey to [raise the rainbow](#) flag at the 1st annual LGBT Senior Housing and Care Expo.
- Developed a draft of Level I LGBT Senior Housing and Care Resident and Family Competency Training Program (four modules).
- LGBT Senior Housing and Care Programs tested at Green Hill Inc.
- Senior Staff advanced cultural competency training session on LGBT senior service and resident integration.
- One-on-one resident interviews by CSWs to evaluate the perception of and feelings about the LGBT community.
- Welcoming signage and markers facility-wide.

2018 LGBT Senior Housing and Care Media, Marketing and Outreach

- Featured in Philadelphia Inquirer article.
- [Building-an-Inclusive-Culture-for-LGBT-Elders-LeadingAge.pdf](#)
- [Leading Age podcast](#)
- Documentary on LGBT Senior Housing in production.
- Panelist at Ethicon LGBT senior event.
- [Responded to industry queries from across the US.](#)
- Initiated LGBT Senior Housing and Care Social Platforms on [FB](#) & [Twitter](#).
- Hosted monthly LGBT Senior Housing and Care working group conference calls/meetings.
- [2nd Annual LGBT Senior Housing and Care Expo](#) (May 19, 2019 at Green Hill Inc.)
- Initiated development program.

What We Learned in 2018:

- Green Hill is the first senior living/nursing community in NJ and the nation to declare itself as welcoming and focus a program on effectuating a comprehensive affirming and welcoming program
- Only one other senior living community in NJ has cultural competency certification.
- A Welcoming and Affirming community, service agency or provider must have a foundation of an accredited cultural competency program as their first step before they can begin to implement Welcoming and Affirming programs and policies.
- Equality, treating everyone the same does not meet welcoming and affirming criteria. Equity, treating everyone from the place that they are and adjusting accordingly is the goal for welcoming and affirming.
- Welcoming and Affirming policies and programs need to serve the LGBT senior and their straight or LGBT allies, chosen or genetic family members and care providers.
- Welcoming and Affirming policies and programs need to serve the facility's LGBT staff.
- Residents, family members, and visitors will notice the rainbow flag and will have questions. The Rainbow flag need only be raised during Pride month. Consider incorporating the raising of recognitions flags for a variety of cultural groups represented in your community.
- LGBT welcoming signage in the facility should be subtle. Community members will scan for welcoming cues.
- Welcoming and affirming intake documents, applications for services or programs, dining forms, in all departments should be revised to meet with the recommendations of LGBT stakeholder groups like one of these below:
- The Human Rights Committee, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/lgbt-inclusive-intake-forms>
- GLMA Gay and Lesbian Medical Association http://www.glma.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/GLMA%20guidelines%202006%20FINAL.pdf
- Collecting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data in Electronic Health Records: <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/Collecting-Sexual-Orientation-and-Gender-Identity-Data-in-EHRs-2016.pdf>
- A Toolkit for Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Clinical Settings: <http://doaskdotell.org/>

- Bathrooms should have nongender identified signage, including those that are handicapped accessible. Male/female signage is not considered nongender identification for this purpose.
- All of the senior team members and senior staff must be intimately integrated into overall program mission prior to onset.
- All staff must be aligned with the program mission at onset.
- Residents and families should be engaged in the process of integrating welcoming and affirming policies at the very beginning of the program. They will require specialized cultural competency training.
- Resident understanding of what LGBTQ means is defined by their age, cultural background, education, religious doctrine and personal experience or lack thereof.
- How current residents may feel about welcoming LGBT residents their senior living community will be affected by their level of cognition, acuity, age, cultural background, education, religious doctrine and personal experience or lack thereof.
- Onboarding an openly LGBT resident to a community needs to be strategic and requires additional welcoming elements. LGBT seniors join a senior community with all of the familiar fears and needs of any senior, of any cultural and religious background, plus the challenges and issues surrounding gender identity, orientation, prejudice and harassment.
- The enhanced onboarding procedures for the LGBT resident should also be utilized with the non-LGBT resident so as not to distinguish between groups.
- Communities need to establish specialized debriefing and evaluation procedures to interpret the successes and challenges of integrating LGBT seniors into their community and make adjustments accordingly.
- There are many subgroups within the LGBTQIAA community, with religious, race, cultural, socioeconomic and experiential differences. There are prejudices that exist within the greater LGBTQIAA community. These subsets and their related issues will need to be identified, understood and served uniquely.
- Welcoming and affirming living environments require social services, healthcare, activities, social and cultural events, and access to books, entertainment, and recreation that reflect the community.
- Housing and roommate policies should be written in the resident contract and resident handbook to describe welcoming and affirming policies.

- Healthcare partnerships with experienced LGBT healthcare professionals need to be established and healthcare staff trained in health issues prevalent in the LGBT community.
- Welcoming and Affirming communities and agencies should update their marketing materials to include language and images that welcome senior LGBT persons.

LGBT Senior Housing and Care Program Looking Forward 2019!

The working group continues to research and collaborate with stakeholder groups and service organizations to develop best practices in programs and services for LGBT seniors and their families and caregivers. We will continue to share our experiences, process, successes and challenges with the greater LGBT and senior service community on our resource pages on the [Green Hill website](#).

- Welcome to new working group member Dr. Michael McNett!
- Congratulations Sydney Kopp-Richardson SAGE Director, National LGBT Elder Housing Initiative.