

Queer Immigrants & Affordable Health Care

LGBTQ and HIV+ immigrants face many challenges in their journeys to the United States. Many flee interpersonal and state abuse because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Yet, once LGBTQ and HIV + immigrants come to the United States, they face a myriad of challenges including access to affordable and quality health coverage and care.

<p>Legal Barriers to Affordable Health Coverage</p>	<p>904,000 LGBTQ immigrants in the US</p> <p>267,000 of whom are undocumented</p> <p>Federal and state policies deny immigrants access to affordable and public health coverage programs like Medicaid, often on the sole basis of their immigration status. Many, if not all, of the 267,000 undocumented LGBT-identified immigrants are barred from most federal health coverage programs like Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. These restrictions also impact the remaining 637,000 LGBT-identified immigrants in the United States, as current law bars many lawfully present immigrants from these programs. Other lawfully present immigrants may be eligible for these programs, but only after a 5-year bar.</p>
<p>Employment Discrimination</p>	<p>Legal restrictions compound barriers to affordable health coverage and care for LGBTQ immigrants. Less than 40% of immigrants have access to health coverage through their jobs. This percentage is likely lower for LGBTQ immigrants as LGBTQ individuals face higher rates of employment discrimination, which undermines their ability to be eligible for employer-sponsored health care or to be able to afford private plans. Currently, there is no federal law explicitly barring employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.</p> 
<p>Provider Discrimination & Bias</p>	<p>LGBTQ immigrants may experience discrimination and bias from healthcare providers and systems based on race and ethnicity, primary language, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Nearly one-in-five transgender patients have been refused care due to their gender non-conforming status, and providers have denied care to undocumented immigrants because of immigration status.</p> 
<p>Lack of Competent Care</p>	<p>Health care providers and systems often lack competency not only on sexual orientation and gender identity, but also in language and culture, compounding barriers to quality health care for LGBTQ immigrants.</p> 

SOURCES Lambda Legal. When Health Care Isn’t Caring: Lambda Legal’s Survey of Discrimination Against LGBT People and People with HIV. 2010. Available at www.lambdalegal.org/health-care-report • The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. The Role of Employer-Sponsored Health Coverage for Immigrants: A Primer. 2006. Available at <http://kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/the-role-of-employer-sponsored-health-coverage/> • National LGBT Cancer Network. Barriers to Health Care. October 7, 2013. Available at http://www.cancer-network.org/cancer_information/cancer_and_the_lgbt_community/barriers_to_lgbt_healthcare.php • Rosenthal J. LGBT Issues in Health Reform: Issue Brief on Making Health Reform Work for All Americans. Center for American Progress. July 27, 2009. Available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2009/07/pdf/lgbthealth.pdf> • National Center for Transgender Equality, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. February 3, 2011. Available at http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds • Huffington Post. Jesus Navarro, An Undocumented Immigrant, Denied Kidney Transplant Despite Willing Donor And Insurance Coverage. January 31, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/31/jesus-navarro-an-undocumented-immigrant-kidney-transplant_n_1245630.html • Gates GJ. LGBT Adult Immigrants in the United States. The Williams Institute. University of California, Los Angeles School of Law. March 2012. Available at <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/us-lgbt-immigrants-mar-2013/> Accessed on January 21, 2014.

