



More information available at:

<https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/about-the-hei>

## Background

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation developed the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) to meet a deep and urgent need for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Americans: the need for equitable, knowledgeable, sensitive and welcoming health care, free from discrimination.

The HEI is the national LGBTQ2IA+ benchmarking tool that evaluates healthcare facilities' policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ2IA+ patients, visitors and employees.

The HEI initiative was chosen by the Central Health Equity Policy (CHEP) Council in 2020 after months of research on new possible campaigns. The research included informational interviews, desktop research, review of reports and recommendations from the City of Austin Boards & Commissions, and discussions with subject-matter experts.

The CHEP Council launched in September 2015 and includes members from over 70 community partners who are experts in policy, data, and community and who are passionate about health issues concerning our community. Following the end of a campaign, extensive research is conducted to provide recommendations for local chronic disease prevention policies inside the geographic boundaries of Travis County, Texas. The population of concern is residents of Travis County at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

## Helpful Statistics

- 25% of respondents have had a healthcare experience in which a doctor or therapist made cisgender and/or heterosexual assumptions about them. (LGBTQ2IA+ Community Health Needs Assessment)
- Nearly 20% of respondents reported that negative healthcare experiences have caused them to delay receiving future care. (LGBTQ2IA+ Community Health Needs Assessment)
- 31% of respondents to the 2020 QWELL Wellbeing Survey reported being treated with less courtesy or respect than heterosexual people in the last year due to their sexual orientation and 23% of respondents reported being treated with less courtesy or respect than cisgender people in the last year due to their gender identity. (LGBTQ2IA+ Community Health Needs Assessment)
- Although 63% of respondents indicated they didn't choose their primary care provider based on their knowledge of the health care needs of LGBTQIA+ people, a significant number (37%) said they make this choice based on the provider's knowledge. More surprisingly, 41% of respondents did not share their LGBTQIA+ identity with their provider. (LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study)
- There is a great need for more health education and increased health literacy in the LGBTQIA+ community. Eighteen percent of respondents did not receive sexual health information at school while living in Austin. However, 21% said they received the education, but with no LGBTQIA+ information. Surprisingly, 19% of respondents had never heard of PrEP. While 31% of all



respondents have never been tested for HIV, only 3% of respondents did not know their status. (LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study)

- 1 to 2% of infants are born intersex (Planned Parenthood)

The table below shows the demographics for 2,149 community survey responses of the QoL study (approx. 3% of the metropolitan Austin LGBT population) compared to the U.S. Census Data for Austin.

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	QoL Responses	U.S. Census Data
Asian or Asian American	56	3%	7.6%
Black, African, or African American	322	15%	7.8%
Hispanic, Latino/a/x/e or Latin American	344	16%	33.9%
Middle Eastern or Arab American	14	1%	
Native American, Indigenous, or Native Alaskan	27	1%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	(<1%)	0.1%
White or European American	1216	57%	72.6% White 48.3% (white non/Hispanic)
Multi-racial	135	6%	3.5%
Other	31	1%	

### Why Participate?

- Learn best practices for LGBTQ2IA+ equity and inclusion
- Provide patient-centered care to a long-overlooked group
- Enhance patient satisfaction ratings
- Take advantage of free online, on-demand staff training from expert sources that includes CME/CEU credits
- Ensure compliance with legal, CMS and The Joint Commission requirements
- Enjoy recognition for commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity from the nation’s largest LGBTQ2IA+ civil rights organization
- In addition to being a valuable tool and resource for healthcare facilities, the HEI is used by LGBTQ2IA+ patients and their loved ones to find facilities that provide equitable and inclusive care

### LGBTQ2IA+ Healthcare Equality Leaders in Travis County

- People’s Community Clinic
- Austin Public Health RBJ Health Center



## The Austin/Travis County Model

The CHEP Council will support a cohort of local healthcare providers through a shared learning experience to integrate policies and practices that reflect the HEI's 4 core objectives:

- Ensure foundational protection for patients, visitors and staff in patient and staff policies and provide cultural competency training on LGBTQ2IA+ inclusion
- Demonstrate progress toward inclusion on LGBTQ2IA+ patient care and support
- Cultivate an inclusive workforce by providing LGBTQ2IA+-inclusive employee support and benefits
- Demonstrate public commitment to the LGBTQ2IA+ community

Projected launch will be August 2022.