Comparative Effectiveness Research to Improve the Health of Sexual and Gender Minority Patients Through Cultural Competence and Skill Training of Community Health Center Providers and Non-Clinical Staff

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The goal of the SOGi Project is to understand how educational and cultural competency trainings of clinical staff assist in improving health outcomes and patient satisfaction for Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) patients at Federally Qualified Health Centers. The SOGI project entails a partnership with the National LGBT Education Center and community health centers across the country, with the goal of demonstrating improved health outcomes in SGM patients at participating clinic sites.

Potential Impact

More than 25 million people (1 in 15 Americans) access their primary care in community health centers (CHC). CHC patients tend to be more economically disenfranchised and racially and ethnically diverse than other Americans. Based on national probability studies, at least 3.5% of CHC patients are SGM, but few CHCs have systematically collected data about SOGI or undertaken staff training to optimize their provision of care for SGM patients.

The premise of this project is that most health care providers are motivated to provide optimal care for their patients, but many providers have not been addressing their SGM patients’ care needs because they lack the appropriate health information systems and education that could assist them to readily identify those patients. Additionally, they may lack training about the best practices to obtain a full history from a SGM patient and may not be conversant with the health disparities that SGM patients experience, leading to insufficient recommendations for needed preventive services, such as STI and cancer screenings, and preventive vaccinations. More effectively collecting and acting on this data will help providers improve health outcomes for SGM patients.