Request for Information (RFI): Inviting Comments and Suggestions on the Health and Health Research Needs, Specific Health Issues and Concerns for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Populations

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Key Dates

**Release Date:**    June 27, 2013
**Response Date:** October 28, 2013

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National Institutes of Health ([NIH](http://www.nih.gov))

Purpose

This Notice is a time-sensitive Request for Information (RFI) inviting comments and suggestions on the health and health research needs, specific health issues and concerns for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender and intersex (LGBTI) populations.

Background

In 2009, the NIH commissioned the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report to…assess the state of the science on the health status of…LGBT populations; identify research gaps and opportunities related to LGBT health; and outline a research agenda that will assist NIH in enhancing its research efforts in this area.

In March 2011, the IOM issued its report of this NIH commissioned study, [The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding](http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/The-Health-of-Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-and-Transgender-People.aspx) .  In that same year, NIH leadership established the NIH LGBT Research Coordinating Committee, which consisted of representatives nominated by 21 Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs).

The Committee conducted an analysis of the ongoing NIH research portfolio in LGBT health as a starting point for considering the IOM recommendations. By “mapping” the portfolio to the IOM recommendations, the Committee identified gaps and opportunities at the NIH. The Committee released its report and analysis “[Consideration of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report on the Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals](http://report.nih.gov/UploadDocs/LGBT%20Health%20Report_FINAL_2013-01-03-508%20compliant.pdf)” in January 2013.

To continue to address this array of health issues and research opportunities, the Committee was reconstituted under the leadership of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). The new LGBTI Research Coordinating Committee serves as a trans-NIH committee to facilitate and coordinate collaborations and other activities related to LGBTI health across the NIH ICOs as well as with other HHS agencies. The NIH LGBTI Committee is an important forum for discussing the diverse health issues for these communities and serves as a catalyst for developing additional research and training initiatives to ensure that LGBTI health needs continue to be identified, addressed, and incorporated in our research and training initiatives, funding opportunities, and programs.

As part of its efforts to advance LGBTI health, NIH is requesting input through this Notice on the following issues to inform the development of an NIH LGBTI Research Strategic Plan:

**Challenges (including, but not limited to):**

* Methodological or other challenges to data collection and analysis for small and/or hard-to-reach and/or heterogeneous LGBTI populations, including the development of valid and reliable methods for asking individuals about their sexual orientation and gender identity to better understand and advance LGBTI health.

**Opportunities (including, but not limited to):**

* Opportunities to expand the knowledge base of LGBTI health (including those identified in the RCC report referenced above), existing data-collection efforts, and other resources and scientific advances on which further research could be built
* Training in LGBTI health research and enhancing the cultural competency of researchers and individuals working with LGBTI persons in clinical settings, specifically how NIH can collaborate with other federal agencies to develop programs for enhancing cultural competency
* Effective ways to engage with the LGBTI health research and advocacy communities, which include the broad range of populations that may be encompassed by the term LGBTI, including, but not limited to:
	+ People who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered;
	+ People with congenital “intersex” (disorders of sex development) conditions;
	+ People who do not identify as LGBT, but nonetheless experience same-sex attraction and/or engage in same-sex sexual behaviors, which includes those who identify as queer and/or questioning; and
	+ People whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth; whose gender expression varies significantly from what is traditionally associated with or is typical for that group; and/or who vary from or reject for themselves traditional cultural conceptualizations of gender in terms of male-female dichotomy. This group includes people identify (or are identified) as transgendered, transsexual, cross-dressers, transvestites, two-spirit, queer, and/or questioning.
* Effective ways to enhance communication between the NIH and the LGBTI research community to enhance practical understanding of the NIH mission, as well as the NIH funding and review processes,  and encourage individuals engaged in research and/or training in LGBTI health to compete for funding through various NIH mechanisms (both targeted and non-targeted to LGBTI health)

**Outcome Indicators (including, but not limited to):**

* Potential measures that NIH could use to indicate whether the proposed activities addressed the challenges or opportunities successfully

Information Requested

To ensure a thorough and comprehensive consideration of these issues, responses are being sought from all stakeholders in the extramural community and the general public. Information is sought for each of the considerations identified above and any other issues that may affect NIH’s efforts to address them.

Your comments may include but are not limited to:

1.  Any of the areas identified above, those in the IOM LGBT report, those in the Committee’s report, and any other specific areas you believe are worthy of consideration by the NIH LGBTI Committee, including identifying the critical issues(s) and impact(s) on LGBTI populations and health researchers.

2.  Information about your personal or institutional experiences in these areas that you believe would be useful to the NIH LGBTI Committee in developing a strategic plan for LGBTI health research and advancing the health of LGBTI individuals.

Response to this RFI is voluntary. Responders are free to address any or all of the above items. Please note that the Government will not pay for response preparation or for the use of any information contained in the response. The comments collected will be analyzed and considered in planning and development of future initiatives. NIH will provide a summary of all input received that is responsive to this RFI.

All personal identifiers (e.g., names, addresses, email addresses, etc.) will be removed when responses are compiled. Please do not include any personally identifiable or confidential information that you do not wish to make public.

This RFI is for planning purposes only and is not a solicitation for applications or an obligation on the part of the United States (U.S.) Government to provide support for any ideas identified in response to it. No basis for claims against the U.S. Government shall arise as a result of a response to this request for information or from the Government’s use of such information.

How to Submit a Response

All comments must be submitted electronically on the [submission website](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/rfi/rfi.cfm?ID=34).

Responses to this RFI will be accepted through October 28, 2013. You will see an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response, but will not receive individualized feedback on any suggestions.

Inquiries

Specific questions about this RFI should be directed to the following email address:
lgbtihealthresearch@od.nih.gov.

[Weekly TOC for this Announcement](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/WeeklyIndex.cfm?WeekEnding=06-28-13)
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