

**Outing Age 2010 report and related FAQ available for download at**

<http://ent.groundspring.org/EmailNow/pub.php?module=URLTracker&cmd=track&j=299522135&u=3331405> and

<http://ent.groundspring.org/EmailNow/pub.php?module=URLTracker&cmd=track&j=299522135&u=3331406>; **organizational representatives and LGBT elders available for comment**

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**Outing Age 2010 report shines spotlight on challenges facing millions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as they age**

***Despite recent advances, report documents widespread discrimination encountered by LGBT elders, offers substantive policy recommendations***

**St. Louis, MO, Nov. 23** — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) today jointly released *Outing Age 2010: Public Policy Issues Affecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Elders*, an update to the groundbreaking *Outing Age* report issued in 2000. Like its predecessor, *Outing Age 2010* presents an in-depth look at public policy issues and challenges facing millions of aging LGBT people in the United States. The SAGE affiliate in St. Louis, MO will be utilizing this report in their work with older LGBT adults across metropolitan St. Louis.

The updated report comes on the heels of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius' recent announcement of plans to establish the first national LGBT elder resource center. LGBT aging issues have been a focus of the New Beginning Initiative, a Task Force-coordinated collaboration of more than 20 national LGBT organizations moving to promote change within federal agencies to improve the lives of LGBT people. LGBT aging issues have been identified as a priority issue for the Task Force and SAGE.

"For too many years, the needs of the oldest members of our community have been invisible to many of us and ignored by most institutions in our society," says Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "LGBT elders remain a highly vulnerable and largely invisible aging population. We know that invisibility leads to greater social isolation, which can lead to increased vulnerability in many areas. We also know that discrimination across the lifespan leaves LGBT people economically and socially vulnerable as they age. *Outing Age 2010* shines a laser beam on these needs and offers concrete recommendations on how aging advocates, policy makers and social service agencies can meet them."

The LGBT elder population is growing, with a large wave of openly LGBT aging baby boomers poised to seek aging-related services over the next 25 years. Yet, as *Outing Age 2010* shows, there is virtually no government-sponsored research on aging includes sexual orientation or gender identity variables. This lack of data results in policy and practices that ignore the unique realities and needs of older LGBT people.

"While we have seen a growing network of LGBT aging programs and some positive steps by mainstream aging services programs to welcome LGBT older adults, there still is a long way to go in terms of public policy, capacity-building and appropriate funding to adequately address the concerns of LGBT older adults," says SAGE Metro St. Louis Executive Director, Sherrill Wayland. "The recent announcement about the creation of a national technical assistance resource center on LGBT aging will make a big difference, especially with regard to building capacity to serve LGBT older people nationwide. *Outing Age*

is a key resource for the LGBT aging network, and a roadmap for aging advocates seeking policy progress. This report supports the early work in St. Louis for creating an LGBT friendly and welcoming health and social service referral network. To date over fifty organizations across metropolitan St. Louis have joined this growing network, agreeing to serve LGBT older adults, their family, friends and caregivers.”

*Outing Age 2010* includes an overview and current research on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the demographics of the LGBT older adult community to the issues facing this population, including challenges in health care, housing, assisted living services, social services, home care and many others.

The report shows that several federal programs that aim to serve seniors blatantly exclude or otherwise discriminate against LGBT elders. For example, Social Security pays survivor benefits to widows and widowers but not to surviving spouses of same-sex life partners. Medicaid regulations protect the assets and homes of married spouses but offer no such protection to same-sex partners. Tax laws discriminate against same-sex partners, costing the surviving partner thousands of dollars a year. In addition, the report spotlights the continuing widespread existence of bias in the provision of services to LGBT elders.

**Report findings include:**

- Research on LGBT people at the federal and state levels is almost nonexistent, and so the specific needs of LGBT elders remain largely invisible and unaddressed.
- Federal, state and local elder housing and care programs, Area Agencies on Aging, and other providers have no mandate to provide culturally competent services to LGBT people, while elders report widespread fear, discrimination and barriers to care.
- Federal “safety net” programs like Social Security and Medicaid define family and partnership in ways that exclude LGBT families, partners and spouses, creating economic and familial hardships for LGBT elders.
- Significant health disparities persist, with no federal commitment to identifying or addressing them.
- With no federal prohibition against anti-LGBT workplace discrimination in place, income inequities across the lifespan persist for LGBT wage-earners.

**Policy recommendations include:**

- The federal government and the states must fund and include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in all research surveys.
- The Administration on Aging should issue guidelines to the states to include LGBT elders as a vulnerable population and provide directives for active outreach to and inclusion of LGBT elders in state plans.
- Federal and state bans on employment discrimination must be established to prevent LGBT elder poverty.
- The definition of family must be expanded to recognize LGBT family kinship structures in the designation of federal benefits such as Social Security, Medicaid and Veterans Benefits.
- The Family and Medical Leave Act must be expanded to cover LGBT caregivers and their family and friends, regardless of whether they are related by blood or marriage.
- Public and private health-care providers must be trained to in cultural competence for working with LGBT older adults.
- Programs that are specifically designed to address social isolation among LGBT elders, such as LGBT-specific and LGBT-affirming friendly visitor programs must be supported at the federal, state and local levels.

*Outing Age 2010* notes two key impending advocacy points LGBT elder advocates: the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act in 2011 and the White House Conference on Aging, slated for 2015. While there

is new openness at the federal level to considering the needs of LGBT elders, advocates must press for the establishment and enforcement of non-discrimination regulations as well as the creation of new research and resources to address LGBT elders' specific needs.