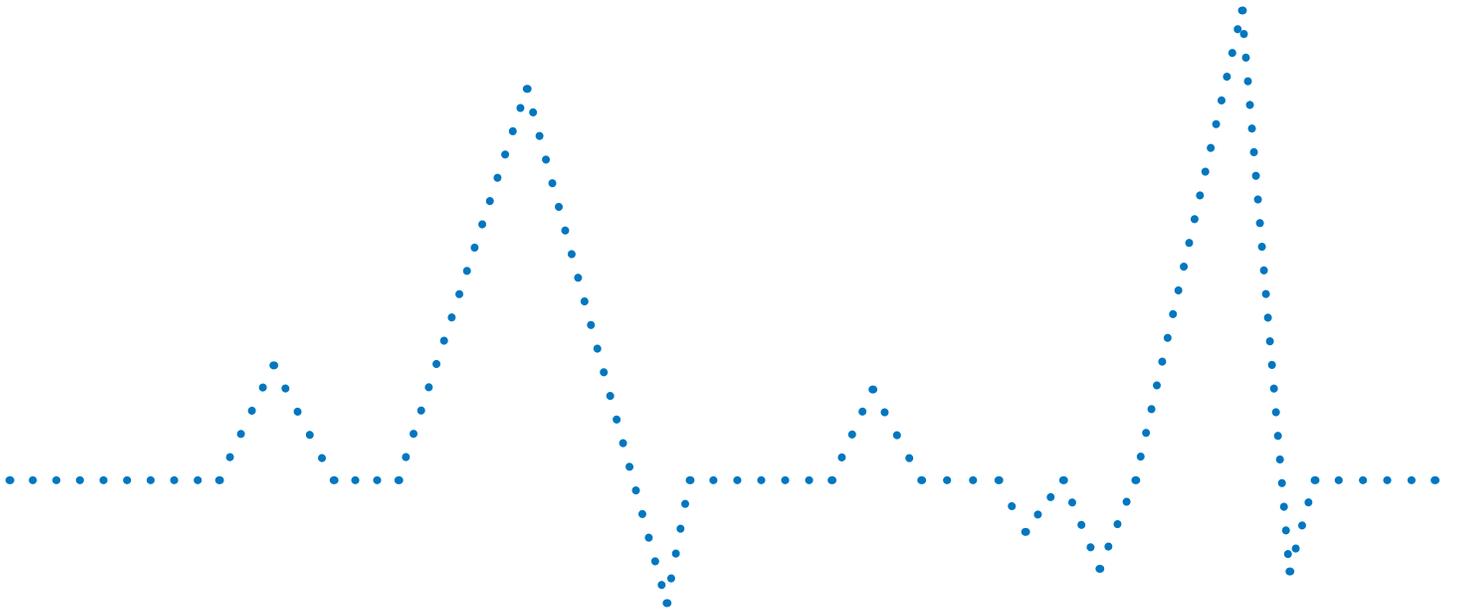


BE STILL MY  
BEATING HEART!

programs to help your chapter  
nurture the pulse of equality  
in your local healthcare community

straight for equality™ in healthcare

A PFLAG CHAPTER FIELD GUIDE



straight for equality™ in healthcare

A PFLAG CHAPTER FIELD GUIDE



**Straight for Equality in Healthcare: A PFLAG Chapter Field Guide**

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Looking for more information? Check out our websites:

**Straight for Equality:** [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org)

**PFLAG National:** [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)



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# A LETTER FROM PFLAG NATIONAL

When you go to the doctor, you need to be able to trust him or her. This basic trust is essential for you to feel comfortable enough to share necessary information and ensure that your physician has the right information to provide you with the best care possible. Whether you're seeing your primary care physician, talking to nurses at a hospital, visiting a mental health professional, or working with one of the dozens of providers in the allied health fields, being open and honest about your background is critical, and something that most of us take for granted.

But did you know that only about a third of gay people directly disclose their sexual orientation to their healthcare providers, while another third actively avoid answering questions about their sexual orientation for fear of the response they'll receive? In fact, one study revealed that "coming out to a doctor" is a more stressful event than coming out to their parents.

It doesn't take a brain surgeon to know that this reality leads to less effective treatment for our gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender (GLBT) loved ones. In fact, many choose to receive no treatment at all.

Now, we're going to do something about it.

PFLAG's Straight for Equality team has worked with a committee of advisors to develop a new resource for healthcare providers called Straight for Equality in Healthcare. The goal of the program is to take what we've learned with the Straight for Equality project – how to effectively invite, educate, and engage new straight allies – and apply it to the healthcare field. We believe that by helping educate healthcare professionals about the challenges facing GLBT people and providing some basic ways to start addressing those challenges, we'll be able to increase the access to and the effectiveness of healthcare for our GLBT friends and family.

This is where PFLAG members come in.

Straight for Equality in Healthcare will only be as effective as our outreach with it. We must work together to ensure that this key resource makes it into the hands of healthcare providers and advocates for health-related causes. There is no better delivery team than PFLAG's strong grassroots network of chapters around the country. So what you are currently reading is a guide designed exclusively for PFLAG members to help you and your chapter learn how to distribute this information, have conversations to educate and transform, and build wide-spread community coalitions that will work together to ensure equality for all – especially when it comes to the health of our GLBT loved ones.

We hope that you will use this guide as the starting point for your chapter's work to change the perspectives and practices of healthcare providers in your community. Here are five programs to help you get started, and we're confident that the contacts you make will lead to new opportunities to teach people about PFLAG and equality nationwide.

Thank you for everything that you do to move equality forward!



John R. Cepek, National Board President



Jody M. Huckaby, Executive Director

**P.S.** This book contains complete instructions for each program offered. But if you're looking for even more comprehensive resources, including direct links to many of the organizations and websites included in this book, be sure to visit the PFLAG chapter section of [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).

## Before You Start: Using this Guide

Welcome to Straight for Equality! We're so happy that you're about to join the ever-growing list of PFLAG chapters around the country that are incorporating Straight for Equality into their chapter outreach. But before you get started, we've got a few pointers to help with your project.

- \* Have you read the *guide to being a straight ally*? This is the first Straight for Equality publication, and a definite must-read before embarking on your programs. You can either download the guide for free from [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org) or purchase a copy from the PFLAG bookstore.
- \* Visit [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org) to really familiarize yourself with this program. There's a whole section specially designed for PFLAG members, so stop by the website today.

In this publication you'll find several icons to help you with your programs:



**The Goal.** Here's the bottom line for the program – this is what you hope to achieve when everything is said and done. Understanding this from the outset will help you tailor the program to work for you.



**Brainstorm!** Here's a great opportunity to work with your chapter members to share information, contacts, and expertise to create a game plan.



**Work it out.** Lots of details and planning will go into your program. Here are some of the important things that you should be aware of while planning your events.



**A Few More Things...** Check out this list for ways to personalize your programs, issues to be aware of, and suggestions for a successful event.



**Talking Points.** Looking for the right thing to say? Look no further than these talking points.



**The Straight for Equality Challenge.** Here's the big challenge! Feel like your chapter can handle the programs outlined here? How about taking on a special Straight for Equality challenge to supercharge your efforts? Get some suggestions on how to do that here.

### Talk to us!

We always want to know what PFLAG chapter members are doing around the country, how these programs work for you, and how we can improve upon them. When you're doing programs, please let us know how things are going or if there is any way for us to assist you. Either go to [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org) and click on Contact Us or talk to your PFLAG Field & Policy coordinator to get the conversation started.

# The Great Guide Drop-Off Day

## Background:

Education is an important part of PFLAG's three-prong mission. Using Straight for Equality as an educational tool is a great way to incorporate Straight for Equality into your chapter's community outreach. This program will give you the opportunity to provide much-needed Straight for Equality in Healthcare resources to providers in your community. Use your chapter members' own contacts in the healthcare field to create a list of potential contacts, then organize The Great Guide Drop-Off Day to educate the healthcare professionals in your life.



## The Goal:

Distribute Straight for Equality in Healthcare guides to the healthcare providers in your area, establish your chapter as a contact for providers to get more information, and raise the visibility of your chapter as the go-to community-based resource for information on GLBT issues.

## The Plan:

### Brainstorm

Your chapter members are your most valuable resource. Ask each of them to make a list of healthcare providers they know. Don't end your lists with just M.D.s! Be sure to think about all healthcare professionals – nurse practitioners, school nurses, mental and behavioral health professionals, allied health providers like occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, etc. An increasingly large number of people use walk-in health clinics, so be sure to include the staff at those locations in your list. Don't forget your friends and neighbors – if you personally know any healthcare professionals, include them too!

Once you've built your lists, collect all of the relevant contact information – name, field (i.e., general practitioner, mental health professional, nurse), address, office phone number, etc., and cross reference to delete duplicates.

### Work it Out

Provide each participating chapter member with the appropriate number of Straight for Equality in Healthcare guides, along with a letter of introduction (see page 6 for a suggestion). Everyone should also be comfortable saying a few words about your project, so we've included a few talking points to help with those conversations (see "Talking Points" on page 5).

When delivering the guide, introduce yourself to the receptionist as a representative from the local PFLAG chapter, share a bit about the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide, and ask them to pass the guide along to the healthcare provider(s) who work at the office. Be sure to attach a letter that summarizes your talking points for those reading the guide later (a sample letter is provided on page 6 for you). Use your talking points to show how important it is for everyone in the office to read the guide. If you're making the delivery to a friend in the healthcare field, do the same thing, although it is likely to be less formal.





### A Few More Things...

- \* Visiting your list of contacts in person is far more effective than just setting up a mailing. Mailing your materials is sometimes easier, but putting a face on the people who are providing the resources – and avoiding getting lost in a pile of junk mail – makes a bigger impact.
- \* Don't forget to include your chapter's contact information with the materials so the healthcare provider can get in touch with you!
- \* If you are a patient of the provider that you're visiting, remember to mention that in both your talking points and the letter accompanying the materials. This is a great and subtle way to remind them that these issues impact their practice and patients.
- \* Offer to leave some additional PFLAG materials – such as a membership brochure for your chapter – in their waiting room. Not only is this great advertising for your chapter, but it also lets GLBT patients know that PFLAG has been there, which could make them feel more comfortable.
- \* The next time you go to the doctor, bring along a copy of the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide and give it to them directly. Do this every time you see a healthcare provider – a spoonful of equality helps the medicine go down!
- \* If you don't have the opportunity to visit with the healthcare provider in the near future, follow up with his or her office. Call them and find out if there are any questions that you can answer.
- \* Finally, be sure to ask chapter members who are participating in this activity to keep a list of the people they have contacted and what the outcome of their outreach was. Were people receptive? Did they seem open to learning more? Are they someone who could help with another event? (See the chapter on Savvy Speakers for more.) Compare notes at an upcoming meeting to determine who can be covered in another round of outreach so you can touch as many healthcare providers in your community as possible!

### Talking Points:

- \* My name is [your name] and I'm from the [chapter name] of PFLAG – Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. We are distributing a new resource for healthcare providers to help them learn a little bit more about their gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender patients and how they can become better allies.
- \* Healthcare providers know that good communication and trust are vital to providing the best care possible. If a person does not feel comfortable or accepted around their healthcare provider, they might not trust or be honest with them. This guide will help providers build their skills to create a more inclusive practice.
- \* This is not about changing what you believe. This is about making everyday, practical changes to your actions to make sure that all your patients feel comfortable and accepted around you, your office, and staff.



(continued on p. 6)

## A Sample Letter for The Great Guide Drop-Off

Below is some suggested text that you can use for your letter to the healthcare professionals that you plan to include in your chapter's Great Guide Drop-Off Day event. Use this as a starting point and personalize it to make it work for your community and contacts. Be sure to send the letter on letterhead that includes your chapter's contact information and the PFLAG logo! (Looking for the logo? You can download it from the PFLAG website by going to [www.pflag.org/logo](http://www.pflag.org/logo).)



PFLAG Chapter Name  
Address  
Phone Number / E-mail / Website

Date

Dear [name of healthcare provider],

Hello, my name is [name] and I'm from the [chapter name] chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). I [have a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) loved one OR I am GLBT], and I want to know that when [they OR I] need medical care, [they OR I] receive the best care possible.

Additionally, since it is estimated that about one in ten people is GLBT, you probably already have some GLBT patients. Unfortunately, many GLBT people do not feel comfortable around their healthcare providers and therefore are not entirely honest about important details. As you know, honesty and good communication are crucial to receiving and delivering the best possible medical care.

That is why I ask you to read the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide. This guide was created by a diverse committee of allies in healthcare specifically for healthcare professionals. In it you will find tips, tools and resources that will help you provide culturally competent healthcare to all your patients, as well as learn more about the specific health needs of the GLBT population.

Providing culturally competent healthcare is not about changing your beliefs. Rather, it is about considering your small, everyday actions and making changes to create an environment that is inclusive of all patients.

Please read this guide and put the knowledge in it to use in your workplace. When you're done with the guide, please pass it on to other healthcare providers (including nurses, clinical social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, therapists, etc.). In addition, you can visit Straight for Equality in Healthcare online to learn more at [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).

If you have any questions or want more information, I would be happy to help. I can be reached at [your contact information – phone and/or e-mail address]. Thank you for your time and commitment to inclusive patient care!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[chapter name]

# THE **straight** FOR **equality** CHALLENGE!

## Challenge One: The Sweet Signs of Acceptance

Did you know that, in a recent study, at least 85 percent of gay people questioned said they scan the environment around their healthcare providers' offices to find visible signs of acceptance for GLBT people, such as rainbow flags, GLBT publications, or GLBT resources, to determine if the provider is affirming?

If your chapter has completed the Great Guide Drop-Off Day activity, why not take it a step further by asking responsive healthcare providers to signal their sweet sign of acceptance. Reach out to them again and ask if they would be willing to display a Straight for Equality postcard or materials in their office. (Chapters in good standing can receive a starter supply of cards by contacting their Field & Policy Coordinator for more details.) Ask providers to place the resources in a visible spot in their workspace and be willing to tell patients and clients what it means when they ask. For people looking for a signal that they're in an inclusive environment, this small symbol can send a powerful message.

## Challenge Two: Create Your Healthcare Ally Network

One of the great outcomes of The Great Guide Drop-Off Day is the ability to find out which healthcare providers in your community consider themselves to be allies and to identify and work with those who are on their way. A simple way for you to keep in contact with this new network is to make it easy for them to reach you. When you do your Great Guide Drop Off Day, consider including a postcard that the healthcare provider can fill out and return to you (be sure to address it and include postage) so that you make it easy to keep track and follow up with your new allies. Also, by identifying healthcare allies in your community, you'll be better able to provide referrals for new PFLAG members looking for local services. We've included a sample postcard below, but you should personalize the content to work for your chapter.



**Straight for Equality in Healthcare  
Reply Card**

Please send me more information about PFLAG-[insert your chapter name here].

I would like to display PFLAG materials in my office! Please send some to the address indicated below.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



PFLAG-[Your Chapter Name]  
[Your Chapter Address]  
[Your Chapter Address]



# Cool Coalitions



## Background:

Straight for Equality in Healthcare creates a great opportunity for your chapter to do some coalition building. There are probably some organizations within your community that already do great work in the healthcare field, groups that focus on healthcare within different racial/ethnic groups, student healthcare access groups, groups that help impoverished/uninsured/underinsured people gain access to healthcare, the local health department, reproductive health centers, etc. In addition to forming coalitions with these locally-based groups, consider partnering with national healthcare related organizations that have local chapters. Check out the list on page 9 for some ideas.



## The Goal:

One of the most powerful ways to create change right where you live is to partner with other groups or organizations with similar goals...in other words, to work in coalitions. Straight for Equality in Healthcare offers a great chance to work with some new people – this time in the healthcare field – who you may have not partnered with before. Use this new resource as your jumping off point for talking to new people in order to create strength in numbers to bring about the changes we need to achieve equality.

## The Plan:

### Brainstorm



Work with your chapter members to lead a brainstorming session. Think about the local healthcare organizations or groups that you could partner with to achieve a common goal, such as increasing the number of people from underserved groups (including GLBTs) accessing healthcare or helping healthcare providers become more culturally competent in regard to all cultural groups. Are there organizations dedicated to increasing awareness or access among underserved populations? Are there groups focused on specific health issues that may have personal meaning to people in your chapter? You'll find some general suggestions on page 9.

Make a list of the groups and start thinking about what you can work on together that will help achieve goals for both (or all) parties. For example, an organization focused on increasing access to basic healthcare for all people would benefit from your chapter's support. In turn, they can expand their discussion to include GLBT people by focusing on the access issues that the community has and the cultural competency skills that healthcare providers need to serve all patients effectively. Similarly, if an organization wants to participate in a community health fair or event, consider joining forces to sponsor a joint table or booth; you'll attract visitors who might not otherwise stop to talk with one of your groups and increase your combined outreach. (See page 12 for more information about effective tabling.)

Be sure that you know and can effectively communicate what each group can get out of the partnership before you go any further.



### Work it Out

Once you have your pitch ready (use the talking points below to get going), approach the group(s) with your idea of working together to achieve a common goal. Tell them why partnering with your PFLAG chapter would be good for them: they could learn about a new group, develop their skills, and find more people who will support their work. Be sure to bring materials to help them understand about Straight for Equality and PFLAG and what your chapter does! Also make sure that you bring the new healthcare guides so that they can learn something new.



### One More Thing...

Remember: successful partnerships and coalitions happen when every group has something to gain. Recognize the mutual need and understand that, in order to make this new relationship work, your chapter will need to be ready to offer time, resources, and support to the groups that you're approaching.

### Talking Points:

- \* Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people are everywhere. Learning about the issues that they face in healthcare and how you can help them is key to being effective in your outreach, regardless of the issue. We can help.
- \* Each of our causes and missions is strengthened when we can build a broad-based coalition. By working together, we can introduce a greater number of people to the issues that are meaningful to us.



### Who Should Be in My Coalition?

Not sure about where to start looking when it comes to making new friends? Take a look at our list of suggested groups. For more ideas or to access these sites directly, visit the PFLAG chapter section of the Straight for Equality website at [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).

- \* The National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health has a resource called Medline Plus Go Local, which allows you to search for any local health-related groups in your area. This is a great place to start identifying local organizations for potential partnerships! Visit [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov) and click on "Go Local" to begin your search.
- \* The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has local affiliates. You can find them online at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) under "Find Your Local NAMI."
- \* The American Cancer Society has a great page called "In My Community" where you can enter your zip code to find out everything ACS is doing in your community, including volunteer opportunities, local resources, upcoming events, and more. Visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) to get started.
- \* The American Diabetes Association has a "Community Events" page that highlights local events and volunteer opportunities. Go to [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) to find out more.
- \* The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure has local affiliates. Get more info at [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) under "Get Involved."
- \* Mental Health America has a number of local groups focused on grassroots advocacy. Learn more at [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net) under "Our Affiliates."
- \* Many organizations are centered on specific diseases. If you are passionate about promoting awareness or working to eradicate a certain disease, there's probably an organization out there that's dedicated to it, too. Do a web search to find out if they have local chapters or branches and reach out to them!

# Valuable Volunteers

## Background:

Do the healthcare providers in your community know what PFLAG is? Have they ever heard of Straight for Equality? If they haven't, a great way to connect with them is to volunteer where they work. Make a plan for your chapter to volunteer at a healthcare facility or organization that provides health services. This will allow you to (gently!) introduce the Straight for Equality message of fairness by actively demonstrating that you are part of the community and engaged in supporting the organizations where you live. When you're ready to do some education, you'll already have an interested audience!



## The Goal:

Identify a health-related volunteer event, become involved, and use the day as an opportunity to do some community service while telling new people about Straight for Equality, why it should matter to them, and how they can become more engaged in moving equality forward.

## The Plan:

### Brainstorm

Many PFLAG chapters already participate in volunteer projects. Now is the time to think about two big questions: what opportunities are available in your community in the healthcare field, and which ones offer the best access to new audiences? For example, perhaps your chapter already works with an organization that provides services to people with AIDS. But do you volunteer in a nursing home? How about a hospital? These are great places to diversify your volunteer work and start making your presence known so you can bring the straight ally message to new people.

Still stuck when it comes to finding volunteer options? Think about these places: hospitals, local free clinics, clinics that serve specific populations (immigrants, foreign language-speakers, uninsured/underinsured people, at-risk youth, etc.), assisted living facilities, senior centers...the possibilities are almost endless. What about one of the organizations in your new coalition?

Maybe the best fit for your chapter would be to participate in a healthcare-centered activity such as the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, National Wear Red Day, Relay for Life, etc., as a group. You could participate as a chapter and feature Straight for Equality, making sure that you have Straight for Equality in Healthcare materials to hand out while you're there!

### Work it Out

Before you volunteer, have chapter members practice having small conversations about why they're volunteering and why PFLAG and Straight for Equality in Healthcare are important. (There are a few talking points that you can use on page 11.) When you volunteer, make sure everyone in your group is wearing a Straight for Equality t-shirt, pin, or sticker, and has a copy



of the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide to pass along. You can order additional publications by visiting the PFLAG Bookstore. Items like t-shirts, stickers, and pins are available in the Straight for Equality store. Start shopping by visiting [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org) and clicking on Shop Straight for Equality > Cafe Press Merchandise.



### **One More Thing...**

When you speak with people about the program, be sure to give them the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide – and ask them to pass it on after they read it!

### **Talking Points:**

- \* Straight for Equality in Healthcare is about giving healthcare providers the tools to provide culturally competent care to GLBT patients. It's not about changing beliefs, it's about changing actions to make their patients feel comfortable.
- \* Tell people about your GLBT child and/or friend. You want your loved ones to be able to trust their healthcare providers so that they can be honest and receive the best possible care.



### **Health-Related Events in Your Area**

There are many local health-related events, though they can sometimes be hard to find. But never fear, the following websites contain listings of different health-related events all over the country. For more suggestions, and direct links to resources, please visit [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).

- \* The National Health Information Center features a list of health-related events. Visit them online at [www.healthfinder.gov/nho](http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho).
- \* Some health insurance companies have listings for upcoming community health days and events. Check out your provider's website to find out if they feature similar resources.
- \* Is there a specific health-related cause that is especially meaningful to your chapter? Efforts like fighting breast cancer, increasing heart health awareness, and reaching out on suicide prevention are often promoted in communities through special events. Search online for specific issues and find out if you can use a local event as a place to bring your Straight for Equality work.

# Table at a Healthcare-Related Event

## Background:

Getting people in your community to see the importance of GLBT inclusion in healthcare – and how to create welcoming environments in healthcare – can happen in a number of ways. One of the most accessible methods is to make sure that your message is reaching a new audience. Local health fairs or events that center around awareness of certain health issues, such as blood pressure testing day, heart health awareness day, and diabetes awareness day, are great places to start. Here's how your chapter can become part of those events.



## The Goal:

Take advantage of a local healthcare-related event as a way to bring the Straight for Equality message to some new people in your community. Secure a table and get some volunteers to a local health fair or program to accomplish your goal.

## The Plan:

### Brainstorm

Think about some local/community events centered on healthcare issues. Are there any coming up in your area? Don't stay with the usual suspects; HIV/AIDS testing and awareness days are important, but think outside the box. How about a blood pressure screening day or mammogram awareness day? We've provided a list on page 11 of just a few suggestions to get you started.

### Work it Out

First, contact the organization that is holding the event and find out what's involved in being an exhibitor at the event, including cost, space, and materials. Once you've got that list, start planning the logistics.

You'll need people to manage the table during the event. At one of your regular meetings, tell chapter members about Straight for Equality in Healthcare and the event you'd like to participate in. Then, pass around a sign-up sheet and ask for volunteers.

Before the event, make sure that your volunteers know how to talk about Straight for Equality in Healthcare. (There are some talking points at the end of this chapter, but be sure that everyone has read the original Straight for Equality guide as well as the Straight for Equality in Healthcare guide.) Also, be sure that you have enough guides and materials to provide to people who come to your table. Speak with your Field & Policy Coordinator for details, or visit the PFLAG Bookstore.





### A Few More Things...

- \* Need some help sponsoring the table? This could be a good opportunity to join with one of your new coalition partners or even the local GLBT community center. Don't be afraid to ask for help from groups that might have common goals or healthcare-related programs.
- \* Don't miss out on follow-up! Have a sign-up sheet for people who want to receive updates on anything your chapter does in the future with the Straight for Equality in Healthcare project. You can use the sign-up sheet on page 18.
- \* Looking for health-related events in your area? Check out the listings on pages 9 and 11 to find some resources for locating events. For more suggestions and direct links to sites, visit the PFLAG section of [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).

### Talking Points:



- \* Straight for Equality is a project that aims to invite, educate, and engage more straight people in our communities to learn more about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and why their issues should be important to all of us.
- \* Straight for Equality in Healthcare is a new part of this project that helps healthcare providers and people who are interested in healthcare issues learn about the challenges that gay people often face when it comes to healthcare and how you can affect change.
- \* This is not about changing what you believe. This is about making small, everyday changes to make sure that everyone feels included and welcome when it comes to accessing healthcare.
- \* I'm doing this because... (tell a very short version of your reason for being involved with PFLAG and why Straight for Equality in Healthcare is important.)

## THE CHALLENGE!

Don't have any events that you think will work for this project in your community? Create your own event! Your chapter could sponsor a Straight for Equality walk or run, with proceeds supporting an organization working on health issues in your area. Promote the event to the broader community, and ask each of your members to bring 2-3 friends along for the day. Be sure to give each participant information about Straight for Equality! Contact your Field Coordinator for assistance.

# Savvy Speakers

## Background:

PFLAGers have a great opportunity to educate their communities about the inclusion of GLBT people in healthcare, but in order to educate the community, you must first educate yourself. Reaching out to local community resources and contacts to find people who can help advance your education about GLBT-related healthcare issues is a fantastic place to start.



## The Goal:

Find a great speaker who can talk about some of the specific healthcare challenges for GLBT people and ask them to speak to your chapter.

## The Plan:

### Brainstorm

What resources are available in your community that could help you identify a healthcare provider to speak to your chapter? Is there a local GLBT community center? (You can find out by visiting [www.lgbtcenters.org](http://www.lgbtcenters.org).) Contact the center and ask them for suggestions. Don't forget to talk to your chapter members about their networks – do they know of any healthcare providers in the area who might be willing to help? Check in with your coalition partners for ideas, too. Remember, don't limit the possibilities to just doctors – psychologists, social workers, nurses, and allied health professionals can all bring an amazing and unique perspective to the discussion, so be diverse!

When you identify a speaker for the event, let her or him know who the audience is (PFLAG members who may not know much about medicine/healthcare) and what your goals are: you'd like for your chapter to be more informed about the specific healthcare challenges facing GLBT people so they can understand the issues better and become more powerful advocates for inclusion and equality.

### Work It Out

Once you've got your speaker and you've set the date, make sure that everyone in your chapter knows about the event. Send e-mails, be sure that it is posted on your website and that you've talked about it at meetings leading up to the big day.

On a practical level, keep the event to a reasonable length. Anything longer than 90 minutes is probably too much of a time commitment for many people, so set a time frame and be sure that your speaker sticks to it.





### A Few More Things...

- \* Remember that the level of the discussion needs to be accessible to everyone who attends. While a few people might have the expertise to understand a complicated discussion about advances in genetic research, such information won't resonate with a lot of people. Make sure that the speaker understands who the audience is going to be.
- \* Be sure to give your speaker materials about your chapter and Straight for Equality in Healthcare before the event. Ask her or him, if at all possible, to tailor their comments to the projects your chapter is doing with Straight for Equality in Healthcare.

## THE CHALLENGE!

### Bring a Friend!

Do you and/or PFLAG chapter members have a straight friend or family member that works in the healthcare field? Bring him or her along to this program – whether they're a doctor, a school nurse, or a physical therapist, this is information they should know! At the end of the event, be sure to ask guests of your PFLAG members to become more engaged with your chapter's work, whether it is with Straight for Equality projects or more PFLAG-focused events. People respond, but only when an invitation is extended. Be sure to have a sign-up sheet on hand that you can use to keep track of those who require follow-up like the one provided on page 18. The more people we can reach with our message, the better!

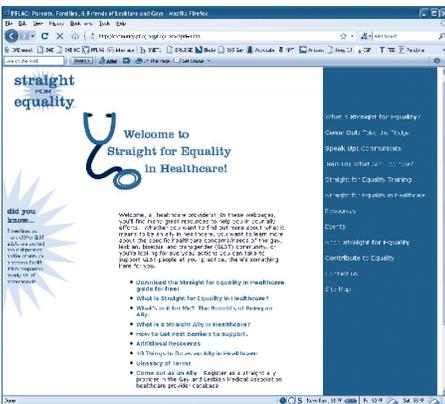
# Additional Resources

## Background:

Looking for a little help with your programs? Here are a few suggestions for sites to visit, places to download or purchase resources, and even a ready-made sign-up sheet to use for your events. Remember, if you still need assistance, don't hesitate to contact the Straight for Equality team (just visit [www.straightforequality.org](http://www.straightforequality.org) and click on "Contact Us" to get the details) or your Field & Policy Coordinator.

Thank you again for everything that you do to move equality forward!

## [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare)



The Straight for Equality website should be your first stop when you're planning to do chapter programs. The main site features basic information about the project, a place where you (and your new allies) can sign the Straight for Equality Pledge, details about Straight for Equality training programs, downloadable resources – including the Straight for Equality program guide for chapters – and much more.

The new portion of the website, [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare), is the perfect place to send your new healthcare allies to get even more in-depth information about the issues covered in the healthcare publication. Visitors to the site can also download free resources such as the healthcare guide and a one-page 10 Things You Can Do as an Ally in Healthcare flyer, links to other great sites, and the chance to connect to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's healthcare provider database where healthcare professionals can register as inclusive providers. Don't miss the special section for PFLAG members that includes PFLAG-specific resources for using the healthcare guide in chapter work.

## The PFLAG Bookstore

Need to purchase *the guide to being a straight ally* or *straight for equality in healthcare*? Looking to buy some new PFLAG publications for some upcoming events? Just log on to [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org) to get started shopping in the PFLAG bookstore.

## The Straight for Equality Sign-Up Sheet

On the next page, you'll find an easy-to-copy sign-up sheet that you can use when you need a way to track and follow up with attendees or visitors during your Straight for Equality chapter events. This form can also be downloaded for free by going to the PFLAG section of [www.straightforequality.org/healthcare](http://www.straightforequality.org/healthcare).





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*Straight for Equality™ is a program of PFLAG National.*