

'Safe Spaces.' Health care and the LGBTQ community



IN THIS EPISODE

What special health needs do LGBTQ communities have – and how well are they being addressed? What can our broken healthcare system learn from the retail industry about how to treat clients with unique needs?

To find out, we spoke to **Jeffrey Rodriguez**, the incoming director of [Community Health Programs](#) at the [Los Angeles LGBT Center](#). He's worked there for the past 12 years mainly in sexual health and education, HIV and sexually transmitted infection or STI testing and treatment, HIV prevention, linkage into primary care, as well as with mental health and substance use programs.

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

How has your prior experience in retail informed your work in community health ?

"...when you think about retail, you know, the customer's always right, *right?*...And then you get into health care and guess what? The customer's still always right.

If they're feeling like they're not feeling well, then they're not feeling well and we really need to listen to where the clients are coming from and ... understanding their experience....health care really, in my opinion,... misses that. " - **Jeffrey Rodriguez**

Talk about some of the ways the LGBT Center supports people in the transgender community, women and other communities.

"So there's a lot of needs and a lot of need for safe space for (the) trans population – trans and non-binary. Lots of need for just a safe space to go and feel comfortable...we're happy to call them by their chosen name and, you know, we even help them get that legalized and different things like that."

"...we have the Audrey Lord, which is a women's clinic that is set aside one day a week on Saturday...we need to create safe space for women to come in with, you know, instead of walking into a waiting room and there's all these men there or gay men or men identified."

"We do have other locations that are servicing other parts of the community, like our Center South location that is servicing our Black community. Yeah ... Our Black, Latino communities. There...we have a provider there one day a week and we have mental health there also. " - **Jeffrey Rodriguez**

Name a major failing in our current healthcare system that deeply impacts the communities you serve.

“...I'm sure anybody who has insurance or has had insurance in the U.S. understands an HMO is not what you really want. But if you're LGBT and you're a person of color, an HMO is horribly *never really* what you want, just for the fact that you want to be able to go to that provider that is an LGBT-specific provider.” - ***Jeffrey Rodriguez***

Helpful Links

[Healthcare Equality Index 2022](#), *Human Rights Campaign*

[Cultural Competence in the Care of LGBTQ Patients](#), *National Library of Medicine*

[Why the world of LGBTQ health doesn't fit under a single label](#), *American Heart Association*

[The problems with LGBTQ health care](#), *The Harvard Gazette*

[Medicare for All as an LGBTQ Issue](#), *Data for Progress*

[Los Angeles LGBT Center](#), *Wikipedia*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Jeffrey Rodriguez Biography

Jeffrey Rodriguez is the incoming director of [Community Health Programs](#) at Los Angeles [LGBT Center](#). He has worked at the center for the past twelve years.

The main focus of his work has been sexual health and education for the LGBT Community, including HIV / STI testing and treatment, PEP / PrEP Services, linkage into primary care, mental health and substance use programs.

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