

'Where the fight begins.'

Provider networks & LGBTQ patients



IN THIS EPISODE

What challenges do people in the LGBTQ+ community face in accessing quality health care and how does this affect their wellbeing? ***What policy solutions are needed to tackle these challenges?***

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.

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WE DISCUSS

What are the main challenges the LGBTQ population faces in accessing quality health care?

"... it's more about ... who their insurance carrier is ... Is that provider really LGBT-knowledgeable? And so those are real big hurdles. And if their insurance [permits them to] work with a provider that is [LGBT-knowledgeable] ... that's great. But that's where the fight begins - where do they go based on their insurance? Where can they go to get that health care?" - **Jeffrey Rodriguez**

Shouldn't diversity training be required for all medical providers?

"...I think for years, many people took that for granted, because you're a healthcare provider, that you were trained diversely and, you know, knowledgeable about different people. <Laugh>. I mean, you can't treat all people the same way, right, especially in health care.

So it should be, but it's not." - **Jeffrey Rodriguez**

What policy solutions would you say are needed to address the healthcare challenges of the LGBTQ community?

"I go back to the beginning. I go back to opportunity for...LGBT people of color or people of color, given the opportunity to go to school, to get into these professions ... And then ... getting them the opportunities, understanding that this is really needed. And then when you look at policies, ... are we really challenging policy makers to look at the broad spectrum of health care? ... *Health care for all*. That's where it should start.

Medi-Cal is amazing, but there is a cutoff and that cutoff is really on what you can make a year and it's really small. And if you think about being under the \$20,000 a year in LA, like you just can't fathom that, you know, and surviving, but then you think of all the people that make \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year, and then you wonder, how are they surviving? ...How are they even participating in health care?" - **Jeffrey Rodriguez**

Helpful Links

[Health Insurance Coverage and Access to Care for LGBTQ+ Individuals: Current Trends and Key Challenges - Issue Brief](#), Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services

[1 In 8 LGBTQ+ Americans Face Health Insurance Discrimination, New Survey Shows](#), *Forbes Magazine*

[Medicaid Eligibility & Requirements in California](#), *Covered California*

[Understanding Poverty in the LGBTQ+ Community](#), *Human Rights Campaign*

[The Complexity of LGBT Poverty in the United States](#), *Institute for Research on Poverty*

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health](#), Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services

[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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