



summer 2005
THE HEALTH ISSUE

lccp

news

we've advanced LBT HEALTH @

Access Community Health Network,
Rogers Park & Grand Boulevard
American Cancer Society
Centers for Disease Control,
National Breast & Cervical
Cancer Early Detection Program
City of Champaign Health Department
Dupage County Health Department
Illinois Masonic Hospital,
Mammography Department
Illinois Department of Public Health
Breast + Cervical Cancer Program
Lasalle County Health Department
Loyola University
Mercy Hospital
Midwestern University
Mount Sinai Out Patient Psychiatry Dept.
National STD/HIV Conference
Northwestern University Medical School
Planned Parenthood of Bloomington,
Champaign & Ottawa, Illinois
University of Illinois at Chicago,
School of Medicine
Westside Health Coalition
Winnebago County Health Dept.



MORE COAC 2005 PICS INSIDE!

Changing Health Care, One Provider at a Time

words by VICTORIA STAGG ELLIOTT

LAURA L. GRIMES, LCSW, HAS HAD IT WITH DOCTORS and nurses who don't tell her what she needs to hear.

She's tired of lectures about birth control but not safe sex. And she's tired of fighting the assumption that when she says she's sexually active that she means with men.

"As a queer woman, when I go to my doctor and immerse myself in the health care system all kinds of things are assumed about me," said Grimes, who leads sessions organized by LCCP and funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health that aim to educate health care professionals about the needs of lesbian, bisexual and transgender clients. It is stories such as these and a growing body of data that the health care needs of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are different and not being met that has LCCP organizing cultural competency education sessions across the state.

The goal is to reduce discrimination and misinformation about the health needs of queer women among providers and reduce the reluctance of lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients to seek care.

"No woman should jeopardize her health because she fears mistreatment at the hands of the person that she should be able to trust the most, her health care provider," said Venoncia Bate, who also leads these sessions.

The state, in turn, is funding this program in order to reduce barriers to accessing health care, particularly when it comes to screening for breast and cervical cancer, but the hope is that eventually all health care services would be provided without prejudice.

"Providers who know about lesbian health issues will utilize the same treatment strategies for all of their clients regardless of sexual orientations without discrimination," said Emily Doering, Education Coordinator of the Office of Women's Health at the Illinois Department of Public Health. "They will provide respectful, sensitive health care even if they do not agree with someone's behavior or beliefs."

(CONTINUED PAGE 5)

LESBIAN HEALTH MATTERS



**A view from
executive director
Jessica Halem**

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF feminists affected by cancer gathered together to form the Lesbian Community Cancer Project. Today we carry on their vision in our new home inside of Howard Brown Health Center. The board and staff sought a sustainable future for this important organization and because of your support we are now stronger than ever. I'm sure you have questions about this historic alliance. Well, I have some answers for some of the most common ones:

"This alliance is bringing more access to more health care to more women in our community."

» LCCP is still a completely, separate, autonomous 501(c)3 organization. Our board, finances, and everything else is still our own. Every penny you donate to LCCP goes to LCCP.

» LCCP receives office space, telecommunications, IT support, office supplies, and other overhead needs from Howard Brown that will result in a 30% budgetary savings for us.

» The Coming Out Against Cancer Ball will continue bigger and better than ever and still is a crucial fund raiser for our programs. Mark your calendars for February 11, 2006!

The other question folks ask is: "How is it going?" Well, the short answer is: GREAT! We have lived together since November and have finally learned the names of our neighbors and how the copier works. But

most importantly, together, we have received two new grants for programs that directly impact women's lives.

Through our smoking cessation program, Bitch to Quit, and the Stand Against Cancer program, which provides free mammograms and pap smears to low income women, this alliance is bringing more access to more health care to more women in our community. And that is the most important answer.

Thank you for being a vital part of LCCP. We truly could not have done it without you.

p.s. I encourage you to ensure LCCP's success by sending us a donation with the enclosed envelope.

Polk Bros. Foundation Grant Announcement

The Lesbian Community Cancer Project was recently awarded a grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation. Their ongoing support of LCCP over the years reflects their support for all of Chicagoans seeking better access to health care. We thank the Polk Bros. Foundation for their support in helping lesbians, bisexuals and those who are transgender reach their full potential.

POLK BROS FOUNDATION
a foundation for Chicago families



**Vibes included...*



“ I’m a lesbian.
Or dyke.
Or queer.
Or woman lovin’ woman.
Or bi.
Or just me.

And I used to smoke.”

Via LCCP’s Bitch To Quit Stop Smoking Program (now in its 2.0 version in partnership with Howard Brown Health Center) over 100 women will be able to say those words.

BTQ 2.0 is expanded to provide more options for lesbians looking to kick the habit.

DROP-IN GROUPS

- Every Tuesday you can get:
- Advice and tools for quitting smoking
 - Support from other smokers
 - Support from non-smokers
 - Support for staying smoke-free
 - Referrals for other ways to quit

FREE QUIT SMOKING GROUPS

With professional facilitators. In these groups, you get everything you’d get in the drop-in group, but within a more structured, therapeutic setting. We create a safe environment where you can examine your smoking triggers and develop an individual quit plan.

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

We offer support over the phone when you need a word of encouragement or ideas about how to quit.

Sign-up at www.bitchtoquit.com to quit now or call 773-388-8682. We’ve got the tools you need.*

BITCH TO QUIT 2.0 IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY FIREBELLY DESIGN AND EARLY TO BED AND IS FUNDED BY THE AMERICAN LEGACY FOUNDATION.



Listen to Your Vulva

Woman-to-woman transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is much more prevalent than we might like to admit. Herpes, HPV (genital warts or human papilloma virus) and bacterial vaginosis are easily transmitted between women during sex. Depending on your sexual practices, HIV, hepatitis B, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia can also be transmitted between women during sex.

So what to do? **Get a Pap test and the STI screenings you need.**

And listen to your vulva!

We work with the doctors and nurses of Howard Brown Health Center (left) to provide you with the best care possible. To see them, call 773-388-1600 or reach Triad at 773-296-8400 to make an appointment or for a referral to a friendly provider near you.



Caregivers Need Care Too

It's all on your shoulders.

At least, that's the most common feeling I've encountered among women who are the primary caretaker for a loved one with a serious illness or physical injury.

Lesbian couples seem to be highly susceptible to the "it's all on me" feeling because often – out of necessity or perceived necessity – they create an "us against the world" scenario long before illness or injury strikes. Despite gains, homophobia still makes it hard for us to be our full selves with our family, work, and life.



As a result, when one partner's needs overwhelm what her partner can handle – which is frequently true in cases of serious illness or injury – the caregiver's shoulders grow heavy with the knowledge that she can't possibly do it all.

Nothing is more normal or more human than feeling overwhelmed when you're living under the relentless shadow of a life-threatening disease, chronic pain, or debilitating illness.

So here are a few tips for being the primary caregiver to the woman you love when she's suffering with a serious illness or injury:

» You can't be truly helpful without taking care of yourself too. To use the wisdom of a former member of our caregivers support group: "You can't fasten the airline oxygen mask on someone else if you're out cold."

» Its normal to have a few angry feelings bouncing around when it seems like your partner and her health always have to come first. Avoid laying that on her. Find support groups or workshops or therapy that supports you. Create a space in your life where you can go and be as afraid or pissed off or bummed out as you actually feel.

» Make good use of supportive friends and family. It may be hard to know what to tell them when they say, "Just call me if there's anything you need." Give them a concrete task, like the laundry or mowing the grass or taking your beloved to her chemotherapy appointment. It doesn't always have to be you.

So loosen up those shoulders. Take a few tasks off them. Then get a massage. You deserve it.

Paula Walowitz, L.C.P.C., is a therapist in private practice on the north side of Chicago, as well as a freelance writer and an LCCP facilitator. Contact her at 773-293-3688.

SALON SERIES

calendar

JULY 23rd A Good Doc Is Hard To Find: Access To Healthcare for Trans and Masculine-Identified Folks

JULY 23rd When You Get What You Didn't Bargain For: Relationships & Chronic Illness

SEPTEMBER 17th Life Through A Different Lens: Living Single with a Chronic Illness

A GOOD DOC IS HARD TO FIND: ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR TRANS AND MASCULINE-IDENTIFIED FOLKS

Looking for a provider that knows about trans health? How do you get your health-care needs met? Are you happy with your health care provider? This workshop is specifically focused on gender variant individuals who are masculine identified. This workshop will openly discuss the issues surrounding access to care and the best way to obtain care. We will share resources available in the community. So if you're pre-op, post-op, non-op, receiving hormone therapy or not. Please join us in a safe and friendly environment.

SATURDAY, JULY 23RD, 11AM-1PM
4753 N. BROADWAY, BRIDGEVIEW BANK BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM
PLEASE RSVP BY FRIDAY JULY 15TH.
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.

Please contact Logan Grimes at logan@lccp.org or **773-561-4662** for more information.

(CONTINUED PAGE 6)

“She Wanted More”

The 14th Annual Coming Out Against Cancer Ball



According to this year’s theme, **SHE WANTED MORE** and we set out to find just who **SHE** is.

We splattered storefronts with posters and stopped anyone resembling **HER** on the street to tell her about the Ball. We passed **HER** a flyer while she spun the “wheel of folly” at the notorious Capricorn Party. We fought blizzards to host three kickoff parties for **HER**. We drove 36 miles to answer questions and reminisce about past years with suburban **HER**.

words by
JENNIFER RANGEL
COAC Committee
Member

We involved online groups who pinned Chicago Rainbow **HERS** at the Ball with pink carnations.

As donations trickled in, we drove across town for pick-up, so **HER** heart would be full and **HER** car would be packed with auction items. We caught glimpses of **HER** in each committee member and volunteer that made the night so special, whether it be limping after a night of schlepping ice and beer, exhaustively undressing tables, packing leftover auction items, or humbly filling **HER** trunk with leftover hors d’oeuvres to donate to the local homeless shelter.

PHOTOS BY SPENCER
For more photos, please visit www.lccp.org



Changing Health Care One Provider at a Time

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER)

And there is evidence that this program is working. Those who have participated in the program say they have been changed by it. For example, Armida Lira, RN, Case Manager of the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center on Chicago’s Southside, feels that she now knows enough to approach her lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients with a more open mind and to educate her peers about related issues.

“I realized that I did not have a complete understanding of the needs of the lesbian community and that they have unique needs,” she said. “I feel that I now have a more open mind when it comes to understanding the needs of the lesbian community. I also feel that I can educate my colleagues about these needs.”

Thank You

TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS OF THE 2005 COMING OUT AGAINST CANCER BALL

- American Airlines
- Northern Trust
- Motorola
- Olivia
- The L Word on Showtime
- George Jewell Catering
- Miller Brewing Company
- Heineken
- Corona Extra
- Effen Vodka
- Kendall-Jackson Wines
- Mumm Napa Cuvee M Champagne
- Orbitz
- Star Gaze
- Cheetah Gym
- Berlin
- Sidetrack
- Cellblock
- j.weida design
- Christa Holka, photographer
- Chicago Rainbow
- i-Candy Productions
- Chicago Filmmakers
- Windy City Media Group
- Chicago Free Press
- DykeDiva.com
- BoystownChicago.com
- Pink Pages

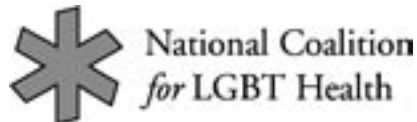
COAC 2005 BY THE NUMBERS

- 24 event committee members
- 6 weeks dedicated outreach
- 2 co-chairs & 1 honorary chair
- \$120,000 dollars raised
- 5 djs (with MC Lyte in command)
- 2,000 attendees
- 86 silent auction items
- 1 chocolate fountain

announcements



SALON SERIES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)



LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: NLGBTHC Membership

LCCP is a member of the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Coalition.

The Coalition coordinates our national efforts in increasing research, policy, support, and services on LGBT health. The Coalition includes local health centers, national research institutions and state-wide advocacy groups.

SAVE THE DATE: LCCP's Fall Brunch

Join honorary co-chairs, Deborah Rethemeyer and Patricia Pocke for "Goin' South," featuring southern music, brunch buffet, fantastic live auction and open bar. **September 25, 2005**
South Restaurant, 5900 N. Broadway.

DYKES PEDALING BIKES

Join LCCP, Dykediva.com, and the Windy City Cycling Club on the second Saturday of the month this summer for "Dykes Pedaling Bikes." This social ride spans Chicago's lakefront. Check www.lccp.org for details and more info.

July 9th / August 13th / September 10th, 2005

WHEN YOU GET WHAT YOU DIDN'T BARGAIN FOR: RELATIONSHIPS & CHRONIC ILLNESS

How does having a chronic illness affect your intimate relationship? How do you cope as the person with the illness and as the person who loves them? In this workshop, female couples explore with one another how their relationships have changed when a chronic illness enters the picture and how they can keep their relationship thriving, despite this.

SATURDAY, JULY 23RD FROM 10AM-12 NOON

LOCATION: LCCP, 4025 N. SHERIDAN
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.

LIFE THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS: LIVING SINGLE WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

How does a chronic illness affect you? Your work? Your ability to form intimate relationships? So often we know how to mobilize once we're first diagnosed, but then what? In this workshop, women will explore with each other what this is like, including developing a support network and other skills to make this easier.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 17TH FROM 10AM-12 NOON

LOCATION: LCCP, 4025 N. SHERIDAN
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.

miscellany

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project is that lesbians, bisexuals and those who are transgender have appropriate and accessible health care in a supportive and bias-free environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project is to advance the health and quality of life for lesbians, bisexuals and those who are transgender through advocacy and public education.

LCCP STAFF

Logan Grimes
Director of Training & Education
Jessica Halem
Executive Director
Catherine Jefcoat
Director of Development

SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATORS & CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINERS

Paula Walowitz, MA, LPC
Laura Grimes, LCSW
Venoncia Bate
Kathie Spegal
Lisa Tonna, LCSW

LCCP BOARD AS OF JUNE 1, 2005

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Please contact laura_grimes@sbcglobal.net or at **773-615-3527**; or paula-jean@ameritech.net or **773-293-3688** for more info regarding either workshop.