



Concerns of the Elderly in the LGBT Community

Challenges faced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) elderly community:

- Family and support networks can be critical to the wellbeing of the elderly. Due to homophobia and other factors, LGBT elderly may not have strong ties to traditional social support networks such as adult children to provide care, extended family or faith-based support, and frequently end up relying on friends and service agencies.
- A recent Met Life survey noted that 27% of LGBT baby boomers reported great concern about discrimination as they age and less than half expressed strong confidence that they will be treated “with dignity and respect” by healthcare professionals.
- Financial challenges include inability to transfer assets such as social security, Medicare, Medicaid and pensions to the surviving partner.
- The same Met Life survey indicated that 51% of LGBT Baby Boomers indicated they have yet to complete wills that spell out their long term and end of life wishes. This is of concern since LGBT partnerships frequently are not recognized legally in matters of health care decisions and finances

The Growing Together Initiative is making a difference in addressing GLBT elderly concerns in San Luis Obispo County:

2002 Gay And Lesbian Alliance received \$1,000 to conduct a LGBT Senior Survey, identifying specific needs of local seniors within the LGBT community and possible support services to be provided by GALA.

2004 San Luis Obispo Community Counseling Center received \$4,896 from GTI to provide, in collaboration with a mental health professional association, a local LGBTQ training for mental health professionals and implement three weekly support groups for LGBTQ individuals.

2005 Gay And Lesbian Alliance received \$5,000 to develop a video documentary about local LGBT elderly community members entitled “The History Project.”

2006 San Luis Obispo County Bar Association received \$2,000 from GTI to conduct workshops to educate the community on Domestic Partnership laws in California and provide information on the importance of estate planning for the LGBT population.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.