

LGBTQ+: NY's Goal of Aging Without Discrimination

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By Candace Dellacona

It is no surprise to LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies that nine out of ten of those who identify as LGBTQ+ fear discrimination in medical settings. According to SAGE, LGBTQ+ people are two times as likely to age alone and four times less likely to have children who might otherwise serve as caregivers and advocates. This means the LGBTQ+ population is even more vulnerable as they age.

As a result, and at long last, Governor Hochul signed a law that is intended to address this discrimination related to the medical care received by the LGBTQ+ community in the home care and nursing home setting. Beginning in June 2023, New York State will require that all home health aides, certified nurses' aides and personal care aides – essentially the backbone of a senior's long-term care team– will receive training focused on providing care to patients of diverse sexual orientations, expressions and gender identities.

This ambitious and much-needed law includes several components that will be included in the training program. Much of the training relates to the education of the caregivers to provide comprehensive explanations of various terms related to the LGBTQ+ community and provides an understanding of *why* patients with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions may conceal their identities. The goal of the training is, of course, to incorporate the concerns of these patients and ensure that they receive "person" directed care and to address the unique healthcare needs of LGBTQ+ patients.

In light of the nearly 400 anti-LGBTQ+ legislative actions pending in the states across the country, it's heartening that New York is taking the lead to combat this discrimination, especially for the most vulnerable in the LGBTQ+ population.