

Training PA Students to Provide LGBTQ Care Via a Novel Elective Experience

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LGBTQ+ Health Elective helps students feel more confident and knowledgeable in caring for LGBTQ+ patients.

- “I had a lot of exposure to many different patient populations during this rotation. I think what I learned the most is **never assume** anything about the patient and always be direct but understanding. Especially when working with transgender patients, it is important to continue to **reevaluate goals of care** and **be partnered** with them about what they want to achieve.”
- “I feel I’ll be more cognizant of the **social barriers for the LGBTQ community**. This rotation has also **motivated me** to seek a career at community centers with large LGBTQ populations in the future.”

BACKGROUND

- LGBTQ+ adults account for more than 4% of the US adult population.
- LGBTQ+ patients face health disparities and there is a shortage of providers to care for them.
- Data on LGBTQ+ content in PA curricula is scarce.
- Across 4 years of medical school, median number of hours spent on LGBTQ+ content is 5.
- To provide students with an educational opportunity to focus on LGBTQ+ patients, we created a 4 week elective course during the clinical phase of PA education.



Sample Weekly Schedule	Morning	Afternoon	
Monday	PreP Clinic	PreP Clinic	May also see patients with HIV
Tuesday	Community Clinic	Community Clinic	Family Medicine with focus on LGBTQ+ patients in low resource setting
Wednesday	Adult Endocrine Clinic with focus on transgender patients	Quality Improvement Project Time	QI project focusing on LGBTQ+ specific issues in a LGBTQ+ Patient-Centered Medical Home
Thursday	Community Clinic	Community Clinic	Family Medicine with focus on LGBTQ+ patients in low resource setting
Friday	Child & Adolescent Gender Clinic	Child & Adolescent Gender Clinic	Clinical experiences with pediatric endo, surgery, social work

METHODS

- Students completed pre- and post- course surveys regarding learning priorities, knowledge, and comfort related to caring for LGBTQ+ patients.
- Students also completed routine course evaluations.

RESULTS

- Two students have completed the course to date. Both strongly agreed with statements indicating increased confidence and knowledge in caring for LGBTQ+ patients.
- Rotation performed above standard PA program established benchmarks for all routine measures used for routine course evaluation.

DISCUSSION

- Feedback from PA students indicates that this novel clinical rotation experience improves their competency in caring for LGBTQ+ patients.
- A LGBTQ+ elective can help address the shortage of providers to care for LGBTQ+ patients by providing additional training in this area.
- PA programs could consider increasing rotations at sites that serve larger LGBTQ+ populations or offering unique elective experiences in order to enhance student confidence in caring for LGBTQ+ patients.
- Blending both didactic and clinical year opportunities may be most beneficial.

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