
Subject: LGBTQ Community and COVID-19

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 3:00:28 PM Eastern Daylight Time

The following information was sent on behalf of the Alliance for Full Acceptance, a community organization committed to achieving equality and acceptance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people.

SUPPORT AFFA

Dear Friends,

We know that these are uncertain and worrisome times and we wanted to take a moment to update you on how AFFA is closely monitoring the situation and taking the necessary precautions on our end to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and prioritizing the health and needs of our community. Serving and advocating for the LGBTQ+ community is at the center of everything we do. Know that we are still working on your behalf and just a phone call or email away if you are in need of support.

Please take care and stay well,

Chase Glenn
Executive Director, AFFA
chase@affa-sc.org

OUR OPERATIONS

Staff Working Remotely

Based on recommendations from public health officials related to social distancing, AFFA staff is temporarily working remotely. You can still reach us on our main phone number (843-883-0343) between 9:00AM and 5:00PM and we will regularly be checking voicemails. We are also still available via email.

Upcoming Events

We have postponed the AFFA Lowcountry Boil that was to take place at Bowens Island on March 29, 2020. We will reschedule this event for a later date. At this time, the AFFA Golf Tournament at Shadowmoss Golf Club will remain as scheduled on May 9, 2020. More information will be available soon.

Equality Hub Programming

For the time being, all meetings organized by outside groups will not be held at the Equality Hub. Out of an abundance of caution, we are limiting access to the space. We do

not have an exact date for when these meetings will be able to return to the Hub, but will be communicating this information directly with these groups.

THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY AND COVID-19

There are many members of our LGBTQ community who are at greater risk at this time. When considering the steps you are taking to mitigate your own risk of illness, also consider other members of our community who are at greater risk.

These are factors that can increase risk for LGBTQ community members:

- LGBTQ people experience higher rates of HIV and of cancer. This means more of us may have weakened immune systems that can make us more vulnerable to COVID-19.
 - COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, and LGBTQ people smoke tobacco at much higher rates than our heterosexual cisgender peers.
 - Our diverse community includes over 3 million LGBTQ elders here in the US alone. Our LGBTQ elders are less likely than other older folks to use health and wellness services like meal programs and senior centers due to anti-LGBTQ discrimination and harassment. Since this virus affects older people more severely, this a serious issue for our community.
 - LGBTQ people regularly experience discrimination and lack of cultural competence when seeking health care. As a result, many avoid or delay seeking health care even in emergency situations.
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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

- Call, message, or video chat with community members who are isolated and alone — especially the elders in our community who are at-risk and particularly vulnerable at this time.
 - Virtually check in on young LGBTQ community members who may be in self-isolation with unsupportive families
 - [Report any instances of anti-LGBTQ discrimination](#) in healthcare and services to AFFA
 - [Share with us the names of your LGBTQ-competent and friendly healthcare providers](#) so we can share this information with others who contact us inquiring about services
 - When you are no longer practicing social distancing, help support LGBTQ-owned businesses with your dollars
 - [Continue to support LGBTQ nonprofit organizations like AFFA](#) who are also taking a financial hit by canceling fundraising events and outreach.
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SOCIAL DISTANCING DISTRACTION

While we of course are not making light of COVID-19, we also realize that many in our community are in self-isolation and may be looking for a little distraction for themselves or their loved ones. In that spirit, we are providing an AFFA Word Search. [Print out the AFFA Word Search](#) and share with your friends and family. Interested in learning what some of the words in the Word Search mean? [Refer back to AFFA's online LGBTQ_101 Glossary of Terms](#).

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