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## New LGBTQ+ Care Type is a Move Forward for Health Care at Home



A Conversation between Arthur Fitting, BSN, RN, Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) and Barbara Warren, PsyD, CPXP, Senior Director for LGBT Programs and Policies in the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, Mount Sinai Health System (MSHS).

“We all have unconscious biases,” says the Mount Sinai Health System’s Barbara Warren, one of the leading voices in LGBTQ+ health equity and advocacy. “It’s protective, it’s primal.”

What, then, can the nation’s health care system do to ensure that LGBTQ+ youth, adults and elders—historically, on the wrong end of that bias—can get the clinically and culturally appropriate care they need to stay safe and healthy?

Dr. Warren, who directs Mount Sinai’s LGBT Programs and Policies in the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and Arthur Fitting, the Visiting Nurse Service of New York’s LGBTQ+ Program Manager, spoke recently about groundbreaking initiatives that include Mount Sinai’s system-wide advances in health equity and VNSNY’s newly launched Care Type program to target even more resources and support to LGBTQ+ people receiving health care at home.

Through her work at MSHS, Dr. Warren demonstrates that providers can prioritize LGBTQ+ cultural competency and communication at scale. And now, VNSNY, the nation’s leader in not-for-profit home care, is working to ensure that LGBTQ+ sensitivity and understanding extend to home care once someone is discharged from the hospital or rehabilitative care.

This spring, VNSNY introduced into practice the LGBTQ+ Care Type, which takes to the next level the organization’s promise to deliver safe, effective and whole-person care to the LGBTQ+ community. VNSNY has already committed to providing SAGECare training to all employees, including education on LGBTQ+ cultural issues and sensitivities and best practices around sexual orientation and gender identity. The new LGBTQ+ Care Type, says Mr. Fitting, will enable VNSNY

to better understand the health needs of the LGBTQ+ community and more strategically target support, education and care.

“Care Type” is a data designation that reflects an important part of a patient’s health profile. In this case, it references patients who self-identified as LGBTQ+ at a referring organization and who, upon intake to VNSNY, or at any time during their care, elect to take advantage of VNSNY’s LGBTQ+ program or services.

Use of the Care Type can help care providers better understand needs, tailor care and assess outcomes. For example, a Care Type can help to designate which kinds of health screening and health education should be targeted for the best health outcomes. Care Types can also help to identify a person’s lived experience, such as being a military veteran or a member of the LGBTQ+ community. In addition to providing information for the plan of care, a Care Type also enables clinicians and health care administrators to collect and track data as well as outcomes.

“Our goal is to provide the highest quality of care and wellness for this population,” said Mr. Fitting, who is himself a nurse and who will, as part of the initiative, support VNSNY home care case managers in understanding LGBTQ+ health issues and assessing patient and staff needs. Use of the Care Type will not only help to identify patients who need further health education, he says, it will also help in the evaluation of patients’ support systems and linking them to LGBTQ+ community resources.

Studies show that LGBTQ+ youth and adults face many health stresses, including increased risk of discrimination, depression, suicide ideation, substance use, and delayed treatment and care. As they age, LGBTQ+ elders are more likely than non-LGBT peers to avoid the health care system right when they need it most, and to report feeling isolated and vulnerable, according to SAGE (Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders).

Important elements of the VNSNY-wide program, which began rolling out in June, include staff training and awareness, data collection to inform and improve outcomes, and a highly collaborative and integrative approach to ensure 360-degree, inclusive care for all patients.

To read the entire discussion, please visit:

<https://arthurfittingvnsny.medium.com/new-lgbtq-care-type-is-a-move-forward-for-health-care-at-home-494148601b68>