

Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office

Annual Report

FY 2017



National Institutes of Health
Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office



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SGMRO Annual Report FY 2017

Introduction

The mission of the NIH is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and to apply that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. At the NIH, the Office of the Director (OD) is the central office responsible for setting policy for the NIH and for planning, managing, and coordinating the programs and activities of the NIH's 27 components. The **Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office** (SGMRO) resides within the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) in the OD.

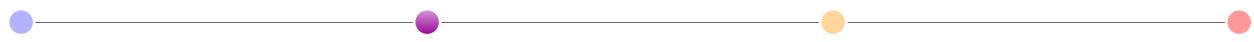


Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office

The SGMRO coordinates sexual and gender minority (SGM)-related research and activities by working directly with NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs) and by providing a point of contact for stakeholders outside the NIH. The Office was officially established in September 2015. "Sexual and gender minority" is an umbrella phrase that encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, as well as those whose sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions, or reproductive development varies from traditional, societal, cultural, or



The 2017 Fiscal Year marked a major policy change: Sexual and gender minorities were designated a health disparities population alongside racial/ethnic minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, and underserved rural populations for the purpose of research at the National Institutes of Health.



physiological norms. This includes individuals with disorders or differences of sex development (DSD), sometimes known as intersex.

The NIH has enumerated the limited areas of study in the SGM portfolio in its recent [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2016 Sexual & Gender Minority Portfolio Analysis](#) and is taking active steps to increase research in this area. This report highlights select SGM-related activities at the NIH during FY 2017 and is intended to be a sampling of all NIH SGM-related activities. The examples included here are mapped to the four goals of the [NIH FY 2016–2020 Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-Being of Sexual and Gender Minorities](#) and illustrate the breadth of activities across the agency rather than all related activities and initiatives.

NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan

In 2015, the NIH released its first SGM research strategic plan, which covers FY 2016–FY 2020, to help guide efforts to increase research and related activities in SGM health. This report is organized by that plan's four goal areas rather than by IC to reflect the collaborative and crosscutting nature of these efforts. In the coming year, the NIH SGM Research Working Group will convene to evaluate NIH's progress across the four goal areas of the strategic plan. Recommendations from this mid-course review will allow any needed course corrections and inform the development of the 2021–2026 NIH SGM research strategic plan.

Goal 1



Expand the Knowledge Base of SGM Health and Well-Being Through NIH-Supported Research

Introduction

The NIH recognizes that more research in SGM health is critical to better understand both the well-being of and the potentially undiscovered health disparities experienced by this population. SGM-related research is challenged by the particular nature of the health needs of SGM individuals, which are specific not only to a disease, condition, identity, or social group, but also to socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and geographic location. Increased SGM status demographic data collection and a better understanding of the many sub-populations, including DSD, sometimes described as intersex, that make up the community is crucial as the research field moves forward. Despite these challenges, investigators are developing novel ways to conduct meritorious research that meaningfully captures the health conditions and needs of SGM communities.

In October 2016, the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) **designated SGM populations as a health disparity population for the NIH**, and subsequently, all NIMHD Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) now identify SGM populations as a population of interest. The designation also impacts health disparities work across the other NIH ICs by including SGM populations in any work focused on health disparity populations. This includes the NIH Loan Repayment Program in health disparities research.

The following research-related activities illustrate the type of undertakings that occur at the NIH to expand the knowledge base of SGM health.



Funding Opportunity Announcements

The NIH is working to stimulate SGM-relevant research with both targeted FOAs that focus exclusively on SGM populations and other FOAs that can be applied to SGM health and well-being.

The SGMRO oversaw the issuance and award of **Administrative Supplements for Research on Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Populations**. Fifteen NIH components signed on to this FOA. Awards





Administrative Supplements for Research on Sexual and Gender Minority Populations

15
NIH components signed on to this Funding Opportunity Announcement

Awards totaling

\$1,291,233

WERE MADE TO

13
GRANTEES
ACROSS EIGHT NIH INSTITUTES

totaling \$1,291,233 were made to 13 grantees across eight NIH Institutes: the National Cancer Institute (NCI); the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; the National Institute on Aging (NIA); the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD); the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK); the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA); and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Several OD offices also co-sponsored these awards, including the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), the Office of

AIDS Research (OAR), and the Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH).

The Health of Sexual and Gender Minority Populations, sponsored by the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) with multiple co-sponsors, continued to elicit a robust response from the research community in FY 2017. This announcement was issued to encourage research in biological, clinical, behavioral, and social processes that affect the health and development of SGM populations and their families.

In FY 2017, the NIH issued a new FOA, [Research on the Health of Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Populations](#). This announcement, led by the NICHD with participation from several NIH components, calls for research on the health of transgender and gender nonconforming people of all ages. This includes individuals who are making or who have made a transition from identifying as one gender to the other. This group also encompasses individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex on their original birth certificate, whose gender identity is nonbinary, or who are questioning their gender identity.

The NIMHD initiative [Engaging Youth and Young Adults from Health Disparity Populations in the HIV Treatment Cascade](#) is important to help eliminate HIV. This initiative supports research projects that implement and test comprehensive service approaches to engage and retain youth and young adults (ages 12–25 years) from health disparity populations in the HIV treatment cascade, which includes diagnosis, linkage to care, engagement in care, retention in care, initiation of antiretroviral therapy, and achievement of viral suppression.

In FY 2017, the NIMHD also funded [Innovations for Healthy Living—Improving Population Health and Eliminating Health Disparities](#). This FOA supports

small businesses in developing a product, process, or service for commercialization to reduce disparities in health care access and health outcomes, prevent disease, and improve health in one or more NIH-defined health disparity population groups. Technologies supported through this program are expected to be effective, affordable, culturally acceptable, and accessible to health disparity populations.

Additional examples of FY 2017 FOAs issued by the NIMHD and other ICOs include [Mechanisms of Disparities in Chronic Liver Diseases and Cancer](#); [Mechanisms and Consequences of Sleep Disparities in the U.S.](#); [Clinical and Epidemiological Research on Chronic Disease in the Caribbean](#); [Collaborative Minority Health and Health Disparities Research with Tribal Epidemiology Centers](#); and [Research Centers in Minority Institutions](#). NIMHD also funds the [NIH Extramural Loan Repayment Program for Health Disparities Research](#).



NIDA sponsored several FOAs related to SGM populations in FY 2017. The FOA [HIV/HCV Co-Infections in Substance Abusers](#) seeks proposals for high-impact research to fill gaps in our understanding of the impact of substance abuse on HIV, HIV/hepatitis C virus (HCV) co-infection-associated disease progression, the pathogenic interactions between HIV and HCV, and hepatic and nonhepatic comorbidities associated with HIV/HCV co-infections in people with substance use disorders. The FOA emphasizes research among at-risk populations, including men who have sex with men (MSM). Sexual risk behaviors, often associated with drug use, have been linked with HCV transmission among MSM. HCV infection is six- to eightfold more likely in MSM who are infected with HIV than in those who are HIV negative, highlighting a priority population for this area of research.

tion, etiology, comorbidities, and consequences of drug use, misuse, and addiction across individuals, families, communities, and diverse population groups. NIDA also sponsored the FOA [Drug Abuse Prevention Intervention Research](#), which seeks proposals that employ rigorous scientific methods to test theoretically derived hypotheses to increase understanding of the science of drug use prevention within diverse populations and settings and across the lifespan.

ORWH sponsored the [Administrative Supplements for Research on Sex/Gender Influences](#). These supplements are intended to support research highlighting the impact of sex/gender influences and/or sex and gender factors in human health and illness, including basic, preclinical, clinical, and behavioral studies. Of special interest are studies relevant to understanding the significance of biological sex on cells and tissue explants; comparative studies of male and female tissues, organs, and physiological systems; and sex-based comparisons of pathophysiology, biomarkers, gene expression, clinical presentation, and prevention and treatment of diseases. The most robust experimental designs include consideration of both sex and gender, so applications proposing to investigate the influence of both sex and gender factors are highly



The funding opportunity [Epidemiology of Drug Abuse](#) seeks research proposals to enhance understanding of the nature, extent, distribu-

encouraged. This administrative supplement has the potential to inform our understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and reproductive development.

ORWH also funds the mentored career-development program [Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health \(BIRCWH\)](#). It connects junior faculty, known as BIRCWH Scholars, to senior faculty with shared research interest in women's health and sex-differences research. One of the scholars funded in FY 2017 also serves as Director of the Transgender Clinic at her institution and has extensive training in and understanding of the many complex and intersectional issues affecting transgender youth.

In FY 2017, ORWH also released [Administrative Supplements for Research on the Health of Women of Underrepresented, Understudied, and Under-reported \(U3\) Populations](#). This administrative supplement required that projects focus on one or more health disparity populations, which now include sexual and gender minorities.

A Request for Applications (RFA) led by NIMH, [Improving the HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis \(PrEP\) Cascade](#), requested research applications to im-

prove the use of HIV preventive medicine among individuals at substantial risk for HIV infection. The FOA included a call for work focusing on MSM and transgender individuals. Of the 13 awards that have been made under this RFA, approximately half address MSM.



In response to the NIH Fogarty International Center (FIC) Global Stigma Research Workshop, the NIMH, FIC, and NCI released a new FOA entitled [Reducing Stigma to Improve HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#). The FOA includes a call for research on the impact of stigma on MSM and transgender women with or at risk for HIV in these settings.

The NIH continues to fund the Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR) program. Currently, 19 center grants provide administrative and shared research support to enhance and coordinate high-quality AIDS



research in the United States. The CFAR program is administratively managed by the CFAR team in the Basic Science Program, Division of AIDS, NIAID, and is scientifically managed by the NIH CFAR Steering

Committee, which comprises representatives from the 11 co-funding ICOs, as well as the FIC and the OAR. Many CFARs are conducting research in SGM populations, and several have held symposia dedicated to SGM health, including sessions addressing transgender issues and HIV risk.

NIAID continues to support five clinical trial networks that conduct domestic and international human studies focused on HIV/AIDS: [AIDS Clinical Trials Group \(ACTG\)](#), [HIV Prevention Trials Network \(HPTN\)](#), [HIV Vaccine Trials Network \(HVTN\)](#), [International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials \(IMPAACT\)](#), and [Microbicide Trials Network \(MTN\)](#). The networks have been undertaking re-

search since the late 1990s and have worked with SGM populations since their inception.

The NIH is collaborating on an RFA with partners from across the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, along with the Appalachian Regional Commission. The FOA [HIV, HCV and Related Comorbidities in Rural Communities Affected by Opioid Injection Drug Epidemics in the United States: Building Systems for Prevention, Treatment and Control](#) solicited research proposals to inform community responses and promote comprehensive, integrated approaches to prevent HIV and HCV infection, along with such associated comorbidities as hepatitis B virus infection and sexually transmitted diseases, among people who inject drugs in rural U.S. communities. Selected projects will yield evidence of the effectiveness of community response models and best practices that can be implemented by public health systems in response to opioid injection epidemics in similar rural communities in the United States. The collaboration encourages projects to recruit sexual minorities and other populations at high risk.

Data Collection on SGM Populations

During FY 2017, a number of data collection efforts were aimed at enumerating and describing SGM populations, both nationally and at the community level.

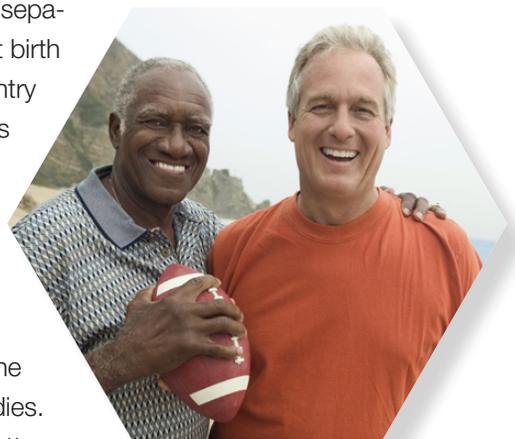
The SGMRO continued to play an active role in the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys, coordinated by the Office of Management and Budget. The SGMRO Director serves as co-chair for the subgroup exploring data collection about youth.

The *All of UsSM* research program is an ambitious effort to gather data over time from 1 million or more people living in the United States, with the ultimate goal of accelerating research and improving health. Researchers will use data from the program to learn more about how individual differences in genes, environments, and lifestyle can influence health and disease. By taking part, people will be able to learn more about their own health and contribute to an effort that will advance the health of generations to come.

In July 2017, *All of UsSM* funded its first four community organizations to begin building a national network of trusted leaders to motivate diverse communities to join the research program, which is part of

the Precision Medicine Initiative. These awardees will raise awareness about the program among seniors, Hispanics and Latinos, African Americans, and SGM populations to complement other outreach efforts of the program. The San Francisco General Hospital Foundation will form a national network to engage SGMs across the country in *All of UsSM*. The team will provide input on enrollment materials and research plans, develop customized educational programs, and study best practices in the dissemination of research results to support retention.

Currently, the NIAID HIV/AIDS clinical trials networks are focusing on transgender populations, which are overrepresented in HIV infection and disease burden compared to other populations. The ACTG, HPTN, HVTN, and MTN collect baseline data on gender identity separate from sex at birth on screening/entry for all volunteers in their clinical trials, and several of the networks also collect baseline data on hormone use in their studies. This helps to better



describe variations in treatment/immunogenicity responses, safety responses, and outcomes in relation to exogenous hormone use.

In response to feedback from transgender research participants, the Clinical Center at the NIH has removed the sex marker from patient wristbands. Training also was offered to Clinical Center staff on the following: defining important lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) concepts and terms, understanding the relationship between stigma and LGBTQ health disparities, describing best practices in LGBTQ health related to effective communication and data collection, and creating an inclusive and affirming environment. These trainings were interactive and included role-playing scenarios and instructional demonstration videos that depicted typical interactions that staff might experience when interacting with patients and others. The goal is to provide a more affirming environment at the NIH for SGM communities. Training is ongoing; the Clinical Center will begin to collect gender identity data for all research participants beginning in FY 2018.



In December 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act was signed into law. The Act states the NIH shall “encourage efforts to improve research related to the health of sexual and gender minority populations.”

In FY 2017, the Prevention of Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (PLUS) investigators, working in collaboration with the Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago, began to replicate their focus group work in lesbian and transgender male participants. The results of this focus group study will provide insights as to how future PLUS work can be as inclusive of SGM populations as possible. The PLUS Research Consortium was established in 2015 by the NIDDK to establish the knowledge and information base necessary to permit future studies of prevention of lower urinary tract symptoms in adolescent girls and women.

Goal 2



Remove Barriers to Planning, Conducting, and Reporting NIH-Supported Research about SGM Health and Well-Being

Introduction

In addition to expanding research in SGM health, the NIH also must ensure that structural barriers to advancing SGM health research are addressed. The ever-improving coordination of SGM-related research activities across the NIH further highlights NIH's commitment to catalyze the growth of the field. The SGMRO is committed to building collaborations within the NIH to enhance the understanding of unique issues relevant to SGM research. The SGMRO communicates with the extramural community about scientific areas of interest and connects researchers and scholars with appropriate contacts across the NIH. The SGMRO also provides outreach to the extramural community and other stakeholders to help educate researchers and scholars about NIH's structure and funding resources.

Various components across the NIH are working internally to increase communication and awareness about SGM health research. In addition, ICOs educate extramural researchers and other parts of government about the work being conducted at the NIH through conference presentations and internal collaborations.

In FY 2017, the SGMRO hosted its first-ever summer intern. Assignments focused on the development of communications materials, such as the SGMRO brochure, which includes an overview of the office, its strategic goals, basic terms and definitions, and office contact information. The brochures are available for SGMRO and other NIH staff to help promote SGM research across the spectrum of health.

The SGMRO utilizes a listserv to communicate with the extramural research community and other interested parties about activities related to SGM health research. Throughout 2017, the listserv membership increased by 217 members.

Outreach, Education, and Coordination

NIAID's Division of AIDS created the HIV/AIDS Network Coordination (HANC) Office to manage crosscutting administrative and scientific issues across the HIV/AIDS clinical trial networks. One of the HANC working groups, the Cross-Network Transgender Working Group (CNTWG), coordinates issues related to transgender research and training across the networks. In FY 2017, the CNTWG meetings included presentations about the inclusion of transgender women in research and their concerns about the interaction of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and feminizing hormone therapy. In addition, the CNTWG Training Subcommittee completed the development of an introductory transgender-related training module. Other training modules were drafted, and plans are underway to pilot test all the modules throughout FY 2018 and begin their development into online training tools.

education module, developed by the NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity, initially was launched with NIEHS intramural managers. Training sessions were subsequently made available to all NIEHS employees. Components of the training include the following: the reality of unconscious bias and its effects on decision-making and interpersonal interactions, awareness of how unconscious bias affects both personal and professional lives, and mitigation techniques to minimize negative impacts of unconscious bias.

In November 2016, NIMH program staff attended the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Stigma and Discrimination Expert Consultation. Numerous presentations focused on the impact of stigma on HIV among MSM and transgender women.

In FY 2017, the NICHD created a fellowship in pediatric endocrinology. The 3-year program provides comprehensive training in clinical patient management and guidance in the development of research skills. The fellowship is based at the NIH, where clinical research protocols are maintained for investigating the treatment of adrenal and pituitary tumors, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, precocious puberty, idiopathic juvenile osteoporosis, Cushing's syndrome, obesity, and other health conditions.



National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) employees continue to participate in unconscious bias training sessions. An unconscious bias

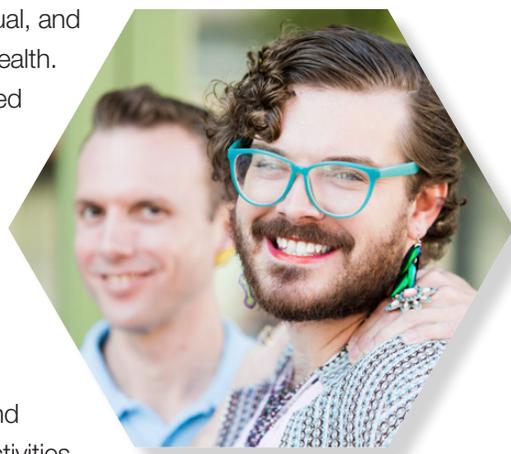
Presentations

The SGMRO Director presented on numerous occasions in FY 2017, educating researchers, NIH staff, and the public about the history and establishment of the SGMRO, the goals of the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan, and the NIH SGM research portfolio. Several of the presentations are highlighted below. The SGMRO reached out to the NIH community, including program officers, about the work of the office and how best to include SGM populations within research initiatives. Internal presentations included the following components of the NIH: the National Library of Medicine, NIDDK, NIMH, NIMHD, ORWH, the Council of Councils (a committee that advises the NIH Director on matters related to the policies and activities of the DPCPSI), and the DPCPSI Office of Administrative Management and Communications.

an, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health.

The talk included terminology and research context, population estimates, data about the health of SGM populations, and NIH-specific activities since publication of the

2011 Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) report, [The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding](#).



In December, the SGMRO Director presented to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and provided an overview of the NIH's progress in SGM health research. The presentation focused on transgender health and its relevance to the FDA.

In January 2017, the Clinical Center Grand Rounds featured an SGM-related lecture. This event was part of the Contemporary Clinical Medicine, Great Teachers Lecture Series, and featured the presentation entitled “‘[Genderation](#)’ of Youth: [Developmental Considerations in the Clinical Approach to Gender Diverse and Transgender Children and Adolescents](#).”



The SGMRO began in fall 2016 with a presentation to the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh, where the Office's Director addressed members of the Center for Lesbi-



Also in January 2017, the SGMRO Director and representatives from the NCI and NIA presented at a special session at the Society for Social Work and Research Annual Meeting. The session

focused on NIH structure, funding opportunities, and the goals of the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan.

To raise awareness about cancer in SGM populations, the SGMRO Director engaged in the Research to Reality Cyber-Seminar Series in January 2017, presenting on “[LGBTQ Health Disparities: Gains We’ve Made and Challenges We Face](#).” This presentation consisted of a description of the NIH’s recent designation of sexual and gender minorities as a health disparity population for NIH research purposes. The webinar also highlighted potential implications for cancer control researchers and practitioners, along with resources relevant to SGM health disparities.

The principal investigator of an NIA-supported study presented to the NIH community in February 2017.

The talk, entitled “Advancing Research on Sexual and Gender Minority Older Adult Health Within a Shifting Context,” provided an overview of work being done with older SGM adults.

In March 2017, the SGMRO Director presented at the American Academy of Dermatology Conference to the newly formed Expert Resource Group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health. The discussion helped facilitate communication and collaboration among expert medical, surgical, and cosmetic dermatologists with an interest in promoting LGBT health and well-being through research and related activities.

Also in March 2017, the SGMRO Director was joined by Atlanta-area academics and activists to discuss interdisciplinary approaches for conducting research on the health and wellness of SGM populations. The event, Intersectionality: A Grant-Thinking Workshop, was sponsored by Emory University.

March 2017 marked the SGMRO Director’s visit to The Ohio State University. As part of the Catalyst Research Series, the SGMRO Director presented on the diverse health challenges facing SGM communities and the progress that the NIH has made to date in increasing research in SGM health. The SGMRO Director also met with students and early investigators to discuss NIH grantspersonship.

NIMH program staff attended the 38th Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions of the Society of Behavioral Medicine in April 2017. Many symposia focused on stigma among MSM and its impact on health outcomes. NIMH program staff also gave a presentation in April at the NIH FIC Global Stigma Research Workshop on intersectional stigma among MSM and transgender women.

Several NIH program officers from different Institutes presented with the Director of the SGMRO at the LGBT Health Workforce Conference in New York City in April 2017. This meeting was sponsored by the organization Building the Next Generation of Academic Physicians, which works to engage students and physicians from underrepresented communities in biomedical research. The NIDCD, NIAID, and NCI were represented.

NIMHD provided an R13 conference grant to Northwestern University to support the 2017 National LGBTQ Health Conference in Chicago, Illinois, in April. NIMHD staff attended the conference and participated both in the plenary session “Sexual & Gender Minority Health Research and Services: View from the Federal Government” and in the Professional Development Institute following the conference, where postdoctoral and junior faculty learned about NIH SGM research priorities and received individual feedback on potential research ideas. Several program officers—including

those representing the NIMH, NIDA, and NCI—and the SGMRO Director also served as faculty for the Professional Development Institute.

In May 2017, in celebration of Nurses’ Week, the NCI sponsored a presentation by the Executive Director of the National LGBT Cancer Network. The presentation was held at the Clinical Center and provided nurses and other staff with information about health disparities among sexual and gender minorities, effective communication, and how to provide an affirming environment for this population at the Clinical Center.

A NIDA program officer helped organize and served as a discussant for a symposium in June 2017 at the Society for Prevention Research in Washington, D.C., entitled Sexual Minority Health Disparities: Using Innovative Methods to Explore Different Etiologies. The symposium explored novel research strategies to understand and address the range of health disparities affecting SGM



communities. The SGMRO Director participated in a special interest group with prevention scholars working or interested in the areas of LGBT health and well-being to discuss how to bolster prevention research and implementation in ways that seek to eradicate LGBT health disparities.

In June 2017, the SGMRO Director participated in a working group on the State of LGBTQ Youth



Health and Well-Being: Strengthening Schools and Families to Build Resilience. The symposium was organized by the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Well-Being at Northwestern Uni-

versity, as well as the Center for Prevention Implementation Methodology, Advocates for Youth, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, and the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. The symposium was centered around the vital nature of support for LGBTQ youth from people at school and family.

In July 2017, the SGMRO Director presented at an Amgen Scholars Symposium. The Amgen Scholars program at the NIH is a partnership between the Amgen Foundation, the Foundation for the NIH, and the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education. The program brings together young scientists from across the country to learn about scientific research in health disparities and advances in the field. The SGMRO Director provided this group with a detailed overview of SGM health research, the formation of the Office, and the Office's purpose and current priorities. This was followed by small group discussion.

Also in July, the SGMRO Director participated in a researchers' convening on recent advances in measuring sexual orientation and gender identity and innovative new methods for studying SGM populations, sponsored by Google™ and the Williams Institute of the University of California, Los Angeles. The Director briefed the audience on the development of the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan and the establishment of the SGMRO. In addition, the contemporary funding landscape was discussed, along with the 2016 designation of the SGM community as a health disparities population for NIH research.

Also in July 2017, the SGMRO Director served as a discussant at a session of the 2017 Joint Statistical

Meeting of the American Statistical Association. The session, “TRANScending Data Gaps: Advances in Transgender Research Using Survey and Administrative Data,” focused on measures and data collection among the transgender population in health care settings, primarily through the use of administrative data sets.

In September 2017, the SGMRO Director and colleagues from agencies across HHS presented at the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association’s Annual Meeting. The session, “Priorities and Capacity Building in Sexual and Gender Minority Research,” focused on activities across the Department related to SGM health research.

In late September 2017, the National Advisory Council on Aging Task Force’s Minority Aging and Health Disparities Research Meeting focused exclusively on SGM health disparities research. The SGMRO Director presented an update on SGM-related activities at the NIH; an extramural researcher presented data about SGM-related research with older adults.

Technical Assistance to Principal Investigators

The SGMRO continued to provide technical assistance to principal investigators who had research

ideas related to SGM health but did not have contacts at NIH ICOs. Program officers from across the NIH were connected with principal investigators whose interests align with their ICOs.



The extramural scientific project officers at NIDA provided technical assistance to potential applicants interested in conducting research on substance use among SGM populations, guiding applicants in how best to align their research aims with NIDA’s priorities across the spectrum of basic science, epidemiology, prevention, and treatment research.

NICHHD program officers from various branches continued to provide technical assistance to potential applicants interested in submitting applications focused on improving the health of SGM populations, including DSD, sometimes described as intersex populations, in topics related to NICHHD’s mission.

Throughout the year, NIMH program officers frequently provided technical assistance to researchers and applicants regarding research related to SGM health, which specifically has included assistance on topics related to suicidal behavior in sexual minority youth and to those at high risk for becoming infected with HIV.

The SGMRO participated in the planning committee of and co-sponsored FIC's [The Science of Stigma Reduction: New Directions for Research to Improve Health](#) Workshop in June 2017. The SGMRO provided FIC with insight into the unique challenges faced by SGM populations relating to stigma and health research. Other NIH components, such as the OBSSR, also co-sponsored the meeting, and several ICOs were represented during the planning and implementation of the workshop. This activity generated the [FIC FOA](#) noted above.

Other SGM-Related Activities

In collaboration with the NIH Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI), the SGMRO co-sponsored the NIH LGBT Pride event [Making Our Stories Count](#) in June 2017, which featured panelists from across the Federal Government. Also in support of Pride Month, the SGMRO Director provided a presentation at the HHS Pride celebration event.

The OEDI formed an SGM engagement committee with representatives from across the NIH. The committee began discussions about how and if bathroom modifications could be made on the NIH campus and other NIH facilities to accommodate the privacy of all employees and meet the specific needs of transgender employees, patients, and visitors. These discussions are ongoing.

The SGMRO is working with the Tribal Health Research Office, also located within DPCPSI in the NIH OD, to ensure cross-pollination of ideas. The Directors participate in discussions during Research Coordinating Committees to promote better understanding of intersecting research needs and priorities.



Goal 3



Strengthen the Community of Researchers and Scholars Who Conduct Research Relevant to SGM Health and Well-Being

Introduction

As reported in the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan, strengthening the community of researchers and scholars who conduct research relevant to SGM health and well-being has emerged as an NIH priority. Networking, collaboration, and information sharing among investigators will speed the pace of SGM research; the NIH can play a key role in bringing this community together. In addition, bolstering the SGM research community will ensure that the NIH is poised to support high-quality and innovative work in SGM health research, with a pool of research experts it can call on for insight and perspectives specific to the field. Here, we report on activities specific to mentoring and developing such researchers.



Mentoring Researchers

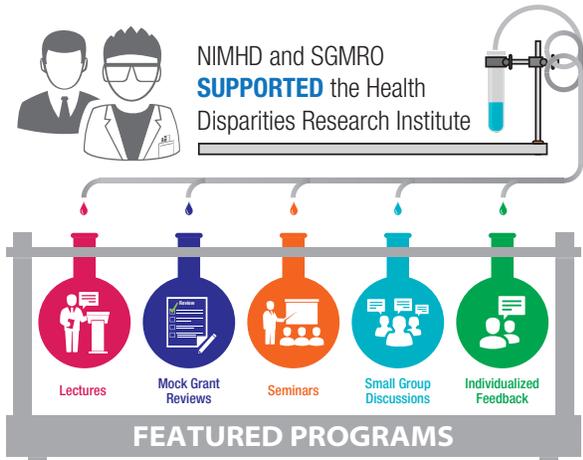
The National Institute of General Medical Sciences sponsors the Mississippi Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program, which supports the improvement of the state's biomedical research infrastructure and the health of its communities. INBRE develops a workforce to address Mississippi's health problems and reach the most impoverished and underserved areas via building and strengthening the state's research capacity. One component of the INBRE, the Community Engagement and Training Core, provides training to minority students in public health and community

outreach through partnerships with public health organizations that work with underserved communities in Mississippi, including SGM communities. The students develop research proposals that integrate their biomedical research and public health interests, enhancing their exposure to research opportunities and careers.

The 2017 NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute, which was co-sponsored by the SGMRO, supported the research career development of promising minority health and health disparities research scientists early in their careers. The program



Research Career Development



six of the **54** **ACCEPTED SCHOLARS** were conducting **RESEARCH** on SGM populations.

featured lectures, mock grant reviews, seminars, small group discussions, and individualized feedback from NIH program officials regarding potential grant applications. Of the 54 accepted scholars, six were conducting research on SGM populations.

Other SGM-Related Activities

The Adolescent HIV Prevention and Treatment Implementation Science Alliance (AHISA) convenes a forum of 15 teams that were selected through a competitive process that took into account how participation in the Alliance would strengthen the research process and findings, as well as the potential for uptake of the research evidence that they generate. The FIC provides this platform for member teams to exchange ideas and information, discuss challenges unique to adolescent HIV (including SGM concerns), and collectively set goals for AHISA and future research. AHISA member teams are led by an NIH-funded principal investigator and include in-country partners, such as key government representatives, implementers, and

research collaborators. This enables the research to be better informed by programmatic challenges and questions, informs policymakers of promising evidence, and encourages the use of the data in decision making. This is particularly relevant for ensuring that SGM is a research focus and for ensuring that programs and policies include and appropriately reach these groups.

The OITE in the NIH OD aims to enhance the training experience of students and fellows across the NIH. More specifically, it focuses on helping NIH trainees develop scientific and professional skills that will enable them to become leaders in the biomedical research community. Many OITE workshops and science skills tutorials are available online to trainees across the United States and around the world. The NIH Academy, a program of OITE, offers trainees the opportunity to learn about health disparities, enhance their knowledge of gaps in health outcomes, and investigate what is being done to address health disparity issues. The NIH Academy trains future researchers and

physician-scientists to actively engage in promoting a society in which all people live healthy lives and have equal access to health care. Over the last several years, the Academy's curriculum has included sessions on health disparities in SGM communities, including among SGM youth. The NIH Academy also includes a Diversity Course with a workshop specific to LGBT populations and health.

The OITE also sponsors the LGBT Fellows and Friends affinity group for LGBT trainees and supporters on the NIH campus. This group helps its members thrive in their professional and personal lives by addressing issues unique to the LGBT community. LGBT Fellows and Friends organizes seminars and workshops, provides professional development opportunities, and offers social events to develop professional and personal networks.





Goal 4



Evaluate Progress on Advancing SGM Research

Introduction

As noted in the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan, the NIH evaluates its efforts addressing SGM research and related activities on an annual basis to ensure that the agency remains on track and meets milestones. Both a portfolio analysis highlighting SGM-related research projects and an annual report capturing other SGM-related work at the NIH are published each year. Existing internal tracking tools are updated to ensure that such SGM tracking reports as the Research, Condition, and Disease Categorization (RCDC) tool, the SGM Annual Report and Portfolio Analysis, and other documents, are accurate, complete, transparent, and timely.



2016 Portfolio Analysis

Using RePORTER data, the SGMRO compiled data from FY 2016 to create the 2016 SGM Portfolio Analysis. The 334 projects identified in NIH's RePORTER that comprise the NIH SGM portfolio for FY 2016 were selected using NIH's RCDC reporting tool. "Sexual and Gender Minorities" was added in FY 2015 to the official list of the currently reported 233 RCDC categories. As a result, this estimate of SGM projects and spending constitutes the second report of those data. The RCDC uses

text data mining (categorization and clustering using words and multiword phrases) in conjunction with a list of concepts and synonyms selected by NIH scientific experts to define research categories. Reflecting the NIH's inclusive approach to SGM health research, the RCDC definition includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, as well as many others. For example, MSM (who may not identify as gay or bisexual), two-spirit populations, and those with a DSD, sometimes described



as intersex populations, are included in the NIH definition of SGM. The RCDC SGM category is new, so no historical funding trends are reported at this time.

The RCDC process is a targeted search of all applications for funding received during a given time period. The search is conducted using weighted key terms (known as a fingerprint). When a given project reaches a threshold for those terms, it is tagged as belonging to that RCDC category, in this case the SGM fingerprint.

The RCDC process relies solely on the clarity and specificity of the text provided and uses new trans-NIH definitions. For these reasons, researchers

viewing the RCDC project listings might agree or disagree with the categories in which their projects appear. The SGMRO works with the NIH ICOs to validate and refine the SGM fingerprint to ensure that the most accurate data are available to the public through the [NIH RePORT](#) website. The most recent validation of these data was performed in FY 2016.

As noted in the Strategic Plan, the NIH will evaluate its efforts on an annual basis. In FY 2017, the SGMRO released both the [FY 2015 Portfolio Analysis](#) highlighting SGM-related research projects and the [FY 2016 Annual Report](#) capturing other SGM-related work at the NIH.





Conclusion

The NIH is committed to expanding the field of SGM-related health research and strengthening the community of scholars and researchers who seek to make a career in this field of scientific inquiry. Since the release of the NIH SGM Research Strategic Plan (FY 2016–2020), much has been accomplished across the agency. The momentum gained through the continuation of past research, the establishment of the SGMRO, and ongoing commitment from NIH leadership for this work is augmented by ambitious initiatives to begin in FY 2018.





National Institutes of Health
Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office