



National Institutes of Health  
Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office

Sexual & Gender Minority  
Research Office

# ANNUAL REPORT



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# Introduction

The Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office (SGMRO) was established in 2015 to coordinate sexual and gender minority (SGM)–related research and activities at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by working directly with the agency’s Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs). Each year, the SGMRO publishes a portfolio analysis that quantitatively describes SGM research funded by the NIH in a given fiscal year (FY). The SGMRO also provides a representative sample of SGM health- and research-related activities and initiatives occurring across the ICOs in its Annual Report. This report is organized around the four goal areas of the [NIH FY 2016–2020 Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual and Gender Minorities](#). The FY 2021 SGMRO Annual Report will be configured to align with the [NIH Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual & Gender Minorities \(Fiscal Years 2021–2025\)](#), which was released officially in September 2020.

To better clarify the populations that fall under the SGM umbrella for NIH-supported research, the NIH released an updated definition of SGM populations in Notice [NOT-OD-19-139](#) in August 2019, which reads as follows:

*SGM populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, and/or intersex. Individuals with same-sex or -gender attractions or behaviors and those with a difference in sex development are also included. These populations also encompass those who do not self-identify with one of these terms but whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or reproductive development is characterized by non-binary constructs of sexual orientation, gender, and/or sex.*

# Goal One

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

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES

The NIH pursued the advancement of SGM health research through a variety of relevant funding opportunities in FY 2020. For the fifth year, the NIH supported [Administrative Supplements for Research on SGM Populations](#). A total of 14 meritorious supplements across five NIH Institutes were funded through this [program](#) in FY 2020. In addition to Institute support, the SGMRO, the Office of AIDS Research (OAR), the Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), and the Office of Research on Women's Health—all within the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives in the NIH Office of the Director (OD)—provided co-funding. The funding of these applications totaled \$1,324,792. Since the SGM administrative supplement program began in 2015, 64 unique supplements totaling \$6,086,286 have been funded by 17 NIH ICOs.

The NIH continued to encourage applications for R01 and R21 research projects on the health of transgender and gender nonconforming populations of all ages through the funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) [PA-18-729](#) and [PA-18-728](#). Fourteen ICOs have signed on to these FOAs.

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) and 19 co-signing ICOs continued to solicit epidemiological, etiological, intervention, implementation, and evaluation research related to the health of SGM populations through the Notice of Special Interest<sup>1</sup> (NOSI) [NOT-MD-19-001](#). This NOSI has been active since March 2019.

In FY 2020, various ICOs issued or maintained support for FOAs for work focused on or relevant to the health of SGM individuals, including the following:

- [Addressing the Role of Violence on HIV Care and Viral Suppression](#)
- [Addressing Suicide Research Gaps: Understanding Mortality Outcomes](#)
- [Ethical, Legal and Social Implications \(ELSI\) Research](#)
- [Health Services Research on Minority Health and Health Disparities](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Notices of Special Interest (NOSIs), which are intended to eventually replace program announcements, highlight scientific topics of particular interest to one or more NIH funding components and direct applicants to relevant active funding opportunity announcements for submission of applications. More information can be found in [NOT-OD-19-107](#).



- [High-Priority Areas for Research Leveraging \[Electronic Health Records\] and Large-Scale Data](#)
- [Increasing Uptake of Evidence-Based Screening in Diverse Adult Populations](#)
- [Leveraging Health Information Technology \(Health IT\) to Address Minority Health and Health Disparities](#)
- [Long-Term Effects of Disasters on Health Care Systems Serving Health Disparity Populations](#)
- [Mechanisms of Disparities in Chronic Liver Diseases and Cancer](#)
- [Mechanisms of Disparities in Etiology and Outcomes of Lung Cancer in the U.S.: The Role of Risk and Protective Factors](#)
- [Promoting Viral Suppression Among Individuals from Health Disparity Populations Engaged in HIV Care](#)
- [Reducing Stigma to Improve HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#)
- [Research on Biopsychosocial Factors of Social Connectedness and Isolation on Health, Well-being, Illness, and Recovery](#)
- [Secondary Data Analysis to Examine Long-Term and/or Potential Cross-Over Effects of Prevention Interventions: What Are the Benefits for Preventing Mental Health Disorders?](#)
- [Social Epigenomics Research Focused on Minority Health and Health Disparities](#)
- [Surgical Disparities Research](#)
- [The Intersection of Sex and Gender Influences on Health and Disease](#)
- [Tobacco Control Policies to Promote Health Equity](#)
- [Transgender People: Immunity, Prevention, and Treatment of HIV and STIs](#)

The NIH also continues to promote SGM research by releasing NOSIs in SGM-relevant topics, including for administrative supplements to expand existing research awards to help address health-related issues in SGM populations, including the following:

- [NOSI: Administrative Supplements for Research on Sex/Gender Influences](#)
- [NOSI in Research on Risk and Prevention of Black Youth Suicide](#)
- [NOSI: Research on the Health of Women of Understudied, Underrepresented and Underreported \(U3\) Populations](#)
- [NOSI: Sex and Gender Differences in Alzheimer's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias \(AD/ADRD\)](#)

In an effort to better understand and mitigate the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on disparity populations, including SGMs, relevant FOAs and NOSIs were released in FY 2020, including the following:

- [Community Interventions to Address the Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Health Disparity and Vulnerable Populations](#)
- [Competitive and Administrative Supplements for Community Interventions to Reduce the Impact of COVID-19 on Health Disparity and Other Vulnerable Populations](#)
- [Digital Healthcare Interventions to Address the Secondary Health Effects Related to Social, Behavioral, and Economic Impact of COVID-19](#)

- [Emergency Competitive Revisions for Community-Engaged Research on COVID-19 Testing Among Underserved and/or Vulnerable Populations](#)
- [Emergency Competitive Revisions for Social, Ethical, and Behavioral Implications \(SEBI\) Research on COVID-19 Testing Among Underserved and/or Vulnerable Populations](#)
- [NOSI Regarding the Availability of Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions for Research on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus and the Behavioral and Social Sciences](#)

During FY 2020, the National Advisory Council on Minority Health and Health Disparities approved several research concepts with an explicit focus on or high relevance to SGM populations that eventually will lead to FOAs. These research concepts included the following:

- [Multi-level HIV Prevention Interventions for Individuals at the Highest Risk of HIV Infection](#)
- [Patient-Clinician Communication and Relationship: An Opportunity to Affect Health Outcomes in Health Disparity Populations](#)
- [Promoting Viral Suppression Among Individuals from Health Disparity Populations Engaged in HIV Care](#)
- [School-Based Health Centers \(SBHCs\): A Promising Health Services Model for Advancing Health Equity](#)
- [Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Structural Racism and Discrimination on Minority Health and Health Disparities](#)

## MEASUREMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Measurement and data collection consistently have been identified as priority fields for the advancement of SGM health research. Developing and evaluating SGM-specific methods and measures and encouraging the collection and analysis of data on SGM status in research and the research workforce are key scientific and operational goals in the new SGM research strategic plan.

In FY 2020, NIMHD, SGMRO, ODP, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) provided funding for “Methods and Measurement in Research with Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Populations” ([RFA-MD-20-005](#)). Released in December 2019, this initiative was the first FOA to focus specifically on the development and assessment of methods and measures of SGM status and relevant constructs, such as the coming-out process and experiences of stigma and discrimination. Seven R21 applications were awarded through this FOA.

The SGMRO’s methods and measurement [webpage](#) was updated in FY 2020. The site includes sample questions for ascertaining sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) information, recent publications in SGM measurement research, and a current list of publicly available nationally representative data sets with SGM-relevant measures.

The NIH continued to advance the collection of data on SOGI in FY 2020. Gender identity information is collected at the NIH Clinical Center. The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) and several other ICOs support the [PhenX Toolkit](#), which furnishes protocols for inquiring about SOGI and sex assigned at birth to investigators interested in conducting research with SGM populations. The [All of Us](#) Research Program includes questions on SOGI, sex assigned at birth, and intersex status in its Basics Survey, and *All of Us* maintains a targeted focus on participants who typically are underrepresented in biomedical research, including SGM individuals.

In May 2020, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) supported a meeting convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) on sampling methods for rare populations of interest in aging research, including SGMs. The group reviewed the current state of the science, including alternative study designs, methodologies for data collection, and statistical techniques for analysis.

The Evaluation Office of the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM), which is coordinated by the National Library of Medicine, has developed four Evaluation Pathways to enhance evaluation planning for underserved communities. The [LGBTQIA+ Health Pathway](#) focuses explicitly on designing evaluation plans for work with members of the SGM community and provides considerations and examples of how to approach each step of evaluation planning to enhance the evaluation of projects that aim to address the unique health and information needs of this community.

## OTHER GOAL ONE–RELATED ACTIVITIES

NIMH and OAR developed and co-sponsored the [Virtual Workshop: HIV-Related Intersectional Stigma Research Advances and Opportunities](#), which took place in July 2020. This workshop brought together experts in HIV prevention and treatment science to help inform the [Ending the HIV Epidemic](#) initiative and HIV efforts worldwide by furthering HIV-related intersectional stigma and discrimination research and identifying pertinent advances, gaps, and opportunities in the field. SGM populations, issues, and needs were highlighted in several presentations throughout the workshop.

The Electronic Medical Records and Genomics ([eMERGE](#)) Network, organized and funded by the NHGRI, is a U.S. medical research consortium supporting the implementation of genomic medicine. eMERGE is working to discern optimal ways to deliver genomics-informed estimates and assessments of disease risk to SGM patients and how this affects health care decisions and medical outcomes.

In FYs 2019–2020, the NASEM’s Committee on Population held four meetings as part of its consensus study on [Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations](#). Co-funded by the SGMRO, the resulting report, which officially was released in October 2020, reviews the available evidence base on the health and status of sexual and gender diverse people,<sup>2</sup> identifies critical gaps in our understanding of their experiences and challenges, and offers recommendations for addressing present and future research needs related to their well-being across the life course.

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<sup>2</sup> In the NASEM report, the term “sexual and gender diverse,” or “SGD,” is used to acknowledge the broad spectrum of natural human variation in sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex development. SGD populations in the NASEM report are analogous to SGM populations for NIH-supported research.



# Goal Two

## Remove Barriers to Planning, Conducting, and Reporting NIH-Supported Research About SGM Health and Well-being

### COORDINATION, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

The NIH leads and participates in a variety of agency-, department-, and government-wide coordinating committees, working groups, and task forces with a focus on or that are highly relevant to multiple dimensions of SGM health and research. The NHGRI Community Engagement in Genomics Working Group is a working group of the National Advisory Council for Human Genome Research that aims to facilitate NHGRI's understanding of community perspectives and needs with regard to genomics, engage and educate diverse communities about genomics, and inform the leadership of NHGRI of issues relevant to its portfolio of genomics research and related programs. The working group comprises community liaisons and health advocates representing diverse populations, including SGMs. In FY 2020, working group meetings featured presentations about transgender health and perceptions of genetics and genomics among SGMs.

The SGMRO Director became a member of the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) [Working Group on Diversity](#) in FY 2020 to ensure representation of SGM needs and issues. The group communicates with the ACD and the NIH Director about effective strategies to increase the representation of and reduce disparities in research awards to diverse individuals underrepresented nationally in biomedical research.

The SGMRO Director continued to participate in the NIH Harassment and Workplace Violence Policy Steering Committee. This committee, which is composed of representatives across the NIH, encourages the consideration of targeted programs and interventions focused on the SGM community at NIH. In addition, the SGMRO Director serves as co-chair for the NIH OD Anti-Harassment Champions Working Group. The Working Group is charged with promoting anti-harassment efforts across the OD, championing anti-harassment initiatives, and leading implementation of the NIH OD Anti-Harassment Outreach Plan.

The SGMRO Director was also active in the committee that developed the [NIH Workforce COVID-19 Impact Survey](#) and the [NIH COVID-19 Extramural Surveys](#) focusing on institution- and individual-level issues, respectively. The surveys, led by the NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity, were fielded in FY 2020 and aimed to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the overall NIH



and extramural workforces with a special emphasis on vulnerable populations. The results of these surveys will inform NIH leadership about strategies to address COVID-19-related inequities within the biomedical workforce.

Members of the SGMRO participated in several COVID-19-related committees at the NIH to ensure inclusion of SGM-specific concerns, such as the committee for the RADxsm Underserved Populations ([RADx-UP](#)) initiative, which focuses on assessing and expanding COVID-19 testing for underserved and/or vulnerable populations, such as SGMs. The program activities include establishing multiple clinical research sites across the country and encouraging collaboration between program sites and communities. SGMRO participation in all stages of the RADx-UP led to the inclusion of SOGI-related data collection in the core protocols for all program sites. SGMRO staff were actively engaged in FOA development and application review for RADx-UP.

In FY 2020, the SGMRO Director began co-chairing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Coordinating Committee. The Committee works to ensure collaboration and communication across the Department regarding SGM-relevant issues.

Initially spearheaded by the NIMH, 15 ICOs participate in the HHS-Wide Stigma Workgroup, along with representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, Indian Health Service, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This working group aims to promote crosscutting stigma research and related activities and to enhance opportunities for knowledge transfer and collaborative learning in the field of stigma and discrimination research.

Members of the SGMRO and the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) participate in the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Inter-Agency Working Group for Measuring SOGI, which explores best practices for SOGI measurement in federal efforts in information collection. The SGMRO Director became co-chair of this group in FY 2020.

The NIH also hosts an array of less formal scientific interest groups, or [SIGs](#), which are assemblies of scientists with common interests in a particular research topic, including NIH staff and extramural scientists. Launched in February 2020 and co-chaired by the NIMH and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the [Stigma SIG](#) is made up of members from across the NIH who share an interest in crosscutting, theoretically driven research that examines the phenomenon of stigma and the biological, behavioral, and social pathways by which it leads to poor health outcomes. The SIG includes a focus on the stigma and associated issues experienced by SGM populations. The [SGM Health SIG](#)—formed in FY 2020 and co-chaired by the SGMRO and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)—will connect individuals engaged or interested in SGM health research and offer a forum for discussion of key subjects in the field.

The NIH remains committed to educating intramural and extramural research communities and the general public about SGM populations and their health. In December 2019, NIMHD staff participated in planning the 12th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health. An NIMHD representative co-led the Promoting Health Equity and Eliminating Disparities Track and served as the moderator of the panel *Implementation of Programs and Practices to Promote Health Equity for Sexual and Gender Minorities in School-Based and Healthcare Settings*.

The Cross-Network Transgender Working Group of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) completed the development of a comprehensive training curriculum and e-learning tool focused on transgender individuals and developed guidance documents to support the implementation of gender-inclusive practices and to help increase cultural responsiveness among research staff. In March 2020, the group also contributed to the final version of the NIAID HIV [Language Guide](#) to help promote the use of non-stigmatizing language and facilitated its broad community review and dissemination.

The NIMH co-led a pre-conference workshop titled “[Synthesis of Datasets to Understand Risk and Prevention of Important Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health Outcomes](#)” at the Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting in August 2020. The workshop included a focus on suicide prevention data from SGM individuals.

Personnel at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) presented on “Sexual and Gender Minorities Research at NIDDK” at the NIDDK Extramural Staff Training Course. This course covered SGM research and related activities taking place at the NIH and NIDDK, SGM-specific research needs, relevant FOAs, and SGM health and employee resources.

NIA’s Alzheimer’s and Dementia Outreach, Recruitment, and Engagement Resources ([ADORE](#)) is a repository of resources designed to improve the recruitment and retention of participants into clinical trials and studies on Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Developed by the Recruitment, Retention, and Community Engagement Program of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, ADORE contains information specifically on recruiting SGM participants. For example, the [Priority Population Toolkit](#) is a resource for researchers who would like to work with populations that are facing health disparities and are underrepresented in research, including SGMs.

The NNLM held several events to share information about health resources for SGMs. The NNLM Greater Midwest Region held a two-part class in February and April 2020 titled “Beyond the Binary: Health Resources for Sexual and Gender Minorities” to offer information about culturally appropriate health information resources for SGM populations and the librarians and health care practitioners who support them. At a series of training programs sponsored by the NNLM Southeastern/ Atlantic Region, titled “Navigating HIV Health Information and Prevention on the Web for LGBTQ,” participants were provided the opportunity to utilize a host of web-based educational materials on health and prevention related to HIV and AIDS.

The NNLM offered numerous trainings to improve understanding of SGM-specific needs and cultural competency in health care settings. In April 2020, the NNLM Middle Atlantic Region included modules on SGM-affirming care in its clinical conversations training webinar. At the Promising Practices for LGBT Care series organized by the Middle Atlantic Region, addiction treatment center staff in Eastern Pennsylvania were trained in 10 sessions on the concepts of gender identity, sexual orientation, health disparities, and promising practices in SGM care. As part of a monthly professional development event, the Middle Atlantic Region hired and trained douglas working with SGM people on the subjects of members of the SGM community, SOGI and sex information, transitioning, and risk factors and barriers experienced by SGMs. Invited community health workers from The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey discussed using information from training with members

of the transgender community who recently began engaging with health and social services. The NNLM New England Region held a webinar on the health needs of SGMs, the importance of cultural humility, and available SGM-relevant resources for nursing staff at Rutland Regional Medical Center in Rutland County, Vermont.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

Members of the SGMRO continue to provide technical assistance to NIH personnel and the extramural research community by serving as a resource on best practices when conducting or soliciting research in SGM populations and connecting principal investigators with program officers throughout the NIH to support and expand SGM-related research agency-wide. Extramural program officers at NIH ICOs continue to offer technical assistance to potential and current investigators interested in SGM-related research by providing recommendations for aligning applications with ICO-specific priorities across a variety of relevant research areas.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

NIH staff presented to various audiences in FY 2020 to boost awareness, knowledge, and understanding of SGM populations and important subjects in SGM health and research. The NNLM New England Region held a virtual discussion in November 2019 titled “Transgender 101,” during which a transwoman spoke about the coming-out process, transition, acceptance, appropriate questions to ask transgender people, and relevant terminology. In January 2020, the NNLM South Central Region held the webinar titled “Transgender Care of Adolescents and Adults” as part of its SCR CONNECTIONS conference series. This webinar focused on demographic trends in the United States, terminology used to contrast orientation and gender identity, and various other issues that impact members of the transgender community.

Members of the NIAID’s Cross-Network Transgender Working Group presented at the December 2019 Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit and the virtual June 2020 AIDS Clinical Trials Group’s Underrepresented Populations Committee meeting to increase awareness of the need for transgender inclusion in HIV clinical research.

The OAR Director presented at the 16th Annual African American Men Who Have Sex with Men Leadership Conference on Health Disparities and Social Justice in January 2020.

The NIMH participated in the [Youth Suicide Research Consortium](#) in June 2020. An NIMH representative spoke about the Institute’s research priorities in youth suicide prevention, and several sessions focused on SGM youth. The NIMH also held its first annual SGM webinar [Sexuality and Stigma: Culture, Identity, and Mental Health Among High-Risk Men Who Have Sex with Men](#) in July 2020. NIMH program staff, along with colleagues from NIDA, co-chaired a symposium presentation at the August 2020 [American Psychological Association 2020 Virtual Conference](#) titled “Intersectional Stigma Matters: A New Cross-Cutting Research Approach.” The symposium focused on the fundamental role that stigma plays in the perpetuation of health inequities in a range of diseases and conditions and included a focus on SGM populations.



In FY 2020, SGMRO staff delivered numerous presentations within the NIH and to external institutions that aimed to increase awareness and understanding of SGM-related issues and work at the NIH, as well as to teach grantpersonship to current and potential NIH researchers. These presentations are listed below.

### ***Presentations to NIH and Other Governmental Entities***

- Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Research Group
- Federal Reserve Board
- Inter-Society Coordinating Committee for Practitioner Education in Genomics
- Interagency Modeling and Analysis Group's Amplifying Impact by Nurturing Diversity Panel
- NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities All-Hands Meeting
- NCI Diversity Task Force
- NHGRI Diversity and Inclusion Panel Discussion
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) Trans-NIH Health Equity Strategic Planning Group
- NINDS Health Disparities and Health Equity Committee
- NIH Common Data Elements Task Force
- NIH Council of Councils
- Office of Scientific Workforce Diversity
- Office of Strategic Coordination

### ***Presentations to Extramural Research and Community Organizations***

- 5th Annual LGBTQ Health and Longevity Conference (Seattle, WA)
- 7th Annual Association of American Cancer Institutes' Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative Meeting (Washington, DC)
- 8th Annual LGBT Health Workforce Conference (Virtual)
- Arizona State University Psychology Department (Virtual)
- Best Brains Exchange: Health Inequalities Among SGMs (Ottawa, ON, Canada)
- California State University Office of the Chancellor, Department of Research (Virtual)
- Duke Sexual and Gender Minority Health Program Launch Symposium and Grand Rounds (Durham, NC)
- Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group–American College of Radiology Imaging Network Cancer Research Group Meeting (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
- National Nursing LGBTQ Health Summit (New York City, NY)
- Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults (Virtual)
- University of Michigan (Virtual)



# Goal Three

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

### MENTORING RESEARCHERS

Mentorship of researchers engaged or interested in SGM health and research remained a high priority for ICOs across the NIH in FY 2020. In October 2019 and September 2020, the SGMRO coordinated two regional workshops, one in person in [Philadelphia](#) co-sponsored by Thomas Jefferson University and one virtually with [The Ohio State University](#) co-sponsored by the Equitas Health Institute. The goals of the workshops were to increase understanding of NIH structure and processes, encourage mentoring relationships within the extramural research community, enhance capacity to conduct SGM research, and provide researchers with the opportunity to interact with NIH staff and established researchers in SGM health, as well as with one another. Representatives from *All of Us*, NHLBI, NIA, NICHD, NIDA, NIMH, and NIMHD participated in the workshops.

In June 2020, the SGMRO hosted a virtual [webinar](#) for researchers interested in conducting research on differences in sex development (DSD) and intersex populations. This webinar was intended to fulfill the same goals as the regional workshops but with a focus on investigators conducting DSD- and intersex-specific research. An NIMH representative discussed general grantspersonship at the NIH and highlighted publicly available tools and resources for researchers. A member of the NIH Council of Councils SGM Research Working Group ([RWG](#)) provided an overview of DSD- and intersex-specific research needs. Members of *All of Us*, NICHD, NIDDK, NIMH, and NIMHD discussed their ICOs' DSD- and intersex-specific research priorities.

The NIMHD held its fifth [Health Disparities Research Institute](#) virtually in August 2020. This Institute supports the career development of promising minority health and health disparities researchers early in their careers and stimulates research in the disciplines supported by health disparities science. A variety of SGM-relevant subjects were covered during the Institute, and a talk on SGM youth engagement in mobile health HIV interventions was given.

A scholar in the NIH Clinical Center's 2020–2021 [Medical Research Scholars Program](#), mentored by a member of NIMHD, is conducting HIV/AIDS research in SGM populations. This program provides medical, dental, and veterinary students an opportunity to conduct basic, clinical, or translational research for one year with NIH investigators.

## OTHER GOAL THREE–RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Special Populations Research Forum (SPRF) provides an NIH-wide venue for sharing and examining programs, initiatives, and strategies that enhance and accelerate the research career development of individuals from diverse populations. In June 2020, SPRF released a list of recommendations for addressing COVID-19 in health disparities populations, including SGMs. The list centered on educating researchers and high-risk populations about COVID-19-related disparities and opportunities, encouraging research projects to tackle disparities, and dedicating funding to ensure that these projects are supported.

*All of Us* released the beta version of its [Researcher Workbench](#) in FY 2020. This platform allows investigators to access and perform secondary analyses on the *All of Us* data set, which comprises a sizable percentage of SGM individuals. In FY 2020, *All of Us* staff affirmed that they are seeking to expand the pool of investigators using their Workbench to take full advantage of the data set and better represent the diverse participant population of the *All of Us* program, including SGM health and research topics and investigators.

The SGMRO hosted its inaugural [SGM Health Research Listening Session](#) in October 2019. This event brought together representatives from research, health, and health advocacy organizations in an effort to gather comments, concerns, and suggestions about SGM health research and related activities at the NIH from community stakeholders. Input from this session informed development of the FY 2021–2025 SGM research strategic plan.

The SGMRO held the first of its [Scientific Webinar Series](#) in June 2020. This series highlights individuals who are actively working to enhance our knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues for SGMs and to provide background on their personal trajectory to a research career in SGM health. The first talk asked the question, “What will it take to create health equity for sexual and gender minority young people?”

The SGMRO launched the [SGM Health Researcher Spotlight](#) in July 2020 and followed up with the second of the series in September 2020. These spotlights engage successful early and established NIH-funded investigators working in SGM health research in an interview format to explore pathways to and provide guidance for building a successful career in the field. The first two interviewees have research projects on the topics of application of new media and technology to sexual health promotion and HIV prevention and biobehavioral approaches to understand and reduce SGM cardiovascular health issues.

The SGMRO marked its 5-year anniversary at the virtual [NIH SGM Research Symposium](#) in September 2020. The Symposium featured scientific lectures from the NIH Intramural Research Program and former awardees of the SGM Administrative Supplement Program. The 2020 awardees of the [NIH SGM Research Investigator Awards Program](#) also were announced during the Symposium. For the second year, two Early-Stage Investigators and a more established Distinguished Investigator were honored for their significant and outstanding contributions to the field of SGM health research and were invited to speak about their research programs.

The SGMRO website was updated in FY 2020 to include a [research resources](#) webpage, which offers various resources, such as a current list of SGM-relevant FOAs, to assist researchers who seek to conduct SGM-relevant work or who want to ask SGM-relevant research questions.

# Goal Four

## Evaluate Progress on Advancing SGM Research

In 2015, the NIH released its first strategic plan for SGM research, covering FYs 2016–2020. In January 2019, the SGM RWG released its [Mid-Course Strategic Plan Review](#), which provided an assessment of NIH progress in pursuing the goals outlined in the FY 2016–2020 strategic plan and recommendations for capitalizing on progress already made.

The NIH continued to make headway in implementing these recommendations in FY 2020. Seven R21 project proposals whose aim was to advance the fields of SGM-tailored methods and measurement were ultimately funded through the FOA RFA-MD-20-005. Through multiple web-based events, expansion of content on the SGMRO website, and strong virtual communications with the intramural and extramural communities, awareness of the SGMRO and SGM-related work at the NIH was heightened greatly in FY 2020. As recommended by the RWG, a webinar was held especially for those actively pursuing or interested in investigating research questions in the fields of DSD and/or intersex research.

The NIH annually gauges the status of SGM health research at the agency in two key documents. In FY 2020, the SGMRO released the [FY 2018 Portfolio Analysis](#), which summarizes information about SGM-focused and -relevant projects occurring throughout the NIH ICOs. Per the Mid-Course Review, this analysis incorporates a more rigorous evaluation of the SGM research portfolio, affording a more nuanced description of the populations of focus, research methods and types of studies employed, and specific SGM-relevant topics explored. According to curated data from the [RePORTER](#) tool, 408 SGM projects were funded by 18 ICOs for FY 2019, which represents a 36 percent increase in SGM research support between FY 2015 and FY 2019. The [FY 2019 Annual Report](#), which illustrates the breadth of other SGM-related activities at the NIH, was released in FY 2020.

The RWG recommended the inclusion of operational goals and scientific opportunities in the follow-up to the SGM research strategic plan that was released in FY 2015. In September 2020, the SGMRO released the [NIH Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual & Gender Minorities \(Fiscal Years 2021–2025\)](#). The plan highlights SGM-focused scientific themes, research opportunities, and operational objectives identified through discussions with the SGM Research Coordinating Committee, SGM RWG, the general public, and ICO and NIH

leadership. The plan will serve as the framework for bolstering and further enhancing health research for SGMs agency-wide for the next 5 years.

2020 was a challenging year. However, the NIH remains steadfast in pursuing its charge to advance SGM health research by supporting and increasing research and funding opportunities in the field, promoting SOGI measurement and data collection, participating in relevant working groups and committees, engaging in outreach and educational activities, and sustaining and expanding the SGM scholar and researcher communities. These efforts become ever stronger and more diverse with the help of the many NIH components, HHS, and a variety of other government and extramural organizations. An extensive and growing network of experts and collaborations, along with the enduring enthusiasm of many involved parties, will sustain the agency's work to improve the health and well-being of all SGM people in the years to come.





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