

# Engaging Diverse Communities: NCC Increases LGBTQ+ Competency and Outreach

## BACKGROUND

People in the LGBTQ+ community have increased cancer risks because of health differences linked to economic, social, and environmental disadvantages. For example, people in the LGBTQ+ community have higher rates of cervical, anal, liver, oral cavity/pharynx, and lung cancer than their hetero/cisgender counterparts.

The reasons for these higher cancer rates are several. The LGBTQ+ community has been targeted by the tobacco industry for more than two decades resulting in increased tobacco use. People in the LGBTQ+ community are also more likely to have eating disorders or be obese, consume alcohol at a higher rate, partake in riskier tanning behaviors, and have higher rates of STIs and HIV. These, combined with lower rates of screening for certain cancers, drive the disparities.

In addition, the LGBT Cancer Network, through their OUT National Cancer Survey, found that finding welcoming care, accessing tailored cancer resources, and overcoming social isolation and poorer treatment by healthcare providers are all

challenges people who identify as LGBTQ+ have reported. It's no surprise that this community would delay or avoid cancer screening, or not even be aware of the recommendations, based on these challenges.

The Gallup Daily tracking survey reports 5.5% of Nevada's population identifies as LGBT--nearly 160,000 people based on 2022 Census estimates. That's more than twice the total number of American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the state.



## CHALLENGE

Nevada Cancer Coalition, through its various funding sources, is tasked with reaching a variety of diverse communities including people of color, Spanish speakers, rural residents, and people with low socioeconomic status. While much of the coalition's work focuses on reducing the cancer burden for these communities, there's intersectionality between these groups and people who identify as LGBTQ+. However fostering inclusivity for this group of Nevadans can be a challenge because of the way cancer data, screening recommendations, and resources are often collected, presented, and offered—using a gender binary and featuring heterosexual relationships.



## OPPORTUNITY

NCC's staff set a priority for 2023 to be a better resource for Nevada's LGBTQ+ community by developing greater cultural competency, increasing partnerships with LGBTQ+ organizations, and attending community events as an ally.

## ACTIVITY

NCC's team knew it was important to start by listening and learning. The LGBT Cancer Network, a national partner of the CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, was identified as a leading resource on LGBTQ+ cultural competency and cancer data. Additional resources were identified as the American Cancer Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the University of Nevada, Reno's Larson Institute for Health Impact and Equity.

All members of NCC's team completed the LGBT Cancer Network's free Welcoming Spaces training. Some staff members engaged in additional training opportunities, such as UNR's Sexual and Gender Minority Conference, and reviewed materials including the report on the OUT National Cancer Survey. NCC's team also met with staff at LGBTQ+ community centers in Las Vegas and Reno to establish relationships.

NCC identified opportunities to offer more inclusive resources. Collateral materials due for reprinting, including the popular early detection cards, were updated to be gender-neutral. A breast cancer screening bill run during the 2023 state legislative session was written as gender-neutral to ensure access to appropriate screening for all Nevadans. NCC also developed materials specific to the



LGBTQ+ community including "Cancer Quick Facts" for Pride Month and tabletop banners for outreach events. Training opportunities and resources were promoted to all of NCC's more than 500 members and posted on the NCC website.

All of NCC's preparation culminated in participation at Pride Day at Greater Nevada Field and Northern Nevada Pride in June and Las Vegas Pride in October. At those events NCC worked to be an ally by sharing cancer information relevant to the LGBTQ+ community at outreach tables, and in Reno with additional signage and a banner during the festival parade.

### NCC's effort to become a stronger LGBTQ+ ally resulted in:

**408**

people reached at  
Pride events

**10+**

collateral & outreach  
items created

**5**

trainings promoted  
through NCC media

**8**

staff completed  
Welcoming Spaces

#### Engagement in conversations on key topics, including:

vaping &  
tobacco use

secondhand smoke  
in the workplace

cancer screening &  
early detection

sunscreen  
(we ran out!)

## OUTCOME

NCC's team thoughtfully and enthusiastically embraced efforts to step up as an LGBTQ+ ally and encourage others to do the same. As a result, feedback from the community was positive. Many people thanked NCC for attending events and said they appreciated the opportunity to have conversations about hard topics like cancer screening, barriers that many face in accessing care, and targeted marketing by tobacco companies.

Moving forward, NCC is working to strengthen our relationships with community organizations representing people who identify as LGBTQ+ and look for ways to expand our collaboration with those partners. The team is also taking steps to learn more through additional trainings and share those opportunities and resources with coalition members.