



[Commission to Issue Findings & Recommendations on Pandemic's Impact](#)

The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth is today sharing preliminary findings on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LGBTQ youth and young adults in Massachusetts. The Commission also announced that the full findings would be included in its **annual report, to be released along with its yearly policy recommendations on June 18th, 2020**. This event was originally scheduled to occur at the State House in April before being postponed and moved to a virtual event due to the pandemic. **Registration for the event is limited and available [here](#).**

While the coronavirus itself is more likely to harm older adults, the impact of the shutdown is being felt strongly by youth and young adults who have seen their schools and colleges close, have lost jobs and housing, and have struggled to access services and community. LGBTQ youth are likely to feel these impacts acutely, as this is a population that is already at a higher risk of living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, having difficulty accessing healthcare, and dealing with mental health issues. These topics were key to the Commission's annual report and work in general before pandemic, and are even more important today.

In an effort to mitigate some of the hardships the LGBTQ youth community is likely to face due to the coronavirus, **the Commission in March distributed \$18,000 in grants** to LGBTQ young people in the Commonwealth and organizations that serve LGBTQ youth. Interviews were conducted with grant recipients, who indicated four common areas of concern during the pandemic: **paying bills, purchasing food and medications, maintaining stable housing, and accessing health and social services.**

"I have medical bills to pay because my insurance doesn't cover transgender-related healthcare, said one youth from the Greater Boston area. "I have to continue to feed myself. I am lucky enough to have community and to have people whom I can talk with, but friendship won't keep me from plunging into debt. An income will."

Other grant recipient, highlighting the pandemic's impact on housing security, said, "In response to the outbreak, [my university] asked all students to leave campus. I lost my housing and my source of income. With my housing and my food source stripped away from me I was nervous that I would have to go home. I am transgender. My parents are not okay with this, in any way shape or form. While I haven't been technically kicked out, living with my parents has led to extremely negative situations involving hospitalization, and suicide attempts. Between the emotional abuse, the occasional physical abuse and the constant invalidation of my identity, my parents' home wasn't an option."

Over the last few months, the state legislature has deliberated many possible responses, including housing assistance, expanding unemployment insurance, decarceration initiatives, and other measures to combat both the pandemic itself and the economic impacts of the shutdown. One major accomplishment was an April 20th law that prohibits landlords from filing eviction notices unless the health and safety of other tenants is at risk for the next 4 months or until 45 days after the state of emergency for coronavirus is lifted. The moratorium will also protect homeowners from foreclosure and small businesses from storefront evictions if they are unable to make rent.

The Commission believes that LGBTQ youth need **long-term supports** from the state to address the underlying socioeconomic insecurities that

permitted the current crisis to occur, including:

1. **Increasing Funding for Safe Spaces:** Now more than ever, LGBTQ youth are dependent on services that provide them with a safe place to go – physically or virtually. These programs include many that rely on HIV funding and/or Youth At Risk Grants (YARG), and include public initiatives such as the Department of Public Health's Safe Spaces for LGBTQIA+ Youth and the Commission's own Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students, co-sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. While the budget will certainly be strained by the decrease in revenue caused by the pandemic, funding for these types of services must not be cut.
2. **Ending Homelessness and Housing Instability:** Many LGBTQ youth already faced housing instability before the pandemic and saw the few options that they had slip away. Some had to choose between sleeping on the street or moving back in with families who do not support them. The Commonwealth needs to end homelessness, and also address the root issues of unequitable socioeconomic opportunity and familial rejection that lead to LGBTQ homelessness.
3. **Supporting Youth in State Care or Custody:** LGBTQ youth are disproportionately likely to be systems-involved, including being part of the child welfare system and the juvenile or adult criminal justice systems. The dearth of data collection across much of these systems, as well as staff training on LGBTQ competency and system-wide LGBTQ inclusion policies, leaves these youth vulnerable at all times and especially during a pandemic, when accessing outside services and support is more difficult.
4. **Improving Access to Care:** Accessing LGBTQ-affirming care has been made even more difficult by the pandemic, and the best solution is to have the Commonwealth ensure that all of its employees, and all providers and contractors who receive state funds, are trained in LGBTQ competence. The state can also use its authority and influence to make LGBTQ competency a requirement in professional licensing. The state should also ensure that recent expansions on telehealth are made permanent, since many LGBTQ youth have desired this option for years because they cannot safely and discreetly access affirming care in their area.

In the shorter-term response to the pandemic, the Commission also supports the recommendations of public health advocates, which could pose significant benefits for LGBTQ youth:

1. **Decarceration and Social Distancing in Prisons and Jails:** Legislation has been filed and is pending as H.4652.
2. **Emergency Paid Sick Time:** Legislation was filed April 21 to address the gaps in benefits provided by current state and federal laws, including the federal CARES Act.
3. **Safe Access to Testing and Treatment for Immigrants:** MPHA notes that Attorney General Maura Healey has reached out to immigrant communities to assure them that they can safely receive testing and treatment regardless of immigration status and will not be penalized under the federal public charge rule.
4. **Safe Quarantine for People Experiencing Homelessness:** The Baker Administration took steps in April to provide safe quarantine for people experiencing homelessness, including opening several hotels around the state. However, much remains to be done to ensure that shelter residents can safely follow physical distancing guidelines.
5. **Data Collection and Action Planning for Equity:** Legislation has been filed as H.4672 to improve data collection on COVID-19 cases and the impact on marginalized communities. This legislation, however, does not call for the collection of COVID-19 infection data by sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. **Crisis Standards of Care:** Advocates have called for the state to update its crisis standards of care, which contain guidelines on how to allocate scarce medical equipment in the event that the demand for critical care resources outstrips supply. Advocates have noted that these standards and guidelines are based on assumptions that discriminate against people of color and people with disabilities and set a dangerous precedent.

The Commission will issue more detailed recommendations and findings on June 18th at 10:00am. Registration is limited and available [here](#).

[Commission Calendar](#)

Summer Quarterly Commission Meeting

May 28, 5:00-7:00pm: Summer Quarterly Commission Meeting. Join by calling +1 646 558 8656 and entering the Meeting ID: 293 915 024 and Password: 841955.

Committee Meetings

These meetings are only required for members of the relevant committee, but are open to all. Please RSVP to commission@ma-lgbtq.org if you plan to attend.

- June 2nd, 4:00-5:00pm: Membership Committee Meeting

Annual Recommendations Release Event

June 18th, 10:00am, State House Library. RSVP [here](#) and see the news story above for more information.

[Resources During the Pandemic](#)

Youth and young adults can refer to our [COVID-19 Resource Page for LGBTQ+ Youth](#), which is updated daily with new resources. Some of the resources include financial relief, food banks, social connection, housing, activities to pass the time, and many more. We encourage you to send queer-friendly COVID-19 resources to commission@ma-lgbtq.org.

Middle and high schoolers are invited to participate in our weekly Virtual GSA Meeting on Thursdays, which has been extended into summer. This is a chance for LGBTQ youth to experience community while we cannot physically go to school and regular GSA meetings. GSA meetings are held through Zoom and require registration beforehand. The registration link is posted a few days before the meeting on our social media and our [landing page with all of our COVID resources](#).

Education professionals can sign up for a wide variety of training opportunities that are scheduled to happen as live webinars over the next few weeks, and that will be made available on-demand afterward. See the full list of sessions [here](#).

[Virtual Community Events](#)

[National LGBT Health Education Center - Fenway Institute](#)

They offer over 40 on-demand webinars, as well as planned webinars, on topics such as:

- Introduction to LGBT Health
- LGBT Youth
- Transgender Health Care
- HIV Prevention
- Same-Sex Domestic Violence

[TransLash Tells Trans Stories to Save Trans Lives](#)

Check out www.translash.org, based in NYC, sharing stories about trans people. They have been doing some marvelous lectures/discussions online. They're hosting an absolutely necessary conversation about COVID-19 and sex workers, particularly QTPOC who are greatly at risk. Their other presentations are archived on their site, and they're very skilled at bringing often-marginalized voices to the center of the conversation.

[Pathways Virtual Coffee Hour](#)

You are warmly welcomed to join Bay Path for a chat at their new weekly Pathways Virtual Coffee Hour. Please RSVP, drop by and say hi on Tuesdays at 11am on Zoom. Please RSVP to Julie via jnowak@baypath.org, or call her confidential line at 508-573-7288 and leave a voicemail. Our friendly group would be delighted to have you join us for a chat!

[Free Legal Clinic for Survivors of Sexual Violence](#)

Friday, May 29, 10 am - 6 pm EST, The VRLC is thrilled to partner with The Center for Hope and Healing Inc. for a virtual legal clinic for survivors of sexual assault, providing aid in the areas of safety, privacy, immigration, employment, education, housing, and financial stability. If you are a survivor of sexual violence in Massachusetts and would like to participate in this clinic, email elaine@chhinc.org to reserve a spot today.

[North Shore Pride Virtual Vendor Fair](#)

June 1 - June 30, Applications to be a vendor are due May 31. North Shore Pride will be publishing links to different LBGTQIA+ organizations and stores. To find out more, follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or send them a note at info@northshorepride.org.

[Survivors on the Margins Black Community: Centering the Needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Survivors](#)

June 1, 2020. 2:00pm - 3:00pm EST, This webinar will focus on culturally specific insights and strategies for intentional planning and methods of delivering information for deaf, and hard-of-hearing survivors.

[MPY Remote PD Workshops: Can't vs. Won't: Executive Functioning and Its Effect on Behavior](#)

June 1st, 2020, 10am-12pm, Speaker: David Gotthelf, Ph.D., NCSP, This is a repeat webinar. Participants will not receive CEUs and/or PDPs for this webinar if they attended on 4/29. Executive functioning has become a major concern for what seems to be the majority of students ranging from the around fourth grade and becoming increasingly challenging each year through high school and college. Along with the significant increase in concerns regarding anxiety, executive functioning—the two challenges go hand-in-hand—is the most common reason for referral for behavioral services. Operational understanding of executive functioning and how challenges related to it can be addressed, from both an educational as well as a behavioral perspective, are the two major goals of this presentation. Register [here](#).

[MPY Remote PD Workshops: How To Support Students At Risk for Suicide During COVID-19](#)

June 2nd, 2020, 10am-12pm, Speaker: Kelsey Manders, MSW, During the school year, identifying and supporting students at risk for suicide comes with many challenges. In a time of physical disconnection and lack of structure, supporting the mental wellbeing of students can be even more complicated. Join Kelsey Manders to discuss the complexities that come with identifying students at risk and connecting with them in new ways that match the virtual reality placed upon us by COVID-19. [Register here](#).

[MPY Remote PD Workshops: Positive Anxiety](#)

June 4th, 2020, 10am -12pm, Speaker: Patrick Barbieri, M.Ed., Executive Director, LABBB Collaborative, This is a repeat webinar. Participants will not receive CEUs and/or PDPs for this webinar if they plan to attend on 5/7. Anxiety can be described as a state of being overwhelmed, futuristic thinking, perfectionism; followed by physiological symptoms that grip and paralyze us. There is a stigma associated with having anxiety and we are on a mission of trying to rid ourselves and others of these thoughts and feelings. "Anxiety" is not a permanent state, it is a flow of thoughts and feelings we choose to call anxiety. If we can learn to understand this energy and accept the feelings associated with it, we will realize that these thoughts and feelings can be positive, inspirational and motivational and can drive us to be more productive and successful. [Register here.](#)

[Screening Party Online. Gen Silent. with Cast and Crew](#)

[Fenway Health and LGBT Aging Project's](#) (and cast member) Bob Linscott will be holding a free only screening party of the film Gen Silent on Friday, June 5, 5 PM PDT and 8PM EDT. The critically acclaimed documentary about LGBT older people going back into the closet to survive. On June 5th, **HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day**, join cast member Dr. Melvin W Simms and the filmmakers after the screening. Register [here](#) or contact Ron at 978-946-1476 or rbourque@esmv.org.

[Boston Pride Flag Raising Virtual Ceremony](#)

Friday June 5, 2020, 12PM Noon, The Official Kick-Off to the 50th annual Boston Pride Week, We'll open up Pride with our traditional Flag Raising at City Hall. Even though we won't be able to gather in person, we'll be able to watch our mayor, elected officials, and the Boston Pride Board speak about what Pride means to the City of Boston, and why we're still #wickedproud.

[Author Talk with Dr. Eric Cervini followed by Q&A Discussion with Miss Rhonda Bout](#)

Friday, June 5, 2020 6:00 – 7:30PM, Dr corvine will be talking about his book The Deviant's War: The Homosexual vs. the United States of America This event will be LIVE streamed. Please [pre-register here.](#)

[LGBTQ Veterans Panel Discussion](#)

Monday, June 8, 2020, 6:00P – 7:00P, Boston Pride and City of Boston Office of Veterans Affairs presents a virtual discussion. Moderated by Sue O'Connell. This event will be live streamed. Registration link coming soon. The Panelist will include Robert Santiago - Commissioner, Veterans Services, Deborah Drew - Board member, Boston Pride Committee, Hanna Tripp - Veterans Caseworker for the Office of Congressman Seth Moulton, and Father Alex Oneto - Vietnam Veteran who served as a Medic with the US Marines.

[Pride Lights - Honoring Those We Lost to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic](#)

Tuesday, June 9, 2020. 6:00pm, This event will be live streamed. Pride Lights is a celebration of the community's strength and resilience, rooted in collective resistance, and a recognition of those whom we have lost through the years to HIV. Details are subject to change.

[North Shore Pride Virtual Interfaith Service 2020](#)

June 25 @ 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM, One of the highlights of the North Shore Pride Parade and Festival throughout the year has been the annual Interfaith service in Salem. This year, we will be bringing this service to you virtually through a live stream on our [Facebook page](#). The Interfaith service will bring together more North Shore churches, temples, synagogues and spiritual communities to celebrate our shared commitment to the values of community, diversity, and equality for all that drive our 50+ year movement for equality.

[North Shore Virtual Pride Parade 2020](#)

June 27, 12:00 PM North Shore Pride's theme for this year is "Uniting Community" and, despite the cancellation of the Parade & Festival, we must do just that. Remember, we are all in this together, and we will get through this together. And so, we are excited to announce that we've been planning an ongoing 2020 Virtual Pride to take place to keep our community engaged and connected throughout the year. Tune into the Facebook livestream of the Virtual Pride Parade on June 27th at 12:00 PM.

[North Shore Pride Virtual Pride Parade Drag Show and After Party 2020](#)

June 27 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, More information to come

[AIDS WALK BOSTON GOES VIRTUAL](#)

[October 18th, 2020.](#) In light of the emergent developments concerning COVID-19, we will not be able to hold this year's AIDS Walk & Run Boston as scheduled on Sunday, June 7. AIDS Action remains steadfast in its efforts to provide its clients with the vital services they need to remain housed, employed, safe, and as healthy as possible.

Have an event or news item you'd like considered for inclusion? [Email us](#) by the 10th of each month for potential placement in our newsletter.

[Community Announcements](#)

The SAPHE Act Signed

The Legislature recently passed and the Governor signed into law *An Act Relative to Strengthening the Local and Regional Public Health System*. It was designed to address these challenges and will implement the [recommendations](#) of the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health. The [new law](#) will:

- Ensure that all members of the local public health workforce have access to essential training,
- Create an incentive grant program to support more effective and efficient delivery of services by increasing sharing across municipalities, and
- Move Massachusetts toward national standards for a 21st-century public health system.

Accessing Gender Affirming Care During COVID-19

Created by the Massachusetts Transgender Health Coalition, includes tips for providers and insurers on top of guiding principles for trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people. View the PDF [here](#).

The OCA also operates a Complaint Line, which anyone with concerns about a child or youth who is receiving state services can contact. If you or a family you are working with is having difficulty with a state service for children (e.g. foster care, residential treatment, special education services)

that you have been unable to resolve through the normal state agency administrative process, please contact our staff at the OCA. **You can reach the OCA Complaint Line in the following ways:**

- Email: childadvocate@state.ma.us
- Phone: 617-979-8360
- [Learn more about the OCA Complaint Line here.](#)

Ramblers Scholarship for Athletes in LGBT Community

The Ramblers Scholarship for Athletes in LGBT Community is currently open for the high school athletes who are self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. Deadline: 1st June 2020, Award Amount: A total of \$5,000. Go [here](#) to learn more and apply.

West Virginia University

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

PHONE SURVEY

Share your attitudes and experiences around naloxone in a 30-minute telephone survey. Volunteers will be compensated \$40 for their time.

CONTACT REBECCA JOYCE, PROJECT COORDINATOR AT 617-320-3334 OR REBECCA.JOYCE@HSC.WVU.EDU

Researchers from West Virginia University are working in Massachusetts to conduct a study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The purpose of the study is to assess the accessibility of naloxone in Massachusetts. Naloxone, commonly referred to by the brand name Narcan, is the drug that reverses opioid overdoses.

Fenway Health's 2020 Activist Academy Getting To Zero Fellowship

This is an opportunity to join [a state-wide coalition of 40 organizations working to end the HIV epidemic](#) and build towards a future with zero stigma, zero new HIV diagnoses, and zero AIDS-related deaths. The Academy will equip participants with the comprehensive knowledge and tools to advocate on behalf of their community, mobilize and cultivate other activists, and educate community members and state officials. **Individuals representing the populations most deeply impacted by the HIV epidemic are strongly encouraged to apply “namely, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people of color.** The fellowship program will last from Sept 2020 to March 2021, and Fellows will be compensated with a stipend for the duration of the program. **To learn more about this program, visit [this project description link](#). To apply, visit [this application link](#).** Applications are open now until July 17th.

New LGBTQ+ Youth Mentoring Program in Greater Boston

Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Boston recently began piloting an initiative that matches LGBTQ+ children in need with adult mentors in the LGBTQ+ community. *During the COVID-19 pandemic, they are still working to match people remotely!* They serve and engage children, adults, and families from all religions, ethnicities, and backgrounds. They are currently recruiting LGBTQ youth (6-18) from mostly Brookline, Brighton, JP, Cambridge, Somerville and Newton and areas nearby. They are also actively recruiting adult mentors to be BIGS so that they can be paired with their Littles. Bigs and Littles see each other twice a month for a couple of hours, mostly on the weekends, and make at least a year commitment. All matches are supported by experienced Clinical Match Specialists who are there throughout the span of the relationship. Contact Lorraine@jbbbs.org for info on participating as a youth, parent, or volunteer mentor.



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