



July 7, 2010

RE: Office of GLBT Affairs' Health Report

The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mayor Fenty:

On behalf of the DC Trans Coalition's members and supporters, I am writing to express our disappointment and concern that transgender, transsexual and gender diverse (hereafter; trans) communities were excluded from the Office of GLBT Affairs' June 30, 2010 [Report of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Health in the District of Columbia](#). While the goal of the report was to "present data and prompt discussion" about how to improve the overall "health outcomes in the GLBT community living in the District of Columbia," we are alarmed by the report's very obvious omission of existing research on D.C. trans communities, and we remain concerned that the report fails to acknowledge the current state of our constituents' health.

Anecdotally, we are well aware of the significant health disparities many trans communities experience due to stigma, discrimination and ignorance. Existing data gleaned from various survey tools – including the [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance \(YRBS\)](#), the [National HIV Behavioral Surveillance \(NHBS\)](#), and even Jessica Xavier's somewhat dated [Needs Assessment of Transgender People of Color Living in Washington, D.C.](#) – could have provided a baseline to gauge the current state of health for various trans communities. Furthermore, acknowledging that the existing survey tools only provide a partial snapshot of the current health of local trans communities in the report would have added much needed transparency rather than falsely stating that one of the report's goals is to "prompt discussion about how to improve the overall health outcomes in the GLBT community."

How can we begin to prompt discussion about the health outcomes of the transgender communities living in D.C. when the District fails to collect the much needed data necessary to better meet the specific needs of these communities? We of course, encourage you and your staff to very seriously discuss how to move forward and include trans communities in a meaningful approach to ensure future reports more accurately monitor and evaluate our constituents' current health needs. In order to achieve this very important and achievable goal, we have provided a set of recommendations to gather the necessary research to ensure such inclusion:

1. **Needs Assessment Funding.** Direct the Office of GLBT Affairs to allocate grant funding for a comprehensive needs assessment for all trans communities living in the District of Columbia.
2. **Issue a Trans Health Report.** Release a second health report that specifically addresses the state of trans health, using the available survey tools and research to create a baseline for the future needs assessment.
3. **Improved Data Collection.** Ensure that all existing survey tools issued by your office include questions that capture a respondent's gender identity and sexual orientation.
4. **Commitment to True Inclusion.** Commit to releasing reports inclusive of all lesbian, gay, bisexual *and* transgender communities living in the District of Columbia, especially when the Office of GLBT Affairs reports on LGBT matters.

The failure to report data on the current health of trans communities underscores the urgency to introduce improved data collection methods, which will enable your office to better meet the needs of our constituents. While we are disappointed that we were not initially consulted in the construction of this report, we do welcome the opportunity to speak with you and your staff to discuss these recommendations in more depth to ensure a more comprehensive report in the future.

With the right leadership, we are confident that the District of Columbia can begin to more accurately collect data for the empowerment of all trans communities living in the District of Columbia. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Rhodes Perry
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CC: Carrie Kohns, Mayor's Chief of Staff
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