

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
POLICY

Subject: Health Care Needs of the LGBTQ Population

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POLICY STATEMENT

The creation of the patient-physician relationship is contractual in nature – generally, both are free to enter into or decline the relationship. A physician may decline to undertake the care of a patient whose medical condition is not within the physician's current competence. However, physicians who offer their services to the public shall not decline to accept patients because of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis that would constitute invidious discrimination.

The SDSMA believes that a physician's nonjudgmental recognition of patients' sexual orientation, sexual behaviors, and gender identities enhances the ability to render optimal patient care in health as well as in illness. In the case of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) patients, this recognition is especially important to address the specific health care needs of people who are or may be LGBTQ.

It is important for physicians to understand and recognize the physical and psychological needs of LGBTQ patients. Additionally, it is important for physicians to understand and communicate the need for: 1) sexual and gender minority individuals to undergo regular cancer and sexually transmitted infection screenings based on anatomy due to their comparable or elevated risk for these conditions; 2) comprehensive screening for sexually transmitted diseases; appropriate safe sex techniques to avoid the risk for sexually transmitted diseases; and 4) individuals who identify as a sexual and/or gender minority (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) to understand and report partner violence – which may differ from that of their cisgender peers.

The SDSMA supports ongoing efforts to: educate the medical community and public on the medical spectrum of gender identity, and to promote social equality and safe access to basic human services and public facilities.

AUTHORITY

South Dakota State Medical Association Council of Physicians, 9/18/2015, 11/3/2017, 11/5/2021;
Reaffirmed by South Dakota State Medical Association Board of Directors 11/8/2021.