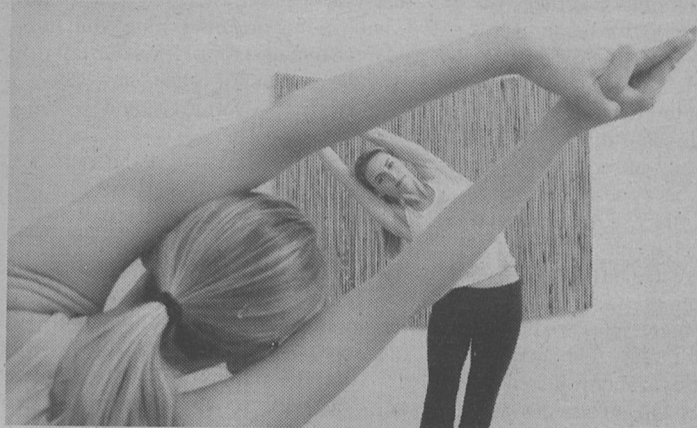


HEALTH BEAT

# Access to Quality Healthcare

The National Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health is sponsoring the third annual National LGBT Health Awareness Week from March 12-18. The theme this year is "Own Your Health, Get Checked Out." One way to get checked out is to visit the R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center in Burlington for a variety of events. Or check the website listed below for more information.



LGBT people often face financial, personal and cultural barriers when attempting to access health care. Further, we often withhold personal information about our sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sexual practices and behavioral risks from health care providers because we fear discrimination. And as many of us know only too well, there is a lack of knowledge about LGBT health among health care planners and providers.

- Transgender care is not taught in U.S. medical schools.

**Here are some things that you can do to upgrade the quality of your health care:**

- Be proactive! Test for HIV. Men should consider screening for prostate and anal cancer. Women should screen for cervical and breast cancer. And if you smoke, make a real effort to cut down or quit completely!
- Find an LGBT-friendly provider. Ask your friends, call your local LGBT community center to inquire about referrals, or log on to services such as [www.gayhealth.com](http://www.gayhealth.com) to research in greater detail.
- Consider coming out to your doctor. It is the most effective way to make certain your health concerns are addressed completely.
- If your state or locality has enacted domestic partnership benefits, find out if you may be eligible to access health care and other benefits.
- Inquire whether your health plan has LGBT cultural competence training required of the health professionals providing services under their plan. ▼

**These problems are compounded because:**

- LGBT people are at increased risk for certain forms of cancers including (lung, cervical, breast, and anal cancer) due to a higher prevalence of smoking, being overweight, and inadequate risk assessment and health care screenings.
- LGBT people also have increased risk of stress-related mental health problems and substance abuse.
- LGBT couples are at a disadvantage in obtaining medical insurance compared to heterosexual couples since many insurance companies and employers do not provide domestic partnership benefits.
- Older LGBT people in same-sex relationships are at high risk of economic devastation due to an absence of Medicaid spend-down protections afforded to legal partners.

➔ Reprinted from National Coalition for LGBT Health website. For more information, please go to [www.lgbthealth.net](http://www.lgbthealth.net)

## LGBTQ Health Awareness Week Events at RU12?

### MONDAY, MARCH 13

- 1-4 pm: Five-minute chair massages by Sergio Corrales (call for appt.)
- 5:45-7 pm: Potluck! Bring a healthy dish to share – along with the recipe.
- 7:15-9 pm: Movie: *Supersize Me!*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 14

- QUEER VISIBILITY DAY at the Statehouse, Montpelier
- 12-6 pm: Drop-in Oral HIV Testing
- Free Yoga Class, sign-up required. Time TBA

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

- 3-9 pm: Drop-in Oral HIV Testing
- Ladies First: TBA
- 6-9 pm: Volunteer Training

### THURSDAY, MARCH 16

- 1-3 pm: Blood pressure screening
- 6:30 pm: Bereavement Support Group
- 7 pm: Green Mountain Leather Club

### FRIDAY, MARCH 17

- 2-9 pm: Drop-in Oral HIV Testing
- 1-2 pm: Hepatitis C Testing at Safe Recovery, 275 College Street, Burlington (802) 860-3567
- 7 pm: Sapphic Cinema: *The Journey*

Please note: All events listed will be held at RU12? Queer Community Center, 34 Elmwood Ave., Burlington, across from the main post office, unless otherwise noted.

FOR MORE INFO:  
Shawn Lipenski, Health & Wellness Program Director,  
R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center, 802.860.7812,  
[www.ru12.org](http://www.ru12.org).

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