



COLORS OF CARE

*TAKING PRIDE IN AUTHENTICITY AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL
AT HOLY CROSS HEALTH*



HOLY CROSS HEALTH'S
LGBTQIA+
NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

FROM THE EDITOR: New Year, Renewed Commitments

BY CANDACE BUSTAMANTE, BSN, RN, BSc

As we welcome 2025, the rainbow comes to mind—a timeless symbol of diversity, unity, and hope. Just as the rainbow graces the sky after a storm, this new year offers a moment of renewal, reflection, and the promise of brighter days ahead.

In 1978, Gilbert Baker found inspiration in the Rolling Stones' "She's a Rainbow" to design the iconic pride flag—a celebration of the vibrant spectrum that makes the LGBTQ+ community so extraordinary. Over the years, the rainbow flag has evolved, its many variations honoring the resilience, strength, and beauty of our differences. This enduring symbol reminds us that progress is made when we stand together, embracing each color, each voice, and each story.

Let's approach 2025 with the same spirit of renewal and inclusivity, working together to build a future where every individual feels seen, heard, and supported.

In this January issue, we feature incredible contributions from our Holy Cross Health family. Mary Carter Warren, D.Min., explores the importance of resetting our lives instead of falling into cycles of routine. Our provider spotlight shines on Michael DeFabrizio, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, NP-C, AAHIVS, who shares insights on enhancing LGBTQ+ patient care. Kim Saiswick, EdD, RN, LMHC discusses the cacophony of health insurance and hospital negotiations and its role in patient care.

We also highlight a new *Public Health Nursing* study on integrating LGBTQ+ curricula into nursing education and revisit the historic *One, Inc. v. Olesen* Supreme Court case in this month's *Roots of Resilience*. Finally, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of

the Holy Cross Medical Group - Wilton Manors Clinic, a milestone in providing inclusive healthcare to our community.

"JUST AS THE RAINBOW GRACES THE SKY AFTER A STORM, THIS NEW YEAR OFFERS A MOMENT OF RENEWAL, REFLECTION, AND THE PROMISE OF BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD."

As always, I encourage you to get involved with our local S.P.I.R.I.T. Committee at Holy Cross Health. Together, we can make 2025 a year of renewed commitment to equity, compassion, and progress. 🌈

Candace Bustamante, BSN, RN, BSc is the Clinical Education Coordinator for the Community Health & Well-Being Department. With a diverse healthcare career spanning 16+ years, she is dedicated to fostering inclusivity, health, and community connection. With a passion for creating programs that make healthcare accessible and approachable, she brings both heart and expertise to her work. When not working on initiatives to improve community well-being, Candace enjoys exploring new recipes, uplifting others, and finding common ground in unexpected places.



STOP THE “RINSE AND REPEAT” CYCLE & HIT “RESET” INSTEAD

BY MARY CARTER WAREN, D.MIN

Whatever New Year’s resolutions you might have made may already be broken or compromised, just a few days into 2025. It’s not that we don’t mean to make a change, but it’s just so darn hard to break the “**rinse and repeat**” cycles of our lives. I really want to make healthier food choices, until I get home tired and comfort food calls my name. I really want to spend less time on mind-numbing social media or internet scrolling, until I check my phone in the middle of the night and one site leads to another and pretty soon I’ve been awake for an hour with nothing to show for it except exhaustion.

I really mean it when I say love my family and relationships are my highest priority, until I over commit to everything and everyone except those I love and care about the most. Habits are hard to break. One of the principal concepts in virtue theory is that the way to become virtuous (or more virtuous) is by practicing being virtuous. And we should practice virtue in situations where it isn’t so hard or challenging, so that when we really need to be virtuous it is our “**habitus**” to be virtuous.

It has become our default setting, our way of responding to the world. If I want to be a prudent and wise person, I need to practice being prudent when the stakes are pretty low. Over time my natural inclination, my default setting, will be to take a deep breath before acting and speaking in a tough situation so that I am prudent. If I want to nurture the virtue of temperance and moderation, then I need to practice moderation when balance is not so hard, so that when I am overwhelmed by options and choices and noise, I’ll be able to default to temperance in my response.

The other thing I appreciate about virtue theory is that it is never too late to hit “**reset**” and start again. There is no calendar pressure, just another day to be the best version of yourself. To practice in small ways to be who you want to be. To practice being all that God intended you to be. To be “**wonderfully made**” as the scriptures remind us.

“IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO HIT ‘RESET’ AND START AGAIN”

So don’t be discouraged; hit the “**reset**” button and practice being who you want to be in the new year! 🌈

Mary Carter Waren, D.Min., serves as the Mission Leader at Holy Cross Health, where she oversees Mission Integration Essential Services, including ethics, spiritual care, and ministry formation, while collaborating with leadership to advance the organization’s Catholic healthcare mission. She played a key role in establishing the Legacy Program, which nurtures the spirituality of colleagues and educates them on the values of Catholic healthcare. With a doctorate in ministry and over 25 years of experience in education and peacebuilding, she has also served as founding director of the Center for Peace and Justice at St. Thomas University and held leadership roles with the School Sisters of Notre Dame.



PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT:

Michael DeFabrizio, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, NP-C, AAHIVS

At Holy Cross Health, our providers are passionate about creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all patients. In this month's feature, we spotlight Michael DeFabrizio, a Family Nurse Practitioner with extensive experience in LGBTQ+ healthcare. Michael shares his insights on the importance of inclusive care, the role of healthcare providers in addressing disparities, and his journey to serving the vibrant community of Wilton Manors.

What does it mean for you to be able to help and connect with LGBTQ+ patients?

Part of the reason I decided to leave Boston and move to Wilton Manors, Florida, is to more deeply connect with the LGBTQ+ community. As a member of the LGBTQ+ umbrella, I am aware of the unique challenges and disparities that this community often faces, particularly in healthcare. Many general practitioners simply don't fully understand or address these needs.

LGBTQ+ individuals often experience healthcare disparities due to systemic discrimination and prejudice, even from healthcare providers. This can lead to both poorer mental and physical health outcomes. Additionally, fear of judgment can prevent people from seeking care, limiting their access to essential services and putting them at greater risk for serious illnesses and conditions, including HIV and AIDS.

Wilton Manors is a truly unique and special place — a safe haven for the LGBTQ+ community in Florida. As the state of Florida becomes a focal point for debates over LGBTQ+ rights and healthcare access, the growing concerns around policies affecting transgender and gender-diverse individuals

are undeniable. Under conservative political leadership, Florida has enacted a series of laws that raise significant concerns for LGBTQ+ advocates, particularly regarding the healthcare needs of the community.

Amidst these challenges, Wilton Manors shines as one of the most vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive communities for LGBTQ+ individuals in the state. Known as a sanctuary for diversity and self-expression, it is a place where people can live, work, shop, and enjoy life while being their true, authentic selves. As the need for accessible LGBTQ+ care continues to grow, I am committed to supporting this mission and bringing my knowledge of LGBTQ+ healthcare from Boston to a community where it is more needed than ever before.

"I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT BRINGING MY EXPERIENCE IN LGBTQ+ HEALTHCARE TO A COMMUNITY WHERE THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE AND WELCOMING CARE HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER."

Why is it important for Holy Cross Health providers to challenge and detach from the health disparities LGBTQ+ people typically face in health care?

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was founded in 1955 and continues to offer a wide range of services, including emergency care, advanced surgery, cancer treatments, and many specialized services. While rooted in faith-based principles, the organization is deeply committed to the diverse communities

(Provider Spotlight continued on page 5)

of South Florida, including the LGBTQ+ community and Wilton Manors. Recognizing the unique healthcare needs of the LGBTQ+ population, Holy Cross Health has established a primary care practice in the heart of Wilton Manors to provide tailored care and create a safe, welcoming environment for all.

It is essential for all Holy Cross Health providers to align with the organization's mission of offering compassionate care to all individuals, fostering an environment of equity, respect, and inclusion for everyone.

What would you tell other practitioners who want to better serve the LGBTQ+ community?

The best advice I can offer to fellow practitioners in better serving the LGBTQ+ community is to prioritize learning and building awareness within your organization about the unique needs of this community.

The LGBTQ+ umbrella is broad, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Therefore, understanding the diverse individuals who make up the LGBTQ+ community in a specific area is essential for growing as an LGBTQ+ practitioner and enhancing your organization's approach. This can be further supported by creating brochures and educational materials to raise awareness about the specific concerns within the community.

What would you share with LGBTQ+ patients who may have hesitations about becoming a patient at a Catholic hospital?

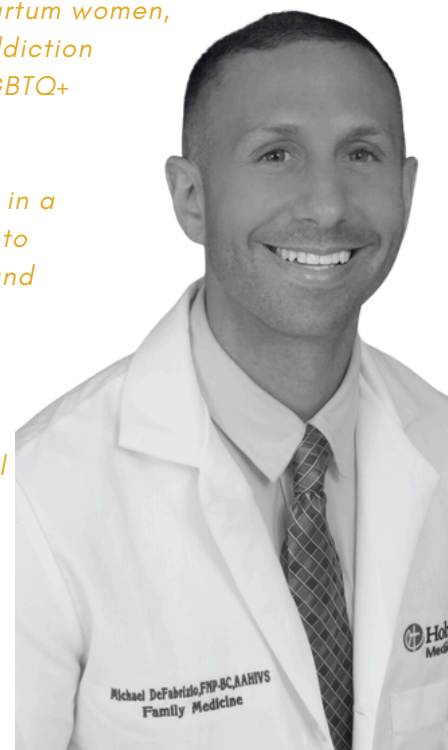
I would explain to LGBTQ+ patients that Catholic, faith-based hospitals, including Holy Cross Hospital, approach care holistically, honoring the values of human dignity, compassion, justice, and a commitment to the whole person. These principles extend to all

patients, including those in the LGBTQ+ community. Holy Cross Health has taken this mission even further by establishing a practice in the heart of Wilton Manors, specifically designed to serve the LGBTQ+ community. Here, skilled practitioners with expertise in LGBTQ+ healthcare work to deliver the highest standard of care, ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. 🌈

Michael DeFabrizio MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, NP-C, AAHIVS is a Family Nurse Practitioner with over six years of experience in this role. He has primarily practiced in Boston, Massachusetts, where he has worked in diverse healthcare settings serving a wide range of patient populations. Notably, DeFabrizio has worked at Fenway Community Health Center, one of the largest LGBTQ+ community health organizations in the country.

He is skilled in caring for patients across the entire age spectrum, from infants and children to adolescents, adults, and geriatrics. Additionally, he holds a specialty in HIV medicine through the American Academy of HIV Medicine and is a certified provider in HIV prevention. DeFabrizio's experience includes caring for high-risk populations, such as prenatal and postpartum women, veterans, those with addiction and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

He is currently enrolled in a post-master's program to obtain his psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioner licensure. This will enable him to be dual-certified in managing both medical and psychiatric long-term needs, further enhancing his ability to serve diverse communities.



THE CACOPHONY OF HEALTH INSURANCE AND CONTRACTS:

An Exploration into the Complexities and Challenges of Health Insurance Companies Contracting with Hospitals

BY KIM SAISWICK, EdD, RN, LMHC

Health insurance companies and hospitals are two of the most integral players in the healthcare system. Their relationship, which involves complex negotiations and contracts, can significantly influence the quality, cost, and accessibility of healthcare for patients. However, these contracts are not without problems, and the challenges they present often lead to increased healthcare costs, reduced access to care, and sometimes, confusion for patients.

The Basics of Insurance-Hospital Contracts

Health insurance companies and hospitals (including hospital owned medical groups) typically enter into contracts to define how much the insurer will reimburse the hospital for services provided to insured patients. These contracts set rates for various medical services, procedures, and treatments, as well as guidelines for billing, claims processing, and patient responsibilities (like copayments or deductibles). The arrangement benefits both parties:

- **Hospitals:** Secure a steady stream of patients who are covered by insurance and guaranteed payment for services rendered (though not necessarily at full cost).
- **Health Insurance Companies:** Gain access to a network of healthcare providers that offer a variety of services to their policyholders, ideally at negotiated, lower rates than if the insurer had to reimburse for out-of-network care.

However, as insurance companies strive to manage costs and maximize profits, they often push for lower reimbursement rates to hospitals, leading to tension in negotiations. Hospitals, particularly small or rural ones, find themselves at a disadvantage because they rely on insurance agreements to stay financially afloat.

When reimbursement rates don't cover the cost of care, it becomes challenging for hospitals to maintain their services and keep up with the increasing costs of medical supplies, technology,

and labor.

The agreements between the two entities are critical to ensuring that insured patients receive care within their network, which typically involves lower out-of-pocket costs compared to out-of-network care. The terms of these contracts can have wide-ranging implications for both healthcare providers and patients.

"...DISPUTES OFTEN LEAVE PATIENTS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, FACING CONFUSION, FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY, AND EMOTIONAL STRAIN."

Contract Expirations, Renewals, and Renegotiation

One of the most contentious aspects of these contracts is the reimbursement rates agreed upon between insurers and hospitals. Hospitals often argue that insurance companies do not reimburse them adequately for the services they provide, especially for complex or emergency care. As the cost of delivering healthcare rises, hospitals claim that these rates often fail to keep pace with inflation or the increasing cost of medical supplies, labor, and technology. This is typically the cause of delays in contract renewals.

The result if an agreeable contract is not renegotiated is a financial squeeze on hospitals, particularly smaller or rural ones, which may already be operating on thin margins. These hospitals, which already operate on tight margins, may lack the negotiating power or resources to secure better reimbursement rates from large insurers.

This often leads to hard decisions about cutting services, laying off staff, or closing departments, which can have **(continued on next page)**

severe consequences for local communities, particularly vulnerable populations that rely on these healthcare facilities.

The Role of the Patient

Patients play a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of health insurance and hospital contracts. During contract negotiations, it's important for patients to contact their **insurance company** directly, not their healthcare provider. Providers (your healthcare practitioner/doctor) typically do not play a role in these negotiations. Here are some key actions patients can take during these challenging times:

- Advocate: Patients should thoroughly understand their insurance policies and actively question any prolonged negotiation periods. This proactive approach can influence how insurance companies manage contracts and pricing.
- Provide Feedback: Participating in feedback and surveys can help insurance companies assess and improve their contracts. This input is valuable for enhancing service delivery and contract terms.
- Communicate Concerns; Contact the Insurance Company: During contract negotiations, it's crucial for patients to contact their insurance providers and express their concerns and dissatisfaction with the ongoing negotiations. This can help ensure your needs and expectations are considered.

By taking these steps, patients can better navigate the healthcare system and advocate for improved care and coverage.

Effects on Patients

Patients frequently find themselves caught in the middle of contract disputes or facing bills that are hard to understand. They may not be aware that a specific provider involved in their treatment is out-of-network or that the terms of their insurance plan have changed due to new contract negotiations. This is why hospitals are transparent and send out notifications to patients when they enter into a contract negotiation. Typically, the letter outlines the date that the contract will end and provides an out-of-network care solution.

In most cases, it is the hospital which is attempting

to negotiate improved reimbursement rates and the health insurer offering decreased reimbursement rates for services. Financial uncertainty anticipated (and/or actual) disruptions to care, and the inability to afford necessary treatment can contribute to increased stress, anxiety, and depression for many patients, especially those with chronic conditions or serious health concerns.

The mental health burden of navigating these disruptions is an often-overlooked aspect that healthcare providers should consider when managing contract negotiations. The stress, confusion, and uncertainty caused by insurance contract disputes can exacerbate mental health issues, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and a general decline in well-being for patients anticipating and/or facing these disruptions.

And, for this Holy Cross Health empathizes with you. Our healthcare providers, colleagues, and leadership are also stressed knowing that full patient populations and their healthcare are at risk. Committed to our mission to be a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities, we cannot compromise our ability to provide you with the best healthcare and improving the health of our communities. Towards this end, we enter into negotiations with the health insurance companies and pledge to do so with reverence and integrity while ensuring good stewardship and justice for the best intentions and outcomes possible. 🌈

Kim Saiswick, EdD, RN, LMHC serves as vice president of Community Health and Well-Being for Holy Cross Health. In her role, she leads, develops, and oversees the implementation of policy, system and environmental change strategies, as well as programs and outreach strategies, in communities throughout the non-profit hospital's service area. Involved with local and statewide policy making boards and community networks, Kim has worked alongside community peers and colleagues to advocate for LGBTQ+ health equity, ending systemic racism, change and improvement in health-related systems, with a special focus on vulnerable, disenfranchised individuals and families.



ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

A look at January LGBTQIA+ milestones and their impact.



One, Inc. v. Olesen

US Supreme Court Decision, January 13, 1958

In January 1953, ONE, Inc., a spinoff of the Mattachine Society, launched the nation's first pro-gay magazine, selling for a quarter in Los Angeles. However, the U.S. Post Office and FBI worked to prevent its distribution, with Postmaster General Olo Olesen invoking the Comstock obscenity laws to block the mailing of the October 1954 issue, labeling it lewd due to its LGBTQ+ content. ONE, Inc. filed a lawsuit, but the courts initially sided with the Post Office.

Attorney Eric Julber took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which, on January 13, 1958, overturned the lower court rulings and ruled in favor of ONE, Inc. This landmark decision was the first time the Supreme Court addressed homosexuality, affirming that pro-gay literature and beliefs are protected under the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. 🌈

To read this article in its entirety, visit [The Trevor Project](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/LGBTQ-History.pdf). All rights are reserved by the original authors and cited source referenced below. Holy Cross Health does not claim ownership or authorship in any capacity.

References:

The Trevor Project. (2022, February). LGBTQ History: Moments and Figures. *The Trevor Project*. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/LGBTQ-History.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Contact Von Biggs at Von.Biggs@Holy-Cross.com to volunteer for any of the following events:

	January 14	Vaccine Town Hall at Pride Center	Expert panelists will answer your vaccination questions and provide vaccines.
	January 16	Pride Center Artisan Flea Market	Join us for a day of unique finds, community connections, and vibrant LGBTQ+ pride.
	January 26	My Hollywood PRIDE	This festival will build upon the unique identity of My Hollywood Pride, embracing authenticity, diversity, and family inclusivity.
	February 1	The Cookout	A Black History Month celebration showcasing that the City of Wilton Manors is welcoming to all races and ethnicities.
	February 15	Rock the Block Wilton Manors	A music festival dedicated to bringing the community together.
	June 14	Stonewall PRIDE Wilton Manors	Wilton Manors Stonewall Pride celebrates the historic Stonewall Riots and the start of the LGBTQ+ human rights movement, highlighting its impact on our community.



Community Beat

BY KIM SAISWICK, EdD, RN, LMHC

Holy Cross Wilton Manors kicked off its 25th anniversary at the GFLGLCC - Greater Fort Lauderdale LGBT Chamber of Commerce holiday luncheon, sponsored by Holy Cross Health and held at the Westin Hotel. The event brought together members of the LGBT and LGBT-friendly business community, who were addressed by representatives of the Holy Cross Leadership team.

Kim Saiswick, VP of Community Health and Well-Being, recognized Dr. Jason Ceavers, voted "Best Doctor" by the South Florida LGBTQ+ community, and highlighted the clinic's commitment to advocacy and equality. For the past 25 years, the Primary Care Clinic at Holy Cross has been a consistent healthcare provider *specializing in LGBTQ+ care* for the Wilton Manors community.

Rudy Molinet, Board Chairman, emphasized Holy Cross Health's dedication to providing a welcoming environment and quality healthcare to the LGBTQ+ community. In 2024, Holy Cross received the "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer" designation from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC) and the Equality Means Business Award from Equality Florida.

Robert Casalou, Interim CEO and Regional CEO for Trinity Health, assured the community that the executive search for a new CEO includes a firm and on-going relationship with and commitment to the LGBTQ+ community.

Holy Cross Wilton Manors will continue to celebrate its anniversary celebrations - look for us in January as the City of Hollywood kicks off PRIDE on January 26th. 🌈



Photo (Left to Right): Dr. Jason Ceavers, Joey Wynn, Rudy Molinet, Kim Saiswick, Chrissy Turner, Von Biggs, and Robert Casalou

LGBTQ+ POPULATION WELL-BEING: Health Equity Implementation Science in Action

Notable Articles

BY THERESA RYAN SCHULTZ, DESIREE EDEMBA, MATTHEW E. LECUYER, ALLISON GARZONE, SHANE HENISE, AMY LILJESTRAND, PAMELA S. HINDS, SIMMY KING

ARTICLE & ABSTRACT ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN *PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING*, DECEMBER 2, 2024

Aims

Health equity is actualized when all individuals can attain the highest level of health. Youth who identify as LGBTQ+ experience health disparities and scarce access to culturally congruent mental healthcare. Our nurse-led research team recognized evidence-based practice guidance gaps and prioritized a systematic inquiry into the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ identifying youth who needed emergency care for suicidality. Concurrently, we translated new findings into practice. The purpose of this endeavor is to implement a nimble evidence-based practice adoption process for nursing staff to effectively address LGBTQ+ population health needs.

Methods

Informed by Purnell's Cultural Competence Theory, qualitative findings from a prospective study and available literature, we developed an LGBTQ+ sensitive care curriculum for nursing staff using the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Nursing Continuing Education Professional Development (NCPD) Framework to address the intersectionality of cultural awareness and care provision. The curriculum was delivered and formally evaluated longitudinally with a focus on communication confidence and knowledge.

Result

The curriculum was delivered in one session to nursing staff during a 6-month period. Program evaluations indicated curriculum acceptability and effectiveness. Participants reported improved ability to use appropriate language when communicating with patients who identify as LGBTQ+ and their families and a moderate to high change in confidence when providing care to LGBTQ+ identifying patients.

Conclusion

Concurrent, evidence-based efforts to uncover and apply new knowledge relevant to nursing communication with youth who identify as LGBTQ+ is possible and yield effective, positive change in nursing knowledge and confidence in providing care for these youth. Implementation science is essential to advance evidence-based nursing practice or the full positive impact of research on patient outcomes is not likely. When the implementation science program is not incorporated early in the research process, research excellence is at risk. Evolving evidence-based practices that enhance individualized holistic patient care delivery for LGBTQ+ individuals are strengthened when primary research, implementation science, and scaling research co-occurrence is achievable. 🌈

To read this article in its entirety, visit <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13480> or the *Public Health Nursing* journal referenced below. All rights are reserved by the authors and cited journal. Holy Cross Health does not claim ownership or authorship in any capacity.

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Schultz, T. R., Edemba, D., Lecuyer, M. E., Garzone, A., Henise, S., Liljestrang, A., Hinds, P. S., & King, S. (2024). LGBTQ+ population well-being: Health equity implementation science in action. *Public Health Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13480>

PARTNER WITH S.P.I.R.I.T.!

Get Involved

Volunteer with the SPIRIT committee, your Holy Cross Health LGBTQ+ colleague group. It's a fantastic way to meet fellow colleagues, promote Holy Cross's commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, and have fun. Volunteer responsibilities include setting up and breaking down event tables, tabling during events, and engaging with the community.

In the coming months, we will focus on celebrating Holy Cross Wilton Manors' 25th Anniversary.

The S.P.I.R.I.T. Committee is Holy Cross Health's internal advisory committee focused on LGBTQ+ patient care issues. S.P.I.R.I.T. stands for **S**howing **P**ride, **I**nclusiveness, **R**espect & **I**ntegrity at **T**rinity Health.

Our mission is to promote visibility and awareness of the LGBTQ+ community within Trinity Health through building connections between LGBTQ+ and Allies, and by promoting acceptance and equity for all colleagues regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.



NEXT MEETING:

Monday, 1/6 at 12:30-1:00PM

Check us out on SharePoint or contact Joey Wynn and Von Biggs for more information.