What the Positively Trans Survey Results Teach Us

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Last summer, the Transgender Law Center's Positively Trans (T+) project began conducting an online poll to better gauge the real-life experiences of transgender people living with HIV across the United States. The findings are now compiled in a report titled "Positively Trans" that focuses on two key areas: advocacy priorities and barriers to health care.

"Some of the starkest findings outlined in the report concern income, education, and history of incarceration," according to the press release on the 10-page report. "While 64 percent of respondents had at least some college experience, a full 43 percent earn less than $12,000 a year. Additionally, 41 percent had some history of incarceration, and of those who had experienced incarceration, more than one in two had gone at least 6 months without medical care since their diagnosis."

Survey results showed that the top five health concerns are as follows:

- Gender-affirming and nondiscriminatory health care (59 percent)
- Hormone therapy and side effects (53 percent)
- Mental health care, including trauma recovery (49 percent)
- Personal care (nutrition, healthy living, etc.) (47 percent)
- Antiretroviral therapy and side effects (46 percent)

What's more, 59 percent of respondents had not gone more than six months without medical care since their HIV diagnosis.

Future reports from survey findings will cover topics such as stigma, law enforcement interaction and substance abuse.

The survey received responses from 35 states and Puerto Rico, with most coming from people of color, notably transgender women of color.

Survey respondents listed HIV-related discrimination as the major legal priority, as well as discrimination in employment, public accommodations, identity documents and housing.

The report goes on to list five recommendations that programs and initiatives can undertake in order to better the health and legal rights of transgender people living with HIV.

“Positively Trans sets out to demonstrate that transgender people living with HIV are capable of developing research and program priorities and to lead national conversations and advocacy efforts that aim to end an epidemic that disproportionately impacts us,” said Cecilia Chung, senior strategist at the Transgender Law Center and lead staff for the organization’s Positively Trans project, in the press release. “Through our research, we are making it clear that transgender people, and particularly transgender women of color, face unique challenges in living with HIV, and we must be at the table when policy and funding decisions are made.”

To download the full report, click here.

In a related Positively Trans project, a series of videos documents the lives of black transgender women living with HIV in the South. For more on that, click here.

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