Fellowship program offers chance to transform nation’s LGBTQ+ care

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Brendan Murphy
News Writer

The AMA Foundation (AMAF) has officially launched its National LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program with a call for letters of intent from eligible U.S. medical schools and teaching institutions that are interested in developing a fellowship in LGBTQ+ health.

It’s the first step in determining which institution will receive a grant of up to $750,000 to plan and implement three consecutive, one-year medical fellowships in LGBTQ+ health. Following a review of the submitted letters, the AMAF’s Commission on LGBTQ+ Health will invite select institutions to submit a full proposal for consideration. The first grant will be announced in June 2021.

According to the foundation, the fellowship program offers a big opportunity to:

- Close the gap in health disparities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people.
- Enhance physician training to increase knowledge on institutional barriers that LGBTQ+ communities face.
- Enhance medical education on LGBTQ+ health and LGBTQ+ health disparities.
- Increase the number of physicians who provide affirming care to the LGBTQ+ community.
- Develop institutional and individual leadership initiatives to improve clinical and patient outcomes.
- Advance leadership and advocacy skills for creating organizational change to transform health care systems to be LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming.

Learn more with the AMA about how to take an LGBTQ-inclusive social history to improve care.

Discrimination, stigma and more

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John D. Evans, a telecommunications pioneer who co-founded the C-SPAN cable channel, has led the AMAF Fellowship Commission for LGBTQ+ Health for the past year.

“This innovative fellowship reflects just how important it is for us to address the intersecting issues of discrimination, stigma, access to and quality of care faced by the LGBTQ+ community,” Evans said. “It is imperative that LGBTQ+ health care become integrated into medical education, especially mindful that the data points to the lack of access to specialized care and increased bias against LGBTQ+ patients.”

The inaugural grantee will develop the LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program infrastructure and curriculum, select one qualified candidate per year, and provide the one-year training experience. The fellowship program encourages information sharing and collaborative efforts to sustain and expand the nation’s ability to develop highly qualified leaders in LGBTQ health and exponentially increase the capacity to care for LGBTQ patients.

“This program underscores our longstanding commitment to health equity and is the first step to ensuring that LGBTQ+ patients have access to truly excellent medical care,” said Jacqueline Bello, MD, the foundation’s president. “We are grateful to Mr. Evans and the LGBTQ+ Fellowship Commission for their knowledge, experience, and commitment to working with the AMAF to create a pipeline of trained LGBTQ+ health specialists.”

AMAF offers answers to frequently asked questions about the fellowship program.

Here’s a primer from the AMA on understanding LGBTQ+ health issues. Also, learn more about the work of the AMA Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Issues.