

# Information



**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
2450 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1127  
**T** 202 828 0400 **F** 202 828 1125  
[www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)

## INFORMATION

**Date:** March 2007

Memorandum #07-07

**To:** Council of Deans  
Council of Teaching Hospitals  
Council of Academic Societies  
Organization of Resident Representatives  
Organization of Student Representatives

**From:** Darrell G. Kirch, M.D., President

**Subject:** Institutional Programs and Educational Activities to Address the Needs of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Students and Patients

At its March 1, 2007 meeting, the AAMC Executive Council approved the following recommendations of the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA) and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) regarding “Institutional Programs and Educational Activities to Address the Needs of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Students and Patients.”

These recommendations result from collaborative efforts between the OSR and the GSA during 2005-2006, which included separate surveys of medical students and medical school student affairs deans about the needs of and educational programming for GLBT students and about attitudes toward GLBT students and patients. The AAMC previously investigated the experience of GLBT students in medical school in 1998.

The AAMC recommends that:

1. Institutions recognize the professional obligations of:
  - Their physician faculty and graduates to treat each patient with dignity and respect, regardless of the patient’s sexual orientation or gender identity.
  - Their faculty members to prepare students to respond effectively, compassionately, and professionally to the needs of all types of patients for excellent, comprehensive health care, regardless of patients’ sexual orientation or gender identity.

2. Medical school curricula ensure that students master the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide excellent, comprehensive care for GLBT patients. Specifically, these curricula should include:
  - Training in communication skills with patients and colleagues regarding issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.
  - Visible faculty members and administrators who model behaviors reflecting respect and appreciation for each student, regardless of the student's sexual orientation or gender identity.
  - Faculty development programs for faculty members and residents regarding GLBT issues.
  - Comprehensive content addressing the specific health care needs of GLBT patients.
3. The AAMC consider initiating a Medical School Objectives Project (MSOP) effort designed to reach general consensus within the medical education community regarding the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes that graduating medical students should possess in the area of human sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity, sufficient to prepare them to provide excellent, comprehensive health care to GLBT patients.
4. Student affairs deans and other responsible institutional officials ensure a safe learning environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. A safe learning environment includes:
  - Ensuring that all students are aware of institutional non-discrimination policies.
  - An institutional culture that promotes and respects diversity in the learning community.
  - Mechanisms for students to report any instances of discrimination or mistreatment without recrimination.
  - Clear policies and procedures to be followed when discrimination or mistreatment are reported.
5. Admissions deans and admission committees be made aware that bias and prejudice concerning sexual orientation and gender identity are important issues in the learning environment for medical students. Admission materials and programs should educate applicants and prospective students about the learning community that they will be joining and about the institution's commitment to a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all persons.
6. The GSA Committee on Student Affairs (COSA) compile a set of "effective practices" in order to provide resource information for schools considering revisions in and changes to current policies, procedures, and programs.

These recommendations should assist faculty committees and medical school administrators in their continuing efforts to insure an appropriately respectful learning environment for all students and appropriate patient care for a diverse patient population.

During the spring of 2007, the GSA will collect “effective practices” information for each of these recommendations and then distribute that information during the summer of 2007 to member medical schools.

Questions about these recommendations and the attached survey data report should be addressed to: Robert F. Sabalis, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Section for Student Affairs and Programs, at (202) 828-0684 or [rsabalis@aamc.org](mailto:rsabalis@aamc.org).

cc: Group on Educational Affairs  
Group on Student Affairs