

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL  
BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS  
July 16, 2007**

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

**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.

**Widely Disseminated "NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION"**

The University of Massachusetts Medical School prohibits discrimination in any form on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, or age in admission and/or employment in its programs, facilities and activities. Further, the Medical School is firmly committed to ensuring that all who work and study here may do so in an environment free of harassment.

**Widely Disseminated "APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF STUDENTS POLICY"**

This policy defines 'Inappropriate Treatment' in the following manner: Inappropriate treatment occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. It can take the form of physical punishment or threat, sexual harassment, psychological cruelty, and discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, **gender**, age, **sexual orientation**, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

**Widely Disseminated "UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES"**

**(A separate University of Massachusetts Medical School policy addresses complaints specific to sexual harassment.)**

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to provide a learning and working environment that is free of all forms of harassment and discrimination and is supportive of the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and dignity.

**Establishment of an active GLBTA subcommittee of the Council on Equal Opportunity and Diversity**

In existence since 1993, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Subcommittee was established to support UMMS in its commitment to an environment that is respectful, fair and affirming to all who work and study at the University of Massachusetts Medical School regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. Activities of this recently re-energized subcommittee have included the following:

- Partnered with the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office to provide *Safe Space* training (an idea originally raised at the subcommittee by a medical student)
- Improved subcommittee membership to include a diverse group of staff, faculty and students, including allies.
- Conducted outreach (e.g., informational kiosks set-up at appropriate campus events and community-based GLBT events) to provide informational materials regarding the GLBTA demonstrating that UMMS is committed to providing an environment that is respectful, fair and affirming to all who work and study at UMMS.
- The GLBTA hosted a concert performed by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus in May 2007 at the medical school.
- The GLBTA collaborated and supported medical students in GLBT educational efforts, including co-sponsorship of "LGBT Aging" lunch program.

### **Establishment of a Civility Subcommittee of the Council on Diversity and Equal Opportunity**

The goal of the Civility Committee is to create a sustainable civil culture by raising awareness, education and training. The existence of this 'civility' initiative provides a strong foundation for GLBT and other diversity efforts.

- Formerly an ad hoc committee, the Civility Committee was voted to become a regular standing subcommittee of the CEOD.
- Drafted and received approval for new UMMS Civility Statement. The new statement has been framed in various UMMS work locations.
- Participated in the International Day by hosting a Civility booth comprised of educational materials promoting civility.
- Created materials to promote civility, including bookmarks, t-shirts and flyers.
- Civility is included as a performance expectation on the UMMS Performance Review form.
- Civility Day, September 28, 2006
- Civility information became part of new hire orientation beginning in summer 2006; and, general Civility training has been provided to UMMS community since fall 2006.

**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. **(See Attachment A)**
- 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 (See below)
- Comprehensive content addressing the specific health care needs of GLBT patients **(See Attachment A)**

**See Attachments A for Overview of GLBT Curriculum Initiatives at UMass Medical School**

**Faculty Development initiatives:** As an adjunct to the University of Massachusetts Medical School's curricular initiatives to address GLBT health care issues in the past 6 years, faculty development and continuing education programming has been developed and offered to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes of faculty involved in the education of medical students.

For clinical faculty, UMass has offered CME Faculty Development courses and practice-based trainings focused on health care delivery to GLBT patients (both adult and adolescent). These curricula have been informed by education and training initiatives at Fenway Community Health, Justice Resource Institute, and Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts. The objective of these faculty development/CME programs is to create a GLBT-safe environment for patients, so as to serve as a model for medical students during clinical preceptorships and clerkships.

**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.**

An MSOP effort with a focus on developing consensus within the medical education community re: human sexuality, sexual orientation and gender

identity would be a positive next step in the AAMC's effort to effect curricular change with the ultimate goal of preparing physicians 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.

**Publications/Websites: Medical School Catalog, Student Handbook** – Sections on Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office as a resource; Appropriate Treatment of Students Policy; Complaint Procedures; also, listing of QMass as one of the “Student Organizations”

**QMass Student Group** – For approximately 10 years, UMass Medical School has provided the GLBT student group with institutional recognition as an officially sanctioned student group; the group is thus eligible to receive support through the institution's Student Body Committee, and recognition with a bulletin board space, listing in school publications, and other acknowledgments. This group advocated for inclusion of GLBT topics within the curriculum, and sponsored a range of educational and social programming, including lunchtime presentations on GLBT topics; Rainbow Pin Campaigns; and participation in schoolwide diversity initiatives to promote GLBT awareness, and to enhance the environment for GLBT students, staff, faculty and patients.

**Assistant Dean of Student Affairs/Diversity and Minority Affairs (Danna Peterson, MD)** – This position, originally established to serve underrepresented ethnic and racial minority students, has expanded its mission to include serving GLBT students. The assistant dean makes a presentation at orientation, explicitly stating her availability as a resource to support racial and ethnic minority students, as well as GLBT students. Support provided includes: advice and assistance with academic and personal issues; career counseling; and a mentoring program.

**Assistant Dean of Student Affairs/Advising (Michael Ennis, MD)** – The advising program endeavors to identify faculty mentors who will be sensitive to

and/or have expertise in GLBT issues, in order to be responsive to students who request these qualities and/or expertise in their advisor.

**Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Equal Opportunity (Marian V. Wilson, PhD)** – The Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office sponsors a range of initiatives to support GLBT students, faculty and staff:

- **Collaborative programming between QMass student group and other campus-wide diversity efforts**, including those sponsored by the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office, and by the GLBTA Subcommittee of the institution’s Council on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Some of these efforts during the past several years have included: increased inclusion of GLBT programming by the campus Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office which serves the entire community (faculty, staff, students); safe space initiatives, including outreach and training program; expansion of resources in DEOC, Human Resources and Employee Assistance Program to broaden support in key institutionwide departments. Initiatives in which students have participated (either as advisors or ‘idea-generators’, or directly in planning and execution of programming and/or events) have included: GLBT Safe Space Presentations/Trainings; Educational programming on “Caring for GLBT Youth”, “Cultural Competence in GLBT Health”, “LGBT Aging”, and “Transgender Health”; and curriculum development projects (as described under section 2, Attachment A).
- **Trainings Conducted through Institution-wide Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office:**
  - **Workplace Harassment Prevention trainings offered at 50% of worksites for managers** – 90 minute program, covering discrimination, sexual harassment and hostile environment. Offered monthly throughout academic year (Sept. – May) at 50% of worksites
  - **Safe Space Trainings** – creating culture and environment of safety and communicating about GLBTA resources at the medical school – offered every other month. Begun in January 2006, the focus of these trainings has more recently shifted to ‘why important for us to do this at UMMS’.
  - **Allies Trainings** – in development – 2 hour session designed to develop an in-house base of resource support for GLBT students, faculty and employees.

**Mechanisms, policies and procedures for students to report discrimination or mistreatment without recrimination:**

See description of relevant policies & procedures (e.g., Nondiscrimination Policy, Appropriate Treatment of Learners, Discrimination Complaint Policies and Procedures) outlined in Section 1.

**5. Admissions deans and admissions 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.**

#### **Establishment and Dissemination of ADMISSIONS POLICY**

The University of Massachusetts Medical School provides equal opportunity and access to all applicants and students regardless of age, race, color, religion, **sex**, national origin, **sexual orientation**, disability and veteran's status. The University adheres strictly to all applicable state and federal regulations relating to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

**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.**

#### **Key UMass Contacts for additional information on 'effective practices' established at UMass Medical School:**

**Emily Ferrara, MA**, Faculty Advisor for QMass, and Assistant Professor, Family Medicine and Community Health  
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## ATTACHMENT A

### UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL

#### **Curriculum Components on Issues related to Providing Culturally Competent Care to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Patients**

##### **Background**

The University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester implemented enhanced communication skills curricula in the clinical clerkships for third year medical students, during the 2001-02 Academic Year, with support from the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation. Faculty leaders at UMass identified **sexual orientation** as one of the priority areas to address in this new curriculum. Through this initiative (spearheaded by a medical student and two faculty members), the topic of sexual orientation was addressed in greatest depth through an integrated curriculum on sexuality in the required clerkship curriculum. In 2001, UMass was selected to participate in a Sexual Health Curriculum Initiative, funded by Pfizer, Inc. This initiative supported additional innovations in GLBT health to be incorporated into the curriculum - e.g., a workshop offering on 'Cultural Competence in GLBT Health' in the required 3<sup>rd</sup> year Multicultural Interclerkship - along with faculty development/continuing education programming.

The following overview of GLBT-relevant curricular highlights features a range of innovations supported through the two grant-funded initiatives described above, as well as subsequent enhancements. In many cases, these curricular components were spearheaded by QMass medical student leaders:

##### **GLBT Curriculum Highlights at UMass Medical School:**

###### **Year 1 & 2**

**GLBT Patient Interviewing Skills in *Physician, Patient and Society (PPS)* Course** - This required course, which runs longitudinally throughout the entire first year of the medical school curriculum has incorporated gay/lesbian standardized patient cases, in an effort to support the development of students' skills in conducting sensitive and culturally-competent history-taking, particularly in the areas of the social and sexual histories. (*Required*)

In 2006, medical student Jessica Wang, in conjunction with the GLBTA student organization QMass, conducted a needs assessment of the sexual health curriculum offered to students, and in response developed a 70-page "Guide to Taking a Sexual History". This is a UMass internal document used as a resource

for medical students, faculty and staff as a comprehensive resource on sexual development, STI screening, and GLBT sensitive sexual history taking. These efforts spearheaded by Ms. Wang and QMass were recognized with the 2007 GLBT Health Achievement Award.

### **Year 1**

***Community Health Clerkship in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Health*** – This clerkship is offered as one of 20+ choices of underserved populations to study in an intensive two-and-a-half week full-time clerkship for first year medical students and graduate-level nursing students. The GLBT Clerkship examines the unique health care concerns of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities, with a particular focus on the reality that many issues faced by the GLBT community stem from a reluctance to seek medical care and to share critical information with their providers due to real and perceived discrimination in the health care system. Participating students visit programs and clinically shadow providers and advocates who serve adults, youth, and elders throughout Massachusetts, where there are many efforts underway to address gaps in culturally appropriate care for the GLBT population. Opportunities to participate in community service projects in collaboration with several participating programs are also offered, and discussions with GLBT patients and with providers who have extensive expertise in GLBT issues are an integral aspect of the experience. *(Required/Selective)*

### **Transgender Health Care - Clinical Correlation in the Physiology Course: Reproductive Endocrinology Block**

Two-hour interactive lecture presented by a pediatric endocrinologist and one of his transgender patients. Format allowed for dialogue/discussion between presenters and students. *(Optional Adjunct Offering)*

### **Year 2**

#### **GLBT Health and Mental Health in the Mind, Brain and Behavior II Course**

**GLBT topics integrated within Human Sexuality block.** The development of GLBT topics to be covered in a 1-hour sexuality lecture, including the range of sexuality and gender identity as an integrated component of this psychiatry course; previously a one-hour lunch talk on homosexuality was offered as an 'optional adjunct' to the curriculum *(Required)*

### **Year 3**

#### **Integrated Curriculum on Sexuality in Required 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Clerkships**

- **Adolescent Sexuality – Case-Based Learning (Pediatric clerkship).** 1.5 hour curricular module includes small group, case-based discussion highlighting cases related to adolescent sexuality, including gay and lesbian youth. Issues pertinent to sexually active teenagers; interviewing techniques appropriate

for dealing with adolescents and their families; and discussion of the development of various sexual orientations and importance of supporting adolescents as they identify and become comfortable with their own sexuality. *(Required)*

- **Lesbian Health Care (OB-GYN clerkship).** 1-hour curricular module features a lesbian parent who serves as guest speaker, and shares her personal experiences with accessing the healthcare system, including considerations re: creating a safe environment, and alternative methods for insemination. Cue card on the ethics of “Taking a Sexual History”, which offers tips for taking an effective and culturally-competent history of women of any sexual orientation, is distributed. *(Required)*
- **Interviewing Seminar: Lesbian with Depression (Psychiatry clerkship).** As part of a 1-hour interviewing seminar session, in which standardized patients are utilized for interview practice, a case of a lesbian patient with depression is used to reinforce open-ended inquiry that does not presume heterosexual orientation and that considers pertinent relationship issues. *(Required)*
- **Suicidality: Prevalence Among Gay Youth (Psychiatry clerkship).** This is covered in an overall session on Suicidality; references Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data outcomes citing higher incidence of suicidality among gay youth. *(Required)*

#### **Workshop on GLBT Health Risks in 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Multicultural Interclerkship**

This Interclerkship is required for all 3<sup>rd</sup> year medical students. A selection of workshops is offered as part of this required curriculum, including a workshop on “GLBT Health Risks”. Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 the class opts to take this workshop offering. *(Required/Selective)*

**For additional information about any of the curricula described above, contact Emily Ferrara, MA, Office of Medical Education, UMass Medical School, at (508) 856-5134, or via e-mail at [emily.ferrara@umassmed.edu](mailto:emily.ferrara@umassmed.edu)**