

# COME OUT FOR HEALTH

9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL LGBT HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

## SMOKING

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States, and it disproportionately affects the LGBT community: LGBT people smoke between 50 and 200 percent more than the general public. On average, gay and bisexual men smoke twice as much as straight men, while lesbian and bisexual women are up to three times more likely to be smokers than straight women. The statistics for tobacco use among LGBTQ young people are even more alarming: approximately 1 in 2 LGBTQ youth between the ages of 18 and 24 smokes.

The high rates of smoking among LGBT people are the result of numerous factors, including peer pressure, the stress of coping with discrimination, socializing oriented around bars and clubs, and aggressive tobacco industry targeting of the LGBT community. Obstacles to effective tobacco cessation treatment for LGBT people, such as a lack of cessation programs tailored to the LGBT community, anti-LGBT discrimination in health care settings, and financial barriers, further magnify the negative impact of tobacco on the LGBT community.

Tobacco is the primary cause of many deadly lung diseases, including lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smoking also contributes to complications for people living with HIV and increases risk of cardiovascular disease. Sponsoring the tobacco industry by smoking provides free advertising for the industry, even while their profits ruin our community's health. This LGBT Health Awareness Week, come out for health against Big Tobacco – commit to quit!

### **Together, we can decrease tobacco's impact on our community by:**

- Creating a smoke-free environment: ask your neighborhood bars, cafes, and restaurants to go smoke-free. Research shows that, after creating a smoke-free environment, most businesses actually see an increase in their number of customers
- Supporting our friends and family members when they are trying to quit
- Avoiding the tobacco industry's "stop smoking" campaigns: most of the campaigns designed by the tobacco industry are ineffective and may actually increase smoking
- Including evidence-based anti-tobacco campaigns: if your organization offers anti-smoking programs, make sure to include information relevant to the LGBT community

### **Learn more:**

Mautner Project ([www.mautnerproject.org](http://www.mautnerproject.org))

Network for LGBT Health Equity ([www.lgbttobacco.org](http://www.lgbttobacco.org))

Legacy for Health ([www.BecomeAnEX.org](http://www.BecomeAnEX.org))

[Partnership for Tobacco Free Maine](#)

[American Lung Association](#)



[WWW.LGBTHEALTH.NET](http://WWW.LGBTHEALTH.NET)