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A safe space for LGBTQ persons to get COVID-19 vaccine

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach and the City of Long Beach offer a free, one-day clinic

Long Beach, CA (May 12, 2021) – A recent academic [study](#) cited that sexual and gender minority populations are less likely to accept a COVID-19 vaccine for fear of experiencing stigma and medical mistrust from providers. The LGBTQ Center Long Beach in cooperation with the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services has created a safe, inclusionary space where clients can receive a free, COVID-19 vaccine in a supportive environment. The one-day clinic will be Friday, May 21 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Houghton Park, 6301 Myrtle Avenue in Long Beach. Appointments are not required but encouraged and can be made by calling (562) 270-6428.

“While many in the public may not need this service themselves,” said executive director of the LGBTQ Center Long Beach Carlos Torres, “they likely know a friend, a family member, a neighbor, or a fellow churchgoer who might need a safe place to access this life-saving service. No one should have to fear discrimination when receiving medical treatment for a worldwide pandemic”

For many LGBTQ people, discrimination and disrespect are felt upon entering a medical setting where they often fill out intake and registration forms that ask for age, race and ethnicity as well as gender. However, the latter most often refers only to the sex a person was assigned at birth, not the gender with which they identify, and leaves

out questions of sexual orientation. Transgender people frequently [experience overt discrimination](#) by health care providers, from being denied care to being verbally harassed. And those who were out to their providers were more than five times more likely to experience overt discrimination. There is also a historical mistrust of the medical community dating back to the early days of the AIDS epidemic.

“There is a lot of work to be done in helping medical providers understand the LGBTQ community,” notes Torres. “The LGBTQ Center Long Beach salutes the city of Long Beach’s Department of Health and Human Services for being at the forefront of care for our community.”

The COVID-19 clinic is made possible in cooperation with the City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services and the support of the CARE Program, the AIDS Food Store, Bienestar Human Services Long Beach, Long Beach Pride, the 4th Street Business Association, and more.

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach supports more than 25,000 people a year through programs including youth and family services, older adult services, mental health counseling, legal services, domestic violence support, trans health programs, HIV and STI testing, and more than 20 weekly support groups. Currently many of these services are offered online during the pandemic. Drive up and walk-up HIV/STI testing is available by appointment Monday through Friday in The Center at 2017 E. 4th Street in Long Beach. For more information on services, visit CenterLB.org or follow @CenterLB on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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