

Victorian Health Survey Demonstrates Significant Health Inequalities for LGBTIQ Populations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday 16 September 2020 - The Victorian Agency for Health Information has released survey findings outlining the issues that contribute to health inequalities faced by LGBTIQ Victorians. Thorne Harbour Health congratulates the Victorian Government on the release of these findings as a first in the state's history, but the community-controlled health organisation hopes the stark findings lead to systemic change and greater support for LGBTIQ Victorians.

"Our LGBTIQ communities are experiencing housing and financial insecurity, mental health distress, chronic disease, and family violence at significantly higher rates when compared to non-LGBTIQ Victorians," said Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth.

"These challenges need to be met with policy changes and service developments that are inclusive and affirming of LGBTIQ Victorians."

The expansion of the sample size from over 7,000 to over 34,000 during this survey has allowed the survey to capture statistically significant findings about the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ Victorians including:

- A significantly higher proportion of LGBTIQ adults had a total household income of less than \$40,000 and were not able to raise \$2,000 within two days in an emergency when compared to non-LGBTIQ Victorians.
- 24.4% of LGBTIQ adults had high or very high levels of psychological distress compared to 14.5% of non-LGBTIQ adults.
- 44.8% of LGBTIQ adults surveyed had been diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression compared to 26.7% of non-LGBTIQ adults.
- 13.4% of LGBTIQ adults had experienced family violence compared to 5.4% of non-LGBTIQ adults.

"The findings from this survey gives the Victorian Government valuable insight into the health status of our LGBTIQ communities, and it paints a clear picture – LGBTIQ Victorians are continuing to experience health inequality and we need to take action," said Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth.

"We strongly encourage the Victorian Government to consider these findings when implementing the reforms from the recent Family Violence Royal Commission and upcoming Mental Health Royal Commission."

The survey findings also included demographic and socioeconomic status details about the 5.7% of Victorian adults who identified as LGBTIQ. While a higher proportion of adults living in metropolitan Melbourne identified as LGBTIQ (6%), the survey showed that LGBTIQ adults are living throughout regional and rural Victoria as well.

"We're not just based in Melbourne and this needs to be reflected in how we provide services and support to LGBTIQ Victorians living in regional and rural settings," said Simon Ruth.

When it came to social capital, a significantly higher proportion of LGBTIQ adults were members of other community groups, were in contact with 1-4 people on the previous day, and felt multiculturalism made life better in their area.

"We envision a healthy future for our sex, sexuality and gender diverse communities, where all Victorians can live with dignity and participate fully in society. We look forward to working with the Victorian Government as we move toward that future," Simon Ruth added.

ENDS

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