

# Bodies and Barriers

## Queer Activists on Health

**Editor: Adrian Shanker**

**Foreword: Rachel L. Levine, MD • Afterword: Kate Kendell**

LGBT people pervasively experience health disparities, affecting every part of their bodies and lives. Yet many are still grappling to understand the mutually reinforcing health care challenges that lead LGBT people to experience worsened health outcomes. *Bodies and Barriers* informs health care professionals, students in health professions, policymakers, and fellow activists about these challenges, providing insights and a road map for action that could improve queer health.

Through artfully articulated, data-informed essays by twenty-six well-known and emerging queer activists—including Alisa Bowman, Jack Harrison-Quintana, Liz Margolies, Robyn Ochs, Sean Strub, Justin Tanis, Ryan Thoreson, Imani Woody, and more—*Bodies and Barriers* illuminates the ubiquitous health challenges LGBT people experience throughout their lives. The book challenges conventional wisdom about health care delivery. It probes deeply into the roots of the health disparities and worsened health outcomes that the LGBT community face and empowers activists with crucial information to fight for health equity through clinical, behavioral, and policy changes.

The activist contributors in *Bodies and Barriers* look for tangible improvements—their stories are lessons learned for caring health care professionals, sympathetic policymakers, and motivated activists—drawing lessons from the history of HIV/AIDS in America and from struggles against health care bias and discrimination. At a galvanizing moment when LGBT people have experienced great strides in lived equality, but our health as a community still lags, here is an indispensable blueprint for change by some of the most passionate and important health activists in the LGBT movement today.

### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Adrian Shanker** is an award-winning activist and organizer whose career has centered on advancing progress for the LGBT community. He has worked as an arts fundraiser, labor organizer, marketing manager, and served as President of Equality Pennsylvania for three years before founding Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in Allentown, PA, where he serves as executive director. A specialist in LGBT health policy, he has developed leading-edge health promotion campaigns to advance health equity through behavioral, clinical, and policy changes.

**Rachel L. Levine, MD**, is the secretary of health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the Penn State College of Medicine. She is a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Dr. Levine is also an accomplished regional and international speaker and author on the opioid crisis, medical marijuana, adolescent medicine, eating disorders, and LGBT medicine.

**Kate Kendell** led the National Center for Lesbian Rights, a national legal organization advancing the civil and human rights of LGBT people and their families, for twenty-two years. Under Kate's leadership, NCLR won custody and family law cases, achieved victories on behalf of LGBT athletes, won protections for LGBT students and elders, and secured asylum for over three hundred clients. NCLR was lead counsel on the California marriage equality case in 2008 and was later part of the team of attorneys to secure national marriage equality in the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

### ACCOLADES

"Now, more than ever, we need *Bodies and Barriers* to shine a spotlight on how and why good healthcare for LGBTQ people and our families is such a challenge. *Bodies and Barriers* provides a road map for all who are ready to fight for health equity—in the doctor's office, in the halls of government, or in the streets."

—Rea Carey, executive director National LGBTQ Task Force

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