July 3, 2018

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA
30329-4027 USA

Dear Dr. Redfield,

The undersigned organizations are writing in support of maintaining the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) optional module to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). As you are aware, BRFSS is the nation's premier system of health-related telephone surveys that collect state data about U.S. residents regarding their health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and use of preventive services.

The CDC provides the BRFSS to states to obtain data on risk behaviors and health conditions in the U.S. population. The SOGI module in the BRFSS — an optional module since 2014 — has been used in more than 30 states and territories and have provided the first representative snapshot of transgender health in the United States.

In 2017 the optional BRFSS SOGI module was funded by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). However, ASPE did not fund its inclusion beyond 2017. The information collected as a part of the SOGI module to the BRFSS provides critical data that helps improve the health and wellness of our nation. This is an extremely important source of data on these issues and is particularly relevant to shaping our response to the intersectional HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and the drug overdose epidemics.

We understand from the Williams Institute that until late in the process the draft survey for 2019 did not include the SOGI module because of a lack of funding although we understand the CDC has now found the money necessary to add the module to BRFSS 2019. Although CDC has shared with us that the BRFSS will remain as it is for the upcoming year, we remain concerned that CDC has the potential to halt the collection of data on LGBT populations from the BRFSS in the future and that the uncertainty could cause a chilling effect in which states will opt not to use the module if they are unsure there is funding available. Confirmation by CDC of its intent to capture this data would go a long way to establishing community trust and ensure that we understand the true health of our country’s LGBTQ population. Consequently, we seek to ensure that sources of funding for the module be prioritized in the CDC’s budget going forward.

We appreciate that the CDC has made the module available and we urge the CDC work to ensure its continued availability for states in the future. Please keep us apprised of CDC plans to fund and include the module moving forward.

Sincerely,

ADAP Advocacy Association
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition (ATAC)
AIDS United
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Atheists
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Psychological Association
Amida Care
APLA Health
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Services In Action
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
AVAC
Bailey House, Inc
Bisexual Organizing Project
Boston Public Health Commission
Broward House, Inc
California Center For Rural Policy
Callen- Lorde Community Health Center
CARES of Southwest Michigan
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc
Cascade AIDS Project
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Center for Public Health Law Research
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Club Charley’s
Commission on the Public's Health System
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW) Project
CrescentCare
DC Fights Back!
Delaware HIV Consortium
Drug Policy Alliance
Empower U Community Health Center
Equality Alabama
Equality California
Equality Federation
Equality Florida
Equality Michigan
Equality New Mexico
Equality North Carolina
Equality Pennsylvania
Equality Texas
Equality Utah
Equitas Health
Family and Medical Counseling Service, Inc.
Family Equality Council
FORGE, Inc.
FreeState Justice
Garden State Equality
Gender Spectrum
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Georgia Equality
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
GLSEN
Harlem United
Harm Reduction Coalition
Health West - ISU Family Medicine
Hep Free Hawaii
Hepatitis Education Project
Highlands Health Clinic
Hispanic Health Network
HIV Dental Alliance
HIV Medicine Association
HIV Modernization Movement-Indiana
Housing Works, Inc.
Howard Brown Health
Human Rights Campaign
Hyacinth AIDS foundation
Idaho Coalition for HIV Health and Safety
JustUs Health
Lambda Legal
Latino Commission on AIDS
Legacy Community Health
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Love’s Child Ministries, Inc
Mazzoni Center
Minority AIDS Council of Orangeburg, Bamberg and Calhoun Counties
NAACP
Nashville CARES
NASTAD
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National LGBTQ Task Force
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
NMAC
One Colorado
Open Door Clinic of Greater Elgin
Out2Enroll
Positive Women's Network-USA
PowerSource Tucson, Inc
Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) PHEWA, Presbyterian Church
Prevention Access Campaign
Prism Health North Texas
Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV & AIDS
Project Inform
Puerto Rico CoNCRA
Quad Cities Harm Reduction
Rhode Island Public Health Institute
SAGE
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Siouxland Pride Alliance
Sociologist AIDS Network
Sonoran Prevention Works
Southern AIDS Coalition
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative
Southwest Women's Law Center
The AIDS Institute
The Chicago Recovery Alliance
The Counter Narrative Project
The Fenway Institute
The Global Justice Institute
The Praxis Project
The Pride Center at Equality Park
The Trevor Project
The Women's Collective
Thrive Alabama
Transgender Law Center
Trust for America's Health
Unity Fellowship of Christ Church NYC
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Whitman-Walker Health
#StillBisexual