

## UCSF Joins National Collaborative to Study COVID-19 Outcomes for LGBTQ People

By Elizabeth Fernandez <sup>[1]</sup>

Researchers from the UCSF School of Nursing have joined a newly launched national collaborative to study the impacts of COVID-19 on members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

The We Count Collaborative aims to bring together data on more than 45,000 LGBTQ patients from five federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that specialize in reducing barriers to care for LGBTQ populations, to help bridge the knowledge gap about COVID-19 health experiences in this community. They will be collaborating with The PRIDE Study <sup>[2]</sup>, a long-term national LGBTQ+ health study led by researchers at Stanford University in partnership with UC San Francisco.

“We don’t know enough yet about the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ people, because we haven’t been counted in most national COVID-19 data collection,” said Annesa Flentje <sup>[3]</sup>, PhD, who is director of the UCSF Center for Sexual and Gender Minority Health <sup>[4]</sup> and associate director of The PRIDE Study. “This collaborative brings together frontline health organizations and community-engaged researchers focused on LGBTQ+ health to fill these gaps in knowledge and inform policy that can improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people.”

A February 2021 report by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that sexual minority people experience higher rates of underlying illnesses that are related to severe outcomes of COVID-19 <sup>[5]</sup>, including higher adjusted prevalence of asthma, cancer, heart disease, smoking and stroke than the general population. The report underscored the need for understanding how overlapping social stigmas and discrimination can cause illness, and how public health policies can intervene to stop the spread of disease.

FQHCs participating in the initiative include Whitman-Walker Institute, Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, CrescentCare, Howard Brown Health and the Los Angeles LGBT Center. The health centers have been on the front lines of COVID-19 response and are uniquely positioned to collect real-time data that is crucial for this project and future public health policy.

**About The PRIDE Study:** *The Population Research in Identity and Disparities for Equality (PRIDE) Study is a community-engaged, online, national, longitudinal, dynamic, prospective, cohort study of self-identified LGBTQ+ people. Founded in 2017 to counteract the lack of data describing the health-related needs of LGBTQ people, The PRIDE Study engages, recruits, and enrolls adults living in the United States who identify as LGBTQ+ to collect and report demographic, physical, mental, and social health data and outcomes. The PRIDE Study is based in Palo Alto, California and is a study of Stanford University School of Medicine in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco.*

**About UCSF:** *The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) is exclusively focused on the health sciences and is dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced*

*biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. UCSF Health<sup>[6]</sup>, which serves as UCSF's primary academic medical center, includes top-ranked specialty hospitals<sup>[7]</sup> and other clinical programs, and has affiliations throughout the Bay Area.*

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**Links**

[1] <https://www.ucsf.edu/bio/elizabeth-fernandez>

[2] <https://www.pridestudy.org/>

[3] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/annesa.flentje>

[4] <https://sgmhealth.ucsf.edu/>

[5] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7005a1.htm>

[6] <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/>

[7] <https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/area/ca/ucsf-medical-center-6930043>

[8] <https://womenshealth.ucsf.edu/subsite/coe>

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