



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **OHR Implements NEW Protections for LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors Living with HIV**

*OHR certifies its first cohort of trainers that will train staff in long-term care facilities.*

(WASHINGTON, DC)- Today, the [DC Office of Human Rights](#) (OHR) is pleased to announce certification of [the first cohort of trainers](#) under the [Care for LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV Amendment Act of 2020](#) (Care for Seniors Act). The Act expands protections afforded under the [DC Human Rights Act of 1977](#) by outlining specific long-term care practices that are prohibited as a form of discrimination against LGBTQ and HIV+ seniors, mandating equitable services and support, and further, requiring facilities to provide training to staff.

“Specific prohibited acts include things like refusing to assign a room in accordance with someone’s gender identity or expression, or knowingly refusing to use a resident’s preferred name or pronouns, and refusing to permit visits by same-sex partners or spouses. These new protections will ensure our seniors are treated with equality, respect, and dignity regardless of who they love or how they express their gender identity. They will have the right to live their authentic lives as they receive care in long-term care facilities,” said OHR Director, Hnin Khaing.

The training component requires facilities to: (1) train their staff on preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity & expression when caring for LGBTQ seniors and

seniors with HIV;(2) post a notice of non-discrimination in a conspicuous location; and (3) certify to OHR that their staff has completed the training.

The newly minted certified trainers will be able to educate staff working in the long-term care industry about: (1) OHR and the DC Human Rights Act; (2) how to file a complaint of discrimination with OHR; (3) challenges that LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV face when seeking and receiving services; (4) the new rights and legal protections afforded to LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV under the Care for Seniors Act; and (5) how facilities can comply with the Care for Seniors Act to avoid penalties. OHR’s Creating Safer Spaces Unit worked for several months on the development of a comprehensive training module by consulting with members of the community, conducting outreach activities, group meetings, and online presentations, monitoring DC Council hearings, and collaborating with DC Government partners such as the DC Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Aging and Community Living

“This is not just a staff training program. We are helping the long-term care industry to create and maintain safer spaces for all. It’s a movement to enhance the way we exercise respect for our seniors,” said Larry Villegas-Perez, Program Manager at OHR.

For the next cohorts of Care for Seniors trainers, OHR is seeking more than just individuals with training skills; rather, the agency is seeking dedicated individuals who can also speak other languages, are knowledgeable of HIV/AIDS and the LGBTQ communities, and are interested in learning more about human rights.

The list of certified trainers can be found [here](#).

For more information on the Care for Seniors Act at OHR, please visit <https://ohr.dc.gov/page/care-seniors>, email us at [careforsenior.ohr@dc.gov](mailto:careforsenior.ohr@dc.gov), or scan this QR code:



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### About the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights

The District of Columbia Office of Human Rights (OHR) was established to eradicate discrimination, increase equal opportunity, and protect human rights for persons who live in, work, or visit the District of Columbia. The agency enforces local and federal human rights laws, including the DC Human Rights Act, by providing a legal process to those who believe they have been discriminated against. OHR also proactively enforces human rights in the District through Director’s Inquiries, which allow it to identify and investigate practices and policies that may be discriminatory.

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