



MEDIA ADVISORY

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HEALTH CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH, HIV PREVENTION AND LGBTQ LEADERS CALL FOR SEXUAL HEALTH LITERACY TRAINING

Groups convene on April 22 to urge passage of the nation's first bill requiring health care professionals to get training in sexual health

April 21, 2021 (New York, NY) -- On Thursday, New York state and national organizations and experts will join Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal to rally behind her bill, [A3864](#), to remedy a serious gap in continuing medical education requirements for licensed medical professionals.

A3864 will require licensed health care providers to complete training in sexual health, including how to talk to patients about sex, STIs and HIV. Experts believe that this kind of training is needed to address the mistrust and discrimination that communities hit hardest by HIV and STIs continue to experience.

The virtual conference supporting A3864 is scheduled for 10 am ET on Thursday, April 22 and will feature the following speakers:

- Michelle D. Collins-Ogle, MD, Children's Hospital at Montefiore, AAHIVM
- Murray Penner, U.S. Executive Director, Prevention Access Campaign/U=U
- Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, Assembly District 67, Committee on Social Services Chair
- Kiara St. James, Co-Founder and Executive Director, New York Transgender Advocacy Group
- David C. Harvey, Executive Director, National Coalition of STD Directors
- Marquise Vilsón, GMHC Board of Directors
- Reginald T. Brown, VOCAL-NY Board Member
- Kimberleigh Smith, Sr. Director for Community Health Planning and Policy, Callen-Lorde
- Kathleen Bernock, BSN, MSN, FNP-BC, AAHIVS, AACRN, Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
- Bryson Rose, Director of Advocacy & Capacity Building, Hetrick-Martin Institute

Click here to register to attend: <http://bit.ly/3smcPG0>

BACKGROUND:

- Most sexually transmitted diseases are easily diagnosed and treated [yet remain at epidemic levels in the U.S.](#) The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are [26 million new sexually transmitted infections](#) in the United States each year, and more than half of them occur among young people aged 15 to 24. [Slightly over a fifth of all HIV diagnoses in the United States](#) are among young people aged 13 to 24, and youth are the most difficult group to retain in care.
- At a time when sexually transmitted diseases are at an epidemic level, most doctors are uncomfortable even discussing sex and sexuality, particularly with patients who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender or queer.
- Despite this, New York, physicians, nurses and other health care providers are not required to understand even the basics of a public health issue of universal relevance: sexual health care and sexual health literacy
- As a consequence, and despite decades of investment in expanded HIV testing programs, many New Yorkers still are not even offered HIV testing.
- [STIs are responsible for nearly \\$16 billion in direct lifetime medical costs.](#) If left untreated, [they can increase the risk of HIV infection](#) and cause a host of other medical problems, including infertility and problems with pregnancy. The advances in treatment and prevention are undermined by medical providers who may feel discomfort or even an unwillingness to speak to their patients about sexual health
- Years of investment in voluntary training programs for physicians, nurses, and other medical staff have yet to significantly address health disparities that prolong the HIV and STI epidemics, and therefore deepen the impact on marginalized communities, cost lives, and cost New York taxpayers.
- The solution, in addition to an increased focus on sexual health as part of medical school education, is requiring training to ensure a baseline level of literacy and competence in sexual health care that incorporates the needs of all New Yorkers, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Assemblymember Rosenthal is joined by cosponsors Rebecca A. Seawright, Chair of the New York State Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues, and Gina Sillitti, Chair of the Subcommittee on Occupational Licenses. Additional co-sponsors include:

- Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
- Assemblymember Emily Gallagher
- Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas
- Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon
- Assemblymember Chantel Jackson
- Assemblymember Chris Burdick
- Assemblymember Sarah Clark

Fact Sheet: [To End the HIV Epidemic, Health Care Professionals Need Sexual Health Literacy](#)

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