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Report gives glimpse into health of LGBT community in Riverside County

A first-ever health report being released this week by health officials gives a better insight into the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Riverside County.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Health and Wellness Profile reports on a segment of the population that has been traditionally underserved and provides a benchmark that will help Riverside County health officials track the health of the community for years to come. The 108-page report took months to complete and is a collaborative effort by the Riverside County Department of Public Health and a variety of agencies and organizations.

“This is a significant document, not only because of what it tells us about this portion of the community, but because of the questions and issues that it raises,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, public health officer for Riverside County. “As we gather more data in the future, we hope to make real progress on the health issues and disparities that affect them.”

Among the findings in the report:

- Gay and lesbian teens smoke at a rate twice that of their heterosexual peers.
- Bisexual women report intimate partner violence at a rate nearly three times that of their heterosexual female peers.
- Nearly a quarter of lesbians and bisexual women report having an asthma diagnosis, a rate that is nearly double that of the general female population.

The report also found that the lack of quality data severely limits knowledge of this community and information on the transgender population is almost non-existent.

“When we better understand the risks and resiliencies regarding a myriad of health issues facing LGBT people, we can better address unmet health needs. It can also help guide decisions on where to better direct scarce financial resources,” said Dr. Jill Gover, director of counseling for The LGBT Community Center of the Desert.

Release of the report is scheduled at 11 a.m. Feb. 26 at the offices of Desert AIDS Project, 1695 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, CA. 92262. Copies of the health report will be available at

this time. Embargoed electronic versions of the report can be obtained by calling 951-358-5599.