



Media Contact: Nicole Hollywood
Phone: 917-854-7408
SalisburyPFLAG@outlook.com

NEWS RELEASE

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PFLAG SALISBURY RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE LGBTQIA+ NEEDS ASSESSMENT

While progress has been made toward achieving equality and equity across Maryland and the United States, significant work remains. Our LGBTQIA+ community still faces challenges in almost every aspect of daily life, from housing, employment, healthcare, and education, while living with increased risks of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

The 2023 Delmarva LGBTQIA+ Climate Survey provides a snapshot of the queer community on the Eastern Shore. This initiative is propelled by advances in LGBTQIA+ rights in the Maryland legislature, which are co-occurring with the erosion of the civil liberties of LGBTQIA+ Americans in conservative states. Highlights of the findings are as follows:

- A resounding statistic from the survey is that when asked to rank the inclusiveness of the community on the Eastern Shore for LGBTQIA+ people from 0 to 100, the average score was a 54
- Respondents were generally satisfied with access to local government and available public services but were dissatisfied when it came to safety for LGBTQIA+ individuals, support for LGBTQIA+ families, and interactions with police.
- Participants indicated that they were dissatisfied with support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, parents, elders, and transgender youth and adults.
- A consistent theme running throughout the results was the lack of sufficient medical care for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.
- Overwhelmingly, respondents do not consider schools on the Eastern Shore to be safe for LGBTQIA+ youth. This sentiment while strong among all respondents was especially intense among participants who identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.

- Respondents indicated dissatisfaction when it came to general access to healthcare, gender affirming care, mental health services, and reproductive care.
- Semantic analysis of a qualitative short answer question related to health care found the greatest issues to be a lack of providers, discrimination and/or bias from providers, long waits for appointments, far distances needed to travel to access providers, issues with cost, and providers lacking knowledge about the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Semantic analysis of a short response question designed to gauge perceived community needs found that the most common themes were medical services, support/resource/advocacy, mental health services, support for LGBTQIA+ youth in local schools, a LGBTQIA+ community center, more LGBTQIA+ groups, a lack of social activities, more education/training/knowledge, and resources and a shelter for unhoused LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The survey was designed and administered by Dr. Nicole Hollywood, a faculty member at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore with an expertise in both survey design, needs assessments, and diversity equity and inclusion. Accordingly, the survey was approved by, and registered with, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore Institutional Review Board.

PFLAG Salisbury is a chapter of PFLAG, the first and largest national organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, plus (LGBTQ+) people and their families.

PFLAG Salisbury remains committed to community building, enhancing access to resources, eradicating injustice, fostering a culture of inclusion, and breaking the barriers that prevent the LGBTQIA+ community from achieving full equality. To learn more about PFLAG Salisbury, visit www.SalisburyPFLAG.com and to read the full needs assessment, visit www.salisburypflag.com/needs-assessment.html

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