

LGBTQ+ Medical Provider Screening Guide

How to find a knowledgeable and affirming medical provider as an LGBTQ+ survivor of sexual violence

Everyone wants a knowledgeable and nonjudgmental health care provider. As an LGBTQ+ identified person who is also a survivor of sexual violence, it may feel overwhelming to figure out how to find a provider who is affirming of your identity, understands needs particular to LGBTQ+ patients, and is sensitive to the needs of a trauma survivor. We hope this screening offers some tools for you to find a health care provider you can trust and contributes to your health and well-being.

Where to Start

You need a list of providers so you have the opportunity to follow up and see which one is a good fit.

- **Ask Around:** Talk to your friends, family members and co-workers who are also LGBTQ+. Ask them who their doctors are. Find out if they know a particular medical group to be LGBTQ+ friendly and trauma-informed.
- If you feel safe to do so, you can **call your health insurance provider** and ask for a list of LGBTQ+ friendly doctors.
- **Talk to a local LGBTQ+ organization or your local sexual assault support center.**
- **Consider starting with a family planning clinic:** Family planning clinics in Maine all strive to be LGBTQ+ affirming and trauma-informed. Those agencies in Maine are: Maine Family Planning and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.
- Rad Remedy and the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association both have online directories.
- **School-based health centers:** affordable and accessible to students, but also might be a great place to get a referral.

Screening prospective providers helps you make sure they can do the job you are hiring them to do.

Questions to Ask

Asking questions of a healthcare provider will be an opportunity for you to see if this person would be a good fit for you, but it is also a way to voice your needs by asking straightforward questions. You can always bring a support person with you.

Here are some questions you may want to ask a potential medical provider office via email or a phone call (as they are applicable to you). *“Hi, I was referred to _____ as a primary care provider, do you have a few minutes to answer some questions about your office policies?”*



Maine's sexual assault support centers: Supporting people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

mecasa.org

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Has your office had an LGBTQ+ training?
- Has your office had trauma-informed training or implemented any trauma-informed practices?
- What do after-hours services look like?
- May I see a sample intake form, including the questions for taking a history?
- How long are appointment blocks?
- How available are sick visits?
- When I see my primary provider, will I also be seeing a nurse, medical assistant or technician?
- What are the payment options at this office?
- Does your EMR have a chosen name and pronoun policy?
- Do you have a marker so that office staff address me with proper name and pronoun?

Here are some questions you may want to ask a potential primary care provider (as they are applicable to you). *“I am interested in _____ as a primary care provider. I would like to make a ‘meet and greet’ appointment with them to see if they would be a good fit for my needs.”*

- How long have you been in practice?
- Tell me about your experience working with LGBTQ+ patients.
- How connected are you to other LGBTQ+ affirming and knowledgeable providers?
- Tell me about how you work with someone who has a trauma history.
- How are my appointments documented and how do I gain access to that documentation?
- How are my appointments billed and can we discuss how that will show up on a medical bill?
- How transparent will you be about my care, if I am also working with a specialist or reproductive health provider?
- Do I have to take off my clothes and who is present when that happens? When are ano-genital exams expected to happen?

Self-Reflection Checklist

First Impressions (check all that apply):

- I felt heard—the provider listened to my questions.
- I felt my personal and medical privacy will be protected.
- I understood the responses the provider gave to my questions—they provided ample detail.
- My gender/gender identity/gender expression were affirmed and respected.
- My sexual orientation/relationship structures/sexual practices and kinks were affirmed and respected.
- I could see the provider took steps to create a safer environment.
- The provider shared their approach to working with patients.
- I felt reasonably comfortable.
- I was treated with respect.
- I felt believed.
- I am able to easily travel to their office.
- I understand how my appointments will be paid for.

Accessing Free or Low Cost Options

Some schools, colleges, and universities have on-campus health services that are often free to students. Although these options may not provide you with the most trauma or LGBTQ+ focused care, the cost and convenience may be helpful for the short term.

Federally Qualified Health Centers provide comprehensive primary care to anyone who walks through the door, regardless of health insurance status or ability to pay. With 19 Community Health Centers and over 65 service locations across the state, Maine's Community Health Center network spans as far north as Fort Kent, as far south as Springvale, eastward to Lubec and westward to Rangeley.

To see if you can access public health insurance, contact the Consumers for Affordable Healthcare. They are the main coordinating agency in Maine for getting enrolled in federal or state-funded health insurance: www.maine cahc.org.

Maine Family Planning and Planned Parenthood may not offer comprehensive primary care, but it is a place you can get valuable care without insurance and on sliding-scale.

Know Your Rights!

- You must give your provider permission to share any of your medical records with any other provider.
- You have the right to have someone else in the room with you.
- You have the right to interpreter services.
- You have the right to be treated fairly and without bias.
- You have the right to receive care at a reasonable and fair cost.
- You have the right to be treated with respect.
- You have the right to a clear description of the medical services you received on your bill.
- You have the right to refuse to be touched.
- You have the right to refuse care.
- You have the right to revoke consent to care at any point.
- You have the right to change providers.
- You have the right to make a formal complaint to the State of Maine Board Licensure of Medicine.