Conversion Therapy

The Williams Institute produced the first-ever estimates of the number of LGBT youth who will receive conversion therapy in the U.S. Since the report was released, four states, including Washington, Minnesota, Maine, and New Hampshire, have passed laws banning health care professionals from conducting conversion therapy on youth. Policymakers and advocates relied on our research to support passage of the laws. In Maryland, our study findings were included in the legislative note on the bill.

20,000 young people will undergo conversion therapy from a non-homonegative professional before they turn 18.

HIV Criminalization in California

The Williams Institute published a first-of-its-kind study on the application and impact of anabolic androgenic steroid (AAS) HIV criminalization laws found that the laws were enforced inequitably—primarily affecting women and people of color—and lacked consideration of modern medical advances related to HIV. Those findings helped inform the legislative debate surrounding California’s bill to modernize HIV criminalization laws. In October 2017, Governor Jerry Brown signed the bill into law, reducing HIV stigma by bringing the penalty for exposing others to HIV in line with other serious communicable diseases.

LA County Preparedness Scan

In October 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors commissioned the Williams Institute and HEI Associates to evaluate how prepared the county is to meet the unique needs of LGBT youth. Our report, which surveyed staff of 11 county departments that serve youth, found unevenness in the depth of staff knowledge, comfort, attitudes, experiences and awareness of support systems, such as police and treatment. The findings prompted the LA County Board of Supervisors in January 2018 to direct the county’s child welfare, probation and health agencies to develop plans to better serve LGBT youth.

Gay and Trans Panic Defense

Since the 1960s, defendants in criminal trials have argued that their violent behavior was a rational response to discovering the victim was LGBT. This defense, widely known as the “gay and trans panic defense,” has been used to reduce murder charges to manslaughter or other lesser charges in a number of cases. In 2016, Williams Institute scholars drafted model language that states could use in criminal legislation that bars the gay and trans panic defense. Our model guided the Illinois General Assembly that states could use in criminal legislation that bars the gay and trans panic defense. Our model guided the Illinois General Assembly

Amici Brief in Masterpiece Cakeshop Case

In October 2017, Williams Institute scholars submitted an amici brief to the US Supreme Court in Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, explaining how stigma and discrimination can have negative effects on the health and well-being of the LGBT community. In the majority opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy underscored this point saying that “up signs saying ‘no AFFECT WOMEN

Global Acceptance Index

In March, the Williams Institute introduced a groundbreaking new measure of LGBT inclusion in the world called the Global Acceptance Index. The GAI, which ranked 141 countries, represents the first time a global index has been applied to a nation’s relative level of social acceptance of LGBT people and their rights. The score and its underlying methodology provide a foundation for future research that examines the social standing of LGBT people around the globe.

Iceland ranks number one in the world for acceptance.

California ranks number two.

Illinois ranks number three.