

## PCS Data Brief Sexual Orientation

### Background

The Patient Characteristics Survey (PCS) is conducted every two years in programs funded, licensed or operated by the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH). The PCS collects demographic, diagnostic, social and insurance characteristics for all persons served during a one week period.<sup>1</sup> The 2013 PCS cycle was the first year data were collected on the **gender identities** and **sexual orientations** of service recipients. Similar efforts have been undertaken in National surveys; for example, the Gallup Survey (2012) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) (2013).<sup>2</sup>

Gender identity and sexual orientation have been increasingly identified as important social determinants of health and mental health.<sup>2</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals face unique health needs and challenges to accessing services.<sup>2</sup> The literature mentions personal and structural barriers, such as discrimination against LGBT individuals and lack of culturally competent providers, as the main barriers LGBT individuals face.<sup>3</sup> These barriers can have an effect on the healthcare of LGBT individuals.<sup>4</sup>

In [PCS Data Brief: Gender Identity](#), demographic characteristics were reported by gender identity and those identified as Transgender. This report presents demographic characteristics of individuals served in the New York State public mental health system by sexual orientation.

### Sexual Orientation Characteristics of Adults in the PCS

During the 2013 PCS survey week, 144,464 persons 18 and older (Adults) received services in the mental health system. Among adults, 7,802 (5.4%) identified with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Other sexual orientation; 4,429 were Lesbian or Gay, 3,047 were Bisexual, and 506 were Other. [Table 1].

### Key Findings

- The percentage of the clients reported to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other differed within age group, Race, Program Category, and Region served (Tables 2 & 3).
- There is no difference among identified Hispanics and Non-Hispanics.
- Among racial groups, the highest percentage was reported for Multi-Racial clients.
- There was a significant difference among programs with the highest percentage in Outpatient settings
- Central NY region had the highest percentage of clients served reported to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other.

**Table 1. Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation	Number of Adults Surveyed N	Percentage of Adults Surveyed %
<b>Total Adults</b>	<b>144,464</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Straight	124,103	85.9
Lesbian or Gay	4,249	2.9
Bisexual	3,047	2.1
Other	506	0.4
Unknown	12,559	8.7

**Table 2. Reporting of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Other (LGBO) by Age and Race**

Characteristic	Number of Adults Surveyed	LGBO N (%)
All Adults	144,464	7,802 (5.4)
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-29 Years	21,771	2,119 (9.7)
30-49 Years	50,224	3,212 (6.4)
50-64 Years	47,099	2,142 (4.6)
65 Years Or Older	12,811	329 (2.6)
	(Chi-Square P-value <.0001, 3 DF)	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic	30,772	1,718 (6.0)
Non-Hispanic	102,810	6,055 (5.9)
	(Chi-Square P-value 0.46, 1 DF)	
<b>Race</b>		
White	71,029	4,272 (6.0)
Black	34,195	2,016 (5.9)
Other	20,055	1,078 (5.4)
Multi-Racial	5,157	347 (6.7)
	(Chi-Square P-value 0.0005, 3 DF)	

Individuals who reported unknown (12,559) in the characteristic groups or Sexual Orientation were excluded from the analysis

**Table 3. Reporting of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Other (LGBO) by Program Category and NYS Regions<sup>5</sup>**

Characteristic	Number of Adults Surveyed	LGBO N (%)
<b>Program Category</b>		
Emergency	2,209	106 (4.8)
Inpatient	8,007	397 (5.0)
Outpatient	78,666	4,842 (6.2)
Residential	23,730	1,404 (5.9)
Support	19,293	1,053 (5.5)
	(Chi-Square P-value <.0001, 4 DF)	
<b>Region Served</b>		
Western Region	21,171	1,112 (5.3)
Central NY Region	13,316	839 (6.3)
Hudson River Region	18,955	1,164 (6.1)
New York City Region	67,601	4,143 (6.1)
Long Island Region	10,862	544 (5.0)
	(Chi-Square P-value <.0001, 4 DF)	

Individuals who reported unknown (12,559) in the characteristic groups or Sexual Orientation were excluded from the analysis

## Discussion

Rates of lesbian, gay, bisexual or other reported on the PCS appear to be higher than some National studies. For instance, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Study, 2.3% of adults 18 and older identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.<sup>2</sup> Gallup data found between 3.4% and 3.6% of adults 18 and older identified as LGBT.<sup>2</sup> Younger adults aged 18 to 29 years old were more likely to identify as LGBT (6.4%) than older people aged 65 and older (1.9%).<sup>6</sup>

## Next Steps:

Obtaining data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity is the first step toward understanding the health needs and disparities for this population. With this objective, the NYS Office of Mental Health introduced a sexual orientation question to the survey and, in the [Guidelines for Completing the 2013 Patient Characteristics Survey](#), advised providers to allow clients to self-identify. For the 2015 PCS:

- OMH will continue to encourage providers to integrate client self-identification into their data collection and recording processes for the upcoming 2015 Survey.

## References

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/statistics/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Ranji U., Beamesderfer A., Kates J., & Salganicoff A.: Health and Access to Care and Coverage for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals in the U.S., 2014; <http://kff.org/report-section/health-and-access-to-care-and-coverage-for-lgbt-individuals-in-the-u-s-the-lgbt-community/>.

<sup>3</sup> National Healthcare Disparities Report, 2013. May 2014. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/nhdr13/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Institute of Medicine. (2011). <http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2011/The-Health-of-Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-and-Transgender-People/LGBT%20Health%202011%20Report%20Brief.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/aboutomh/FieldOffices.html>

<sup>6</sup> Gates, G., Newport, F. (2013). Gallup poll Special Report: 3.4% of U.S. Adults Identify as LGBT. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/158066/special-report-adults-identify-lgbt.aspx>