

**LAVENDER
SENIORS**
of the East Bay

Lavender Notes

A Project of the Tides Center

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Equality California

Equality California worked hard to sponsor four pieces of legislation that will help many LGBT Californians when they take effect Saturday, January 1:

- Authored by Senator Mark Leno, **SB 543** will allow LGBT youth to access mental health services without their parents' consent, ensuring they get the care that they need when they need it -- without having to come out to their parents first.
- Authored by Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal, **AB 2199** repeals the reprehensible requirement that California seek the "causes and cures of homosexuality."
- Authored by Assemblymember Fiona Ma, **AB 2700** will allow same-sex couples who are both domestic partners and married to dissolve their partnership and their marriage with the same process if they choose to separate.

Authored by Assemblymember Hector De La Torre, **AB 2055** will grant same-sex couples who are about to enter into a domestic partnership the same unemployment benefits as opposite-sex couples who are about to wed.

We made a lot of progress in 2010, and with your help I know we can do the same in 2011. And we must.

LGBT youth need us to make their lives better now. More than 85 percent of them report harassment at school, and more than 33 percent of them report attempting suicide.

2011 will be the year that we make huge strides forward for LGBT youth. Equality California is sponsoring a bill in the new legislative session, authored by

Sen. Leno, which will ensure all students learn about the contributions of LGBT people and the movement for LGBT rights in their social science classes. We're also sponsoring a bill to strengthen anti-bullying laws with Assemblymember Tom Ammiano.

New Budget Cuts Affect Seniors

Last month Governor Brown released his proposal to address California's \$25.4 billion budget shortfall. His approach is broad, and includes keeping recent income, VLF and sales taxes increases that were set to expire; eliminating offices and doing a top to toe trimming of state government; beginning a multi-year shift to counties; and eliminating local re-development agencies.

His proposed budget also cuts very deeply into every segment of public services, including health and human services programs.

The Governor's proposed budget targets core life-line programs for seniors - Adult Day Health Care (ADHC), In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), Supplemental Security Income & Payment Program (SSI/SSP), Multi Purpose Senior Service Program (MSSP), and Medi-Cal. These programs are now vulnerable to the decisions of state legislators as they consider the Governor's proposals.

This year, more than any prior year, it will be critical for stakeholders to make their concerns and priorities heard.

Because several tax provisions necessary to holding the line against even deeper cuts will go before the voters, it is more important than ever that we involve our communities and connect with the public.

Wendy Peterson- Senior Service Coalition Alameda County

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is funded by individuals as well as Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, Alameda County Leather Corps, California Council for the Humanities, The California Endowment, City of Oakland, City of Fremont, Contra Costa County Area Agency on Aging, East Bay Community Foundation, Gay Chemists Support Fund, Horizons Foundation, Royal Grand Ducal Council/Alameda County, San Francisco Foundation, Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, and Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. We gratefully acknowledge the support of all Friends of Lavender Seniors.

Mission Statement

The mission of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is to improve the quality of life of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors through direct service, community outreach, advocacy, and education.

Founded in 1994, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay provides the following:

LGBT Seniors of Color: Improves access to health and human services to LGBT seniors in the African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Friendly Visitors Program: Matches volunteers with isolated and /or frail LGBT seniors for social support, light household and shopping assistance, and telephone assurance.

Cultural Competency Training: Through LGBT Senior panelists, educates service providers to comply with state laws to change policies and practices to make service more accessible to LGBT seniors.

Monthly Informative Social Gatherings: Help build informal social networks and individual's knowledge of issues affecting seniors at the Monthly Potluck in San Leandro, Lavender Lunch Bunch in Oakland, and South County Lunch and TalkAbout at the Fremont Senior Center.

Community Involvement: Engages in community building and partnering processes with local governments in order to insert LGBT elders' needs into their planning efforts.

Monthly Discussion Groups: Coming Out Again, Fellows of East Bay and Seniors Men's Afternoon co-sponsored and co-hosted by the North Berkeley Senior Center and Pacific Center (see back page for schedules) provide LGBT support group settings to elders in the North County.

Monthly newsletter: *Lavender Notes*.

Website: <http://www.lavenderseniors.org>

To get involved as a participant or volunteer, contact us at 510-667-9655, press 1, or go to: <http://www.lavenderseniors.org>

Lavender Seniors welcomes all LGBT persons, their partners, allies, and guests. Cost of production and mail makes necessary a request of \$20 minimum annual donation to receive the newsletter. Visitors & others may receive the newsletter for three months without charge. No one is turned away for lack of funds. For gifts, make checks payable to
Tides Center / Lavender Seniors.

Advisory Board

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Marvin Burrows, Meg Bruynell, Gabriel Delgado, Frank Howell, Rob Mills, Pat Skillen, Tomi Smith

BOARD MEMBERS

Lavender Seniors are looking for volunteers who are willing to participate on the Board of Directors.

We are looking for people to fill several positions and who are willing to be diligent fund raisers for our organization.

If you are interested, please contact tomi@lavenderseniors.org, or call (510) 667-9655, Ext. 2.

Ellen DeGeneres

- Age: 52
- Title: Talk show host
- Residence: Beverly Hills, CA
- Country of citizenship: United States

Marital Status: Married

If the title weren't already taken, it wouldn't be a stretch to call DeGeneres "queen of all media." Her eponymous chat show, a five-time Emmy winner, is now in its eighth season. She was an American Idol judge this year, but quit because, she says, it "didn't feel like the right fit for me." In between, she's a face for Cover Girl and Vitaminwater Zero and has been a runway model for designer Richie Rich. An outspoken gay-rights supporter, she came out in 1997 and married actress Portia de Rossi in 2008; de Rossi legally took DeGeneres' name last month. Putting her money where her heart is, this March the talk host gave a \$30,000 college scholarship to Constance McMillen, a gay Mississippi teen who challenged her school's policy banning same-sex prom dates. An outspoken gay-rights supporter, she came out in 1997 and married actress Portia de Rossi in 2008; de Rossi legally took DeGeneres' name last month. Putting her money where her heart is, this March the talk host gave a \$30,000 college scholarship to Constance McMillen, a gay Mississippi teen who challenged her school's policy banning same-sex prom dates.

Signed articles represent the opinion of the authors and not necessarily those of Lavender Seniors. Inclusion of a name in this newsletter does not necessarily indicate a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

February Birthdays

Feb. 2 nd Thomas D.	Feb. 18 th Mary D.
Feb. 3 rd Robert Z. Larry L.	Feb. 19 th Marvin B.
Feb. 4 th Devon C.	Feb. 20 th Corky W. Ellen L. Duane I.
Feb. 6 th Frank H.	Feb. 23 rd Robert S.
Feb. 7 th Eric L. Margie A.	Feb. 24 th Cathy C. Cheryl G.
Feb. 9 th Chuck B. Lynn R.	Feb. 28 th Melvin G.

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Saturday, Feb. 12th - 12 noon to 2pm

Program: Memoir Sharing with
Ralph Dranow

- A thru K Bring a Side Dish
- L thru R Bring a Main Dish
- S thru Z Bring a Dessert/Fruit



Donate to Lavender Seniors online! Now you can go to www.lavenderseniors.org and click the **Donate Now** link. This is an easy way to make a difference in your community.

Become a "Friend of Lavender Seniors" Today!

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay need your help! LGBT seniors are among the most overlooked and underserved population. Your donation provides general operating support for programs that help LGBT seniors live better lives by addressing issues of stigmas based on age and sexual orientation, limited biological families and social support, health disparities, insensitive health and human services providers, and economic insecurity exacerbated by ineligibility for spousal or survivor's benefits.

Please take a moment and send your gift today. Your annual giving entitles you to a subscription to our monthly newsletter, Lavender Notes.

Here's my gift of: \$20 \$35* \$50 \$100 \$250 \$1000 Other \$ _____

Annual Courtesy Giving Levels

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- Please contact me about including Lavender Seniors in my will.
- Please contact me about participating in Lavender Seniors' programs and or volunteering.
- Please do NOT list me in Lavender Seniors publications as a "Friend of Lavender Seniors."

Please mail to: Lavender Seniors of the East Bay, 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577
REMEMBER THAT YOUR DONATIONS TO LAVENDER SENIORS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

"Eat Well— Age Well"

Let's Get Moving!

by Wendy Albovias, RD

We all know that exercise is good for us, but do we know how good? Here are the MayoClinic's top seven benefits to regular physical activity.

1. Exercise improves your mood.

Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed. It helps you look and feel better which can boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem. Regular physical activity also helps prevent depression.

2. Exercise combats chronic diseases.

Regular physical activity can help you prevent or manage type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, certain types of cancer and high blood pressure. It also boosts high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or "good," cholesterol while decreasing triglycerides - keeping your blood flowing smoothly by lowering the buildup of plaque in your arteries.

3. Exercise helps you manage your weight.

When you exercise, you burn calories. The more calories you burn, the easier it is to keep your weight under control. You don't need to set aside major chunks of time for working out. Physical activity you accumulate throughout the day helps you burn calories, too.

4. Exercise boosts your energy level.

Regular physical activity helps your entire cardiovascular system work more efficiently by delivering oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you'll have more energy to do the things you enjoy.

5. Exercise promotes better sleep.

A good night's sleep can improve your concentration, productivity and mood. Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster and improve your quality of sleep. If you're having trouble sleeping, try exercising earlier in the day.

6. Exercise can put the spark back into your sex life.

Regular physical activity can lead to enhanced arousal for women, and men who exercise regularly are less likely to have problems with erectile dysfunction than are men who don't exercise - especially as they get older.

7. Exercise can be FUN!

Find an activity you enjoy, and just do it. If you get bored, try something new.

Let's get moving!

Monthly Wellness Recipe

Here's a new take on hummus by Leslie Beck, dietitian/Canada

Black Bean Hummus - per ¼ cup: 128 calories, 5g of protein, 8g total fat (1g saturated fat), 4g fiber, 0mg cholesterol, 219 mg sodium.

Ingredients: (makes 8 servings)

- 1 can (19 oz) black beans, drained/rinsed
- ¼ cup tahini
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

In a mixing bowl, combine black beans, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic and red pepper flakes. Using the back of a fork, mash ingredients until smooth. (Alternatively, place ingredients in a food processor and pulse until smooth.)

Place in a serving bowl and garnish with fresh parsley. Serve cold.

Transgender Issues: The Additional Challenges of LGBT Aging - Excerpts from Joanne Herman article - The Huffington Post- Part II

Transgender seniors may also have long-untreated health conditions. According to the same [survey](#), 19 percent of the respondents of all ages were refused care because of their transgender or gender non-conforming status, 28 percent were subject to harassment in medical settings, and 2 percent were victims of violence in doctor's offices. A full 50 percent of the sample reported that their providers lacked the knowledge to treat them.

It's no wonder KrysAnne dreaded being in the health care system.

A transgender senior is also more likely to be without stable housing, the direct result of having been underemployed or unemployed. While age discrimination is against the law nationally, the country still lacks protection from being fired for being transgender.

Fortunately, issues facing LGBT elders are starting to receive needed attention. The new [National Resource Center on LGBT Aging](#) is the face of a new federally funded coalition led by [Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders \(SAGE\)](#). [Transgender Aging Network \(TAN\)](#) is the coalition member tasked with making sure that needs and issues of transgender elders are included in all materials to be produced in the coming months.

So while we anxiously await those resources, watch this month's "In the Life" to learn more about the issues, and to hear up-and-coming director Stu Maddux's insights from working with KrysAnne. If you can't wait until the program shows on your local station, you can watch it now on the ["In The Life" website](#). The filmmaking in the "Gen Silent" excerpts is personal, KrysAnne's story is heart breaking, and the issues are real. Have Kleenex handy

Transgender Discrimination

More Employers to Cover Transgender Surgery, But New Hurdles Expected

By Joanne Herman

Transgender advocate and author of "Transgender Explained For Those Who Are Not"

Posted: January 4, 2011 08:46 AM

One year from now, more employers than ever before will cover transgender surgery as part of their health insurance plan. While this is much-needed progress for transgender people, implementation issues will unfortunately create new hurdles to living in one's true gender.

The coverage is a requirement in the 2012 Corporate Equality Index. An employer must contract for the coverage by June of this year and coverage must be effective January 1, 2012 in order to score 100 percent on the 2012 CEI.

This change will impact all transgender people even though many do not need or want surgery. That's because insurance company exclusions of transgender surgery, and in some cases any transgender care, have tended to make medical care providers regard anything transgender-related as frivolous.

The consequence of this is shocking. The recent National Transgender Discrimination Survey -- Report on Health and Health Care showed that 19 percent of the respondents of all ages were refused care because of their transgender or gender non-conforming status, 28 percent were subject to harassment in medical settings, and 2 percent were victims of violence in doctor's offices.

It's unclear if all 337 employers who scored 100 percent in the 2011 CEI survey will be able to arrange for the new coverage in time. The chief diversity officer of one employer told me that adding the coverage is his number one priority in 2011. Yet I'm guessing the change is big enough that some companies will fall from 100 percent in 2012.

While 85 of those employers already cover transgender surgery in some way, the challenge for all employers will be that the 2012 CEI requires coverage of surgery deemed medically necessary by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). It may take some employers longer than others to accept that procedures such as facial feminization surgery, usually dismissed as "cosmetic" in current coverage, should be covered.

For those employers large enough to "self-insure," conformance with WPATH requirements can easily be written into the health plan. But for other employers who must take the "plain vanilla" insurance offerings, many health insurers in the U.S. do not even offer a rider covering transgender surgery, and those who do typically impose requirements that differ from the WPATH requirements, usually in more restrictive ways.

One restriction in standard riders concerns the procedures involving breasts. For a person transitioning from female to male, a mastectomy is recognized by WPATH as the first

step typically undertaken in a gender transition. For a male to female, WPATH sees breast enlargement as warranted after 18 months in cases where hormone therapy has not led to adequate breast tissue growth. But most standard insurance riders set an 18-month delay for any breast procedure, unacceptable for those transitioning to male.

Even with the most WPATH-compliant coverage, a significant hurdle will be that few of the current transgender surgery specialists accept insurance. In fact, most require prepayment of the full cost. Many employees are just not going to be able to come up with that kind of cash, and it's going to be a while before the market forces providers to accept insurance.

For those who can pay in advance, the insurance company's inexperience with transgender coverage could leave the employee hanging. In one company already providing coverage, a patient obtained the required pre-authorization letters from a therapist and the primary provider of care, received approval, and underwent surgery, only to find the insurance company refusing to pay because it decided after the fact that the employee's primary provider of care should have been a mental health provider. The patient is now scrambling to be pre-authorized after the fact.

Of course, most insurance companies limit payment to the "reasonable and customary" (R&C) amount for the particular surgery. Surprisingly, insurance companies already have these amounts determined since most transgender surgery procedures are actually the same procedures performed for non-trans people under different circumstances (for example, construction of a penis for a man who has been in a tragic accident). An employee could be caught short if the R&C amount ends up being less than trans surgery specialists normally charge.

And then there is a common requirement of using providers within the employee's home state. With so few surgeons specializing in transgender surgery, will this leave the employee with coverage, but no qualified surgeon? Or will it encourage the employee to gamble on a surgeon who has little experience with the procedure?

Regardless of the hurdles, the new coverage is timely. The recently-released U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People objectives for the next 10 years include, for the first time, a specific objective of recognizing transgender health needs as medically necessary. The change in attitude brought by the new surgery coverage will go a long way toward achieving this objective.

Smart Living

Treat daily physical activity like a meeting with an important business associate. Don't even think of canceling

"The truth is rarely pure and never simple" -T.C. Elliott

"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge"

-Proverbs 19:2

Gay Travels In The Muslim World
Edited by Michael Luongo
Routledge Publishing Co.-Paperback

Since the cultural and military explosions of 9/11 carved a gulf between the Western countries and Islamic culture, it is becoming more apparent that we need to understand the differences between ourselves and those who approach the world in different terms. This anthology offers a mixed bag of responses. Some are more revealing than others. Jay Davidson, in "It All Began With Mamadou," was a Peace Corp volunteer in Mauritania and found that you must marry and have children, but homosexuality is tolerated. There is open affection between males. But that is the limit of toleration.

For the average Muslim the Islamic ethic creates an impossible dilemma. The Islamic religion is quite protective of female purity. Males are isolated from female companionship until the pre-arranged marriage occurs. As a result, the men and boys must fall back on each other for

affection. But even after marriage the men stray from time to time. Hurijah, a magazine for gay Muslims, was founded in 2000. An outlet will always pop up somewhere.

Michael Luongo found that pedophilia is sometimes common among the men who have teenage boys as lovers. They dress them as women.

Luongo attended parties for Afghan men where there was only erotic joking, but no actual contact. Sex is strictly private.

Some of the articles dwell on wild intrigues but little insight. Consider "My Intifada" by Ethan Pullman. He was born and raised in Palestine. Pullman was rejected by his family when he revealed his sexual orientation. He came to America for high school and college. He was finally granted political asylum.

In "Love, Sex and Religion: Betrayed In Muslim Morocco," by Richard Ammon, we are confronted by the mysterious slaying of a respected American from California. You would not expect this in Morocco which has been famed as a happy hunting ground for western tourists for generations. A number of famed artists, Oscar Wilde, Andre Gide, and Paul Bowles cavorted there.

"Paradox," by Thomas Bradbury paints a frustrating portrait of an impossible love affair between an American and a Turkish man with a wife and two sons.

The gay baths are revealed in "Last Winter in

Marrakech," by John Champagne. Moroccan men are quite modest when undressing in front of each other. But they always feel free to dance together in public.

Michael is a senior editor at Haworth Press and has produced World Gay Travel series. He has also written for the National Geographic Traveler and the Advocate.

"Gay Travels" has some perceptive articles, along with tales of cheap titillation, but it is still worth considering, especially if the reader is considering a dream trip to the Middle East

.-Frank Howell

Preventive Services Without Cost Sharing

New private health plans must pay for screenings and other preventive services. Will the benefits outweigh the costs?

By: Cassidy A

In: Health Affairs/RWJF Health Policy Brief Series

Publisher Health Affairs/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Published: Dec 29, 2010

Preventive services, such as vaccines and screenings, have the potential to help people live longer, avoid disease and disability and be healthier and more productive. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) expands coverage of preventive services both within private health insurance plans and within Medicare and Medicaid, so more people can benefit from these services. As of September 23, 2010, the health reform law requires new private health insurance plans to fully cover the costs of 45 recommended preventive services. This means patients pay no deductibles or co-payments or otherwise share costs of these services. As of January 1, 2011, the new law will also require coverage for a new annual wellness visit under Medicare and eliminates cost sharing for recommended preventive services covered by Medicare. Additionally, the new law gives state Medicaid programs financial incentives to cover preventive services for adults and supports initiatives to improve public understanding of the benefits of lifetime preventive services.

This policy brief from Health Affairs and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation examines the importance of preventive services, the expansion of access to those services required by the new law and the pros and cons of expanding access to screenings and other tests that might increase costs without necessarily improving health outcomes.

"All cases are unique and similar to others"


--T.S. Elliott



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February 2011

Schedule of Events

Feb. 3rd & 17th-1:30 - 3:30 PM – Support Discussion Group for Aging Queer Women, (1st and 3rd Thurs.) -The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave. (at Derby) Berkeley

Bancroft Ave, San Leandro

Feb. 8th– 7:30 PM - (2nd Tues.) PFLAG Meeting, Holy Redeemer Lutheran 35660 Cedar Blvd., Newark

Feb. 9th- 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM – Lavender Seniors Board Meeting (Wed. before Potluck) 1395

Feb. 10th and 24th- 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM - Seniors Men's Group. (2nd and 4th Thurs.), 2712 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley at the Pacific Center Co-Sponsor: Pacific Center 510-548-8283

Feb. 11th- 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Lavender Women's Book Group (2nd Fri.), – Reading: Farmer Jane

Feb. 12th– 12:00 - 2:00PM - Lavender Seniors Potluck, (2nd Sat.)1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro; Program: Memoir Sharing with Ralph Dranow

Feb. 18th-12:30 to 2:30 PM – Lavender Seniors Lunch Bunch, (3rd Fri.), North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr. Way. (58th St.) Oakland. Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging and Adult Services. Program: Prescription Management with ApotheCare RX

Feb. 19th - Fellows of the East Bay (3rd Sat.) 1823 9th Street (at Hearst), Berkeley. Social Hour 5:00, Dinner 6:30.

Feb. 25th South County Lunch Bunch and Talk (4th Fri.) Program: Prescription Management with ApotheCare RX- 40086 Paseo Padre Pkwy, Fremont. Sponsor: City of Fremont, Human Services Dept. For more information call Dan Ashbrook – 510-667-9655

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Queer Women	4	5
6	7	8 Newark PFLAG	9 Board Mtg	10 Senior Men	11 Womens Books	12 Potluck
13	14	15	16	17 Queer Women	18 Lunch Bunch	19 Fellows
20	21	22	23	24 Senior Men	25 South County	26
27	28					

ADVERTISING RATES* FOR LAVENDER NOTES

Ad Size	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Classified Ad	\$2 per line (per month) on a 3-column page			
Business Card	\$30	\$75	\$140	\$250
Quarter Page	\$50	\$125	\$225	\$400
Half Page	\$90	\$220	\$400	\$750
Full Page	\$200	\$450	\$800	\$1400

* Individuals and non-profit organizations who have made an annual contribution of \$25 or more are entitled to discounts of 40% on classified ads and 20% on ads of other sizes. Lavender Seniors reserves the right to accept or reject any ad submitted.

* A one-page insert to Lavender Notes for one month may be purchased for the fee of: Non-Profits, \$250; For-Profits, \$500; ½ half page inserts are the same amount. Must be received by 10th of preceding month.