

NEWS RELEASE

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PFund Foundation Releases Report on LGBT Seniors in Minnesota

~"Equality as we Age: a Report on LGBT Seniors in Minnesota" provides policy recommendations for improving service delivery and social interaction ~

MINNEAPOLIS, July 19, 2010 – PFund, the only Minnesota-based foundation dedicated exclusively to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, today released a first-of-its-kind report on LGBT seniors issues in Minnesota, "*Equality as we Age: a Report on LGBT Seniors in Minnesota.*"

"Equality as we Age" captures the voices and policy recommendations of a wide-ranging, multi-ethnic group of LGBT and mainstream community and nonprofit leaders. These leaders participated in a PFund-sponsored community forum and in-depth interviews on LGBT seniors issues earlier this year. The report provides an overview of common challenges Minnesota's LGBT senior community members face and recommends changes needed to facilitate improved health and wellness, visibility, social interaction and services.

"Our hope is that this report will inform policymakers and senior services providers on the concerns of the LGBT communities they serve," said Alfonso Wenker, director of programs of PFund Foundation.

"Additionally, we hope it guides future investments and action from community, business and philanthropic leaders to examine and advocate policies that ensure all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have equal access to, safety and security at senior serving agencies, equal rights and social interaction."

Policy Recommendations

As outlined in the report, participants made recommendations in three main areas: (1) strategies focused on addressing issues related to the availability and accessibility of culturally appropriate care, (2) policy initiatives that focus on community well-being and increased visibility and social engagement, and (3) legal right that increase access to benefits and financial resources. Key highlights:

- Reframe and expand the definition of family: LGBT seniors frequently rely on friends and chosen families to provide support and care. Such families do not have legal rights to protect and support seniors. This includes supporting full equality for same-sex couples, transgender people, and other forms of family legal protection.

- Do not isolate seniors. Add opportunities for seniors to work in intergenerational partnerships in the LGBT and broader communities. In particular, recognize that seniors are not a problem to be solved, but instead, a thriving part of our community.
- Include the experiences of LGBT seniors in all data used to create legislation. Include LGBT demographics in the Minnesota Department of Human Services “Survey of Older Minnesotans.”
- Maintain and expand the system of Social Security. For many seniors, Social Security is a significant part of their income. Maintaining a livable safety net is key to ensuring independence into old age.
- Train all senior-serving agencies and organizations to be equitable and skilled in meeting the needs of LGBT seniors. This includes training public and private healthcare providers, home healthcare aids, social workers and community educators to be culturally competent on the needs of LGBT seniors.
- Create a gathering space or center where both social connections and resource sharing can take place for LGBT seniors. This space will include resources for sustaining activism in older age and for sharing a lifetime of knowledge.
- Continue funding and expand Area Agencies on Aging. These federally funded agencies provide advocacy, services and support for seniors in every state. Add LGBT people to the boards of directors.

Participants in the forum included leaders and representatives from The Saint Paul Foundation, the Office of Sen. Al Franken, Portico Healthnet, Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Buchholz & Burke, PLLC, Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, Minnesota Board on Aging, OutFront Minnesota, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, Minneapolis Skyway Senior Center, NAMI Minnesota, Rainbow Health Initiative, SEER Consulting, Ecumen Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, Hospitality Initiative of Servant Hearts, All God's Children MCC, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

The complete report can be found online at:

[“Equality as we Age: a Report on LGBT Seniors in Minnesota.”](#)

About PFund

PFund envisions a time when LGBT people experience the world as a place of safety and our media, policy makers, families and popular culture reject any form of violence against them; where LGBT people’s human rights and dignity are unquestioned and they are free from discrimination and are celebrated and visible.

Established in 1987 as Philanthrofund Foundation in Minneapolis when four friends pooled \$2,000, PFund is now supported by thousands of individuals in dozens of states who have created a vibrant and vital community foundation that advances social justice. PFund is one of only a handful of foundations in the nation created specifically by and for LGBT communities. It provides grants to emerging non-profit organizations and projects that would otherwise not get funded in large organizations, awards scholarships, develops leaders, and inspires giving. Today PFund manages \$1 million in assets, enjoying the support of committed donors and dedicated volunteers from GLBT and allied communities. www.PFundOnline.org.