



## **Principles of Respect and Inclusion for LGBTQ+ Persons**

### **A Statement of the Adventist Health Policy Association**

In the United States, about eighteen million people self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQ+). Individuals in these communities often encounter difficulties in receiving needed health care because of discriminatory practices such as abusive language, refusal of health care, denial of visitation rights, or exclusion from medical decision-making. Failure to understand the unique needs of this population perpetuates significant health disparities.

The mission of the Adventist Health Policy Association is promoting wholeness to live God's healing love. This mission is achieved through collaborative actions guided by values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and founded on the biblical principle of justice that requires extra care and concern for those at increased risk of unfair treatment. We affirm that LGBTQ+ persons have the right to receive compassionate medical care that is considerate and respectful, free from unfair discrimination, stigmatization, and stereotyping related to their sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The following principles express our commitment to establishing an inclusive health care environment, consistent with federal and state law, that affirms the human dignity of all LGBTQ+ persons, whether patients, their families, or their professional caregivers.

#### **Our COMMITMENT is expressed through our GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- To be informed by an understanding of the distinctive healthcare needs of LGBTQ+ persons.
- To provide equitable health care for LGBTQ+ patients, including access to affirming behavioral health services that specifically address LGBTQ+ health needs.
- To respect LGBTQ+ patients' spouses and domestic partners by extending the same courtesies that heterosexual spouses receive, including visitation rights and participation in advance care planning.
- To promote preventive care, such as medication to prevent HIV infection, and other common health care services.
- To choose language that best reflects each patient's lived experience by seeking guidance from LGBTQ+ individuals about their healthcare needs and when using names, titles, and pronouns.
- To foster health care professionals' enhanced competencies in addressing the needs of LGBTQ+ populations and increased awareness of the potential impact of personal biases involving the care of LGBTQ+ populations.
- To expand electronic health record capabilities that serve relational needs in patient care.