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**Holy Cross Health earns “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer*” Designation in Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Healthcare Equality Index**

*Holy Cross Health is one of 462 healthcare facilities nationwide earning the*

*“LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer” designation*

Fort Lauderdale, Florida (May 7, 2024) – Today, Holy Cross Health announced their “LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer” designation from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC). The designation was awarded in the 16th iteration of HRC’s [Healthcare Equality Index (HEI)](http://reports.hrc.org/hei-2024), released today. A record 1,065 healthcare facilities actively participated in the HEI 2024 survey and scoring process. Of those participants, 462 received the “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer”* designation.

“Health inequities are systematic differences in the health status of different population groups. Social determinants of health such as poverty, unequal access to health care, lack of education, stigma and racism are underlying, contributing factors of health inequities. Turning the tide of these inequities is not only possible, but also imperative; Holy Cross Health has recognized this, making health equity an explicit and implicit priority. Holy Cross Health is an agent of local change and is changing the narrative, taking action that will promote health equity. These issues are an important priority for healthcare professionals year-round, not just during Pride Month,” said Kim Saiswick, Ed.D., R.N., LMHC, Vice President of Community Health and Well-Being at Holy Cross Health.

Holy Cross Health continues to be a leader and change agent in the healthcare arena. Holy Cross ranked in the top 25% as one of America's Best-In-State Hospitals 2024 (Newsweek) which recognized 600 leading hospitals across the nation. As a Catholic not-for-profit community hospital, Holy Cross’ commitment to serve all stands as a beacon to many marginalized communities and those lacking access to healthcare. Holy Cross welcomes the LGBTQ+ community and is here to meet its healthcare needs.

“As anti-LGBTQ+ extremists look to strip away healthcare access at every turn, LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones are looking for healthcare providers to offer and champion fully inclusive services, The Healthcare Equality Index is helping people find facilities where welcoming policies and practices are the standard,” said Kelley Robinson, President of the Human Rights Campaign. “We know that LGBTQ+ people – especially our trans family – continue to face discrimination in the doctor’s office. No one should have to put their health on the backburner for fear of mistreatment in a healthcare facility or by their doctor.”

Key highlights from the report include:

* **Targeted Health Disparities Reduction Plans:** Encouragingly, **71%** have an official plan for reducing health disparities that specifically includes LGBTQ+ patients in addition to race, ethnicity and linguistic concerns.
* **Work to Be Done: Only 27%** have an externally promoted specific program to provide patient navigation or advocacy services to transgender patients.
* **Bias Elimination and Welcoming Interactions: Just over half (53%)** have a policy or policies that specifically outline procedures and practices aimed at eliminating bias and insensitivity, and ensuring appropriate, welcoming interactions with transgender patients.
* **EHR SOGI Data:** Major increases are seen in the number of healthcare facilities collecting sexual orientation and gender identity-related data in their Electronic Health Records systems. Seven of the eight relevant data points had double-digit increases.
* **Pronouns in Electronic Health Records:** The ability to collect and display a patient’s pronouns rose from 44% to 74%. This is an important tool to help prevent misgendering a patient.
* **FMLA-Equivalent Benefits:** **38%** offer FMLA-equivalent benefits that allow employees to take family and medical leave to care for same-sex partners as well as the children of a same-sex partner, regardless of biological or adoptive status – this is up from 34% in 2022.
* **Comprehensive Benefits for Domestic Partners: 41%** provide medical and comprehensive health benefits to domestic partners of benefits-eligible employees up from 34% in 2022. This is the first increase in this measure since the 2015 Obergefell decision on same-sex marriage.
* **Employee Resource Groups: 72%** have an officially recognized LGBTQ+ employee resource group.
* **Community Engagement and Support: 92%** took part in or supported one or more LGBTQ+ related events or initiatives in their service area.

This year’s HEI comes as [LGBTQ+ adults are twice as likely](https://files.kff.org/attachment/Topline-KFF-Survey-on-Racism-Discrimination-and-Health.pdf) as non-LGBTQ+ adults to be “treated unfairly or with disrespect by a doctor or healthcare provider” in the last three years, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. The impact of [anti-LGBTQ+ legislation](https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Anti-LGBTQ-Legislation-Impact-Report.pdf) combined with a history of discrimination in healthcare settings has the potential to cause even more LGBTQ+ people to delay or avoid seeking healthcare, which makes the HEI even more salient for those looking to find LGBTQ+-inclusive care.

*The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the educational arm of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people. Through its programs, the HRC Foundation seeks to make transformational change in the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ people, shedding light on inequity and deepening the public’s understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, with a clear focus on advancing transgender and racial justice. Its work has transformed the landscape for more than 15 million workers, 11 million students, 1 million clients in the adoption and foster care system and so much more. The HRC Foundation provides direct consultation and technical assistance to institutions and communities, driving the advancement of inclusive policies and practices; it builds the capacity of future leaders and allies through fellowship and training programs; and, with the firm belief that we are stronger working together, it forges partnerships with advocates in the U.S. and around the globe to increase our impact and shape the future of our work.*

**About Holy Cross Health**

A member of Trinity Health, Fort Lauderdale-based Holy Cross Hospital, dba Holy Cross Health, is a full-service, not-for-profit, Catholic, teaching hospital operating in the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy. Holy Cross has been recognized for six Types of Care in U.S. News and World Report's 2023-24 Best Hospital rankings and was named among the 2024 America's Best-In-State Hospitals by Newsweek. Through strategic collaborations and a commitment to being a person-centered, transforming, healing presence, the 557-bed hospital offers progressive inpatient, outpatient and community outreach services and clinical research trials to serve as our community’s trusted health partner for life. Holy Cross Health also encompasses Holy Cross HealthPlex outpatient facility, urgent care centers and more than 40 Holy Cross Medical Group physician practices. To learn more about Holy Cross Health, visit [holy-cross.com.](https://www.holy-cross.com/) Connect @holycrossfl.

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