



## ***Perspective/ Opinion***

# **Importance of LGBTQ+ Equity Work in Healthcare**

By Aaric Guerriero

Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin recognizes the key role that we have to play in decreasing the significant health disparities that face the LGBTQ+ community. These disparities include high rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use and abuse, elevating HIV/STI rates, mental health issues particularly depression and anxiety, as well as growing suicide attempts and completions.

Froedtert leadership sees this continuously growing gap and made a decision to continue to serve the LGBTQ+ community more intentionally. In August 2021, Froedtert Health created the Patient Equity and Inclusion Manager position, which reports underneath the Diversity and Inclusion area. This role was designed to help improve LGBTQ+ patient and staff experience, as well as working across the system to ensure that all patients and staff are receiving inclusive and supportive support and care.

Healthcare continues to be an area that falls short in being an open, welcome, and accessible space. By understanding and tackling the disparities that impact this community, we can begin to shift the narrative of LGBTQ+ inclusion in healthcare.

*Aaric Guerriero (he/him/his) has over 16 years of experience facilitating workshops and presenting on topics centered on identity, inclusion, and social justice. He currently works for Froedtert Health as the Patient Equity and Inclusion Manager. The bulk of his professional career has been spent working in diversity and inclusion in Higher Education, most recently at UW-Madison as the Program Director for Our Wisconsin. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Recreation, as well as a Master's degree in Higher Education Administration both from Central Michigan University. Aaric currently resides in Milwaukee with his two dogs, and best friends, Dot and Alfie.*