



**CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT**

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Mary Beth Haller, Interim Commissioner of Health, Baltimore City Health Department
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	May 29, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0020R - Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

This resolution calls for an informational hearing to be held to discuss the well-being of gay men in Baltimore City.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) strives to protect health, eliminate disparities, and enhance the wellbeing of everyone in our community through education, coordination, advocacy, and direct service delivery. This includes Baltimore City's LGBTQ community, including gay men. BCHD's myriad programs and services are open to all, regardless of sexual orientation.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Department of Health and Human Services, men who have sex with men are disproportionately impacted by HIV and syphilis.^{i,ii} Men who report male sexual contact represent the largest risk factor for new HIV infection, a change from earlier in the epidemic when use of injection drugs represented the largest risk category. Over 60% of individuals newly diagnosed with HIV each year in Baltimore City are men who report having male sexual contact, and over 40% of those living with HIV in Baltimore City identify as men with male sexual contact. Almost 70% of syphilis infections each year are among men, and of those 40% are among men who self-report sex with men as a risk factor.

BCHD operates several programs, services, and initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of HIV, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted infections and supporting those living with HIV. This work includes educating the public about sexual health and treatment and prevention options, providing clinical services including testing, treatment, and the provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), providing and coordinating funding for Ryan White providers for HIV treatment, including promotion of clinics that are free of stigma, addressing social determinants of health, including those that disproportionately may impact gay men, as they relate to sexual and overall health and well-being, funding partners who work directly with the gay community, and working to reduce stigma associated with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections throughout the Baltimore City community.

BCHD recognizes that the wellbeing and health of gay men extends far beyond HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and that social determinants of health, including housing, employment, stigma, violence, and others, are instrumental in all aspects of health and wellbeing. As an agency, we envision an equitable, just, and well Baltimore where everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and to thrive. As such, we respectfully request a **favorable** report and support the Council holding an informational hearing to discuss the wellbeing of gay men in Baltimore City.

ⁱ US CDC. (2024). Fast Facts: HIV and Gay and Bisexual Men. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/data-research/facts-stats/gay-bisexual-men.html#:~:text=At%20a%20glance,for%20gay%20and%20bisexual%20men>.

ⁱⁱ US Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Healthy People 2030 - Reduce the syphilis rate in men who have sex with men — STI-05. Retrieved from <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/sexually-transmitted-infections/reduce-syphilis-rate-men-who-have-sex-men-sti-05>