

News Release

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Trillium, HRC Join Record Number of Partners Working on LGBTQ+ Inclusivity

Trillium is proud to be one of the 36 FIRST TIME / 136 RETURN partners.

GREENVILLE, N.C. –Trillium Health Resources is proud to be one of 172 child welfare organizations joining the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation’s All Children - All Families (ACAF) program in 2023, as highlighted in a new report. Together, these organizations work to improve the services provided to the LGBTQ+ community, including children in foster care and prospective foster and adoptive parents who are LGBTQ+. This year alone, this multi-organization partnership assessed 9,500+ policies and practices within child welfare organizations to ensure they meet ACAF best practices criteria — approximately 6,000 more than were assessed when this report was first released in 2019. This allowed for over 1.4 million children, youth, and families across 43 states to benefit from these LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices.

“Providing children and families with the most inclusive environment in which to grow should always be the number one priority,” said Phii Regis, Director of HRC’s All Children - All Families Program. “We are grateful for Trillium’s work as part of this partnership — together, we can win the fight for equality and build safe and loving communities at the same time.”

“Trillium is proud of the efforts we have taken for our LGBTQ+ members and their families,” shared Dru Fulcher, Trillium’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director. “By partnering with ACAF, we help demonstrate to everyone we serve our inclusive and affirming practices.”

This report comes at a time when LGBTQ+ people, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, are under threat. Laws and policies protecting LGBTQ youth in foster care from discrimination are a patchwork from state to state. Only 13 states and the District of Columbia have explicit laws or policies in place to protect foster youth from discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity. Seven additional states explicitly protect foster youth from discrimination on the basis of

sexual orientation but not gender identity. Approximately 1 in 3 youth in foster care are LGBTQ+, and laws that attack them on the basis of sexuality and gender put an already vulnerable community at risk. When they aren't allowed in homes that support them, LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of abuse and mistreatment than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Data shows 44% of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody were removed, ran away, or thrown out of their home for reasons directly related to their identity.

At the same time, there are an overwhelming number of LGBTQ+ families who have at least considered adopting or fostering a child in the future, but 55% of them feared being turned away because of their identity, and only 14% knew of an LGBTQ+-inclusive agency near them. One couple was quoted in the report as having been rejected from two child welfare agencies on the basis of their identity before finally being accepted to foster with an ACAF partner agency: “[I] got rejected twice from two different agencies and I didn't see how going to another agency was going to make any difference. One day I was just browsing online and I found a foster care licensing agency and they [had] the LGBT flag so I called them and I found that, yeah, they're inclusive to everybody. It's kind of like it was meant to be.”

With the work of ACAF, A record-breaking 10,650+ professionals were trained in how to make their agencies as inclusive of LGBTQ+ families and youth as possible. Additionally, all partner organizations that earned a Tier of Recognition with the program, such as Trillium, now include “sexual orientation,” “gender identity” and “gender expression” in their client non-discrimination policy, and communicate this policy to staff and clients. They also documented client forms featuring gender-neutral language, such as “Parent 1” and “Parent 2” rather than “Mother” and “Father,” and they display visual cues throughout common areas to communicate support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.

To learn more about Trillium, please visit [TrilliumHealthResources.org](https://www.TrilliumHealthResources.org). To learn more about the All Children-All Families program, please visit <https://www.thehrfoundation.org/about/all-children-all-families>.

ABOUT TRILLIUM HEALTH RESOURCES

Trillium Health Resources is a leading specialty care manager (LME/MCO) for individuals with substance use, mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities in 28 counties in eastern North Carolina. Trillium's mission is to transform the lives of people in need by providing them with ready access to quality care. We take a person-centered approach to health and wellbeing, coordinating care across multiple systems to achieve improved health outcomes, quality of care and efficient use of resources. Trillium is investing in innovation to meet the unique needs of the individuals and communities we serve, and remains focused on delivering the right services, in the right amount, at the right time. For more information, visit www.TrilliumHealthResources.org.

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