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NYC to Focus on LGBT Mental Health in 2008 Plan

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This is the first time the city has included the words "gay" or "lesbian" in the annual plan, the *New York Blade* reported Friday. Next year's effort will address rates of depression among LGBT residents, which are reportedly double that of straight New Yorkers. According to the article, the Department of Health has focused more of its mental hygiene resources in the past on the elderly, children, and subcategories of people affected by mental retardation, developmental disabilities, or substance abuse.

The plan also acknowledged a recent study showing that a large number of mental health care workers harbor negative attitudes toward LGBT patients.

"The result is that many LGBT consumers, having entered treatment, leave prematurely," the plan said.

"Often, even today, therapists and psychiatrists think of LGBT persons as a traumatized or underdeveloped version of a heterosexual person," Christian Huygen, executive director for Rainbow Heights Club in Brooklyn, told the *Blade*. "When clients go to their care providers and talk about LGBT issues, the care provider assumes being LGBT is what the client wants changed." (*The Advocate*)

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