Reaching a Broader Client Base: How to Make Your Practice More Attractive to the GLBT Community

Michael D. McElvaine, DVM, MPH, DACVPM
2007 AVMA Veterinary Diversity Symposium
July 16, 2007
LGBT Community

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
Presentation Goals

• Address unique socio-political issues
• Discuss Practices and Policies to:
  – Attract and retain GLBT Clients
  – Attract and retain high-quality GLBT Staff
Differences??

• Hidden minority
• No obvious identifying characteristics
• Assumptions aren’t always correct!
We are *Everywhere* in your tree

- Every race/ethnicity
- Religion
- Profession
- Disability
- All families!
The Rainbow Flag

• First GLBT use in 1978
• Reflects community diversity & inclusiveness
• Hope and yearning
• Old Testament use for hope – Noah’s Ark
• Many other uses around the world
Rainbow Flag in the SF Castro
GLBT Federal Legal Protections

- None - No Federal legal protections
- Civil Rights Act – race, creed, color, sex, national origin
- American’s with Disabilities Act – disabilities in employment and accommodations
- Protected classes defined in many other laws
Some State/Local Protections

- State non-discrimination laws
- Local ordinances
- Business policies and procedures
  - 50% of Fortune 500 companies protect GLBT employees and customers and
  - Provide benefits for GLBT employees
How to Attract GLBT Clients?

• Importance of peer referrals
• GLBT Community Networking
  – Advertise in GLBT press and cultural events
  – Join GLBT Chambers of Commerce or other organizations
  – Donate time/services to GLBT community events and projects (PETS DC)
  – Speaker for workshops/events
  – Referral lists from GLBT organizations
GLBT Friendly Office

• Non-discrimination policy – posted
• Employee sensitivity training
• Employee affirmation/signature
• Zero tolerance in effect 24/7 on premises
Policy Statement Example

“All employees and customers of USDA shall be free from reprisal or discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status, [or] receipt of public assistance”

• From USDA non-discrimination statement by Secretary Johanns
Summary

• Easily adapted concepts to other groups/minorities
• When everyone is treated fairly and with dignity/respect – fewer discrimination complaints
• We are more the same than we are different – a common love of animals
Thoughts to ponder.....

- Dr. Calvin Schwabe
- Dr. Roger Mahr
- My suggestion
- “One Medicine”
- “One World, One Health, One Medicine”
- “One World, One People, One Health, One Medicine”
Special Thanks

- Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association
- Scott Henrichsen Photography for Diversity photo template, www.scotthenrichsen.com
- PetsDC for the cute bulldog photograph
- USDA Gay and Lesbian Employee Advisory Committee and Bill Scaggs
- USDA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Employee Organization and Blake Velde and Chip Wells
- My USDA colleagues: Teresa Pickett, Linda Abbott, Jim Schaub