

# The Suffolk Times.

## Stony Brook ELIH Hosting Its First LGBTQ+ Outreach Forum

March 19, 2024 | Ana Borruto



One crucial issue often discussed within the LGBTQ+ community is limited access to comprehensive — and compassionate — healthcare.

Recognizing the importance of cultivating understanding and improving communication among a diverse group of residents, Stony Brook Eastern Long Island is encouraging the public to participate in its next outreach program, titled “LGBTQ+ and Healthcare: Empowering Health, Embracing Diversity.”

On Wednesday, March 20 at 4:30 p.m. at the Peconic Community Center, speakers will outline the healthcare challenges specific to individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community and offer insights on how they can be more effectively addressed and understood.

Stony Brook Southampton Hospital’s Cristina Witzke, site director of the hospitals Edie Windsor Healthcare Center — Long Island’s first and only LGBTQ+ focused healthcare facility, is among the speakers.

The center offers comprehensive primary and family medical care, HIV/AIDS services, free HIV Rapid testing, STI testing, mental health counseling and other resources.

Ms. Witzke said the center wants to work closely with its counterpart in Greenport — which does not have a specific LGBTQ+ clinic — to help provide these needed services.

In 2021, Stony Brook Medicine issued a survey to LGBTQ+ adults living in Suffolk and Nassau Counties, for which they received an estimated 1,150 completed responses. Some of the key findings included nearly 44% of respondents who said they had fair or poor mental health, few respondents reporting receiving routine preventative medical care and 37% of respondents saying their past experiences with healthcare providers had been “disrespectful or “non-affirming.”

Ms. Witzke said she and the other speakers will inform participants about what “affirming” healthcare means, the barriers and disparities faced by the LGBTQ+ community, proper terminology and how healthcare providers, business owners, parents, family and friends can become allies.

“LGBTQ+ individuals need a welcoming environment with providers who have the cultural competence to use the correct name, use the language and the terms that are affirming,” Ms. Witzke said. “Using a name, language or a term, it may not seem like a big deal to some people, but those microaggressions, those small things, can add up for a person.”

The official flyer for the event is below. For more information, call 631-477-5164.


**LGBTQ\* and Healthcare:  
Empowering Health,  
Embracing Diversity**


**STONY BROOK MEDICINE  
PRIDE**

**Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 4:30 pm**  
Peconic Lane Community Center  
1170 Peconic Lane, Peconic

**Speakers:**  
Camille Limongelli, MS – Patient Navigator/Case Manager (she/her) Cristina Witzke, MPH – EWHC Administrator (she/her)

This event is a dedicated space for healthcare professionals, allies, and the LGBTQ\* community to delve into the nuances of LGBTQ\* healthcare. Our dynamic speakers will shed light on the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQ\* community in healthcare settings, offering practical insights and fostering a dialogue of understanding. Your presence can make a difference – be a part of this transformative journey towards a more inclusive healthcare landscape.

 **SCAN TO REGISTER & LEARN ABOUT OUR  
COMPLIMENTARY DRAWING for a chance  
to win a hotel stay in Panama, terms apply.**  
For more information please call (631) 477-5164.

 Stony Brook  
Eastern Long Island Hospital [elih.stonybrookmedicine.edu](http://elih.stonybrookmedicine.edu)