

PRIDE MONTH/HALIFAX PRIDE FESTIVAL

HALIFAX PRIDE FESTIVAL 2026 IS TAKING PLACE FROM JULY 16 TO 26. Halifax celebrates its Pride Festival in July rather than June in recognition of the city's first Pride march, which took place in July 1988.

Pride Month is a celebration of identity, visibility, community and love. However, within healthcare it's also an important reminder that feeling safe, respected and accepted should never depend on how you identify. Research continues to show that 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are more likely to delay or avoid medical care all together because of fear of discrimination, negative past experiences, or concerns about having to explain or defend their identity to a healthcare provider.

This is why ensuring conversations about 2SLGBTQIA+ health become a regular part of comprehensive healthcare is so important. Healthcare is not simply about diagnosis and treatment; it's also about trust and understanding. As we advocate for the integration of siloed care within primary care, we should also reflect on the ways patients may feel siloed within the healthcare system. Ensuring all members of a healthcare team are knowledgeable about 2SLGBTQIA+ healthcare and understand the importance of affirming and person-centred care means patients will feel respected rather than othered.

Key terminology

2SLGBTQIA+: Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and asexual

AFFIRMING CARE: Often called gender-affirming care, this is a framework of medical, psychological, behavioural and social support designed to validate and support an individual's gender identity when it conflicts with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia's work

When healthcare providers lack basic awareness of 2SLGBTQIA+ health, the burden of explaining experiences, terminology and identity fall on the patient. Training and education for providers take this emotional weight off the patient.

2SLGBTQIA+ people are at greater risk of chronic diseases, some cancers, certain STIs and more recently mpox. Ensuring 2SLGBTQIA+ health is a regular part of comprehensive healthcare ensures providers are prepared to screen and treat these unique clinical realities.

Research tells us that 2SLGBTQIA+ patients are more likely to avoid the healthcare system due to fear of discrimination or judgement. Affirming care as a norm within our healthcare system helps to build trust, so patients feel comfortable sharing important information.

Personal Reflection from Debbie Traer:

Working as a paramedic brought me into the lives of complete strangers from every walk of life when they were at their most vulnerable. Those experiences taught me that although we are all different in our own ways, we all have the basic need to feel seen, heard, and be treated with kindness, respect and understanding. They shaped how I cared for all my patients, including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

I carry those same lessons into my personal and professional life. They were also the values that my husband and I imparted to our son; values he applies in his life every day.

Treating people with these principles doesn't make us perfect, but it certainly helps us bring a little good to someone's day, make them smile and feel safer in the world.

Resources:

- prideHealth: www.nshealth.ca/pridehealth
- prideHealth resources for healthcare providers: library.nshealth.ca/TransGenderDiverse/ProviderInfo
- Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness: www.dal.ca/life-at-dal/health-and-wellness.html
- Halifax Pride Festival: www.halifaxpride.com
- CMA – What is LGBTQ+ inclusive health care in Canada and how does it work?: tinyurl.com/CMA-LGBTQ-inclusive-care



Find more EDIRA resources, videos and tools in the DNS SharePoint EDIRA Hub.