Tobacco is the most serious yet preventable health crisis facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth in their teens and twenties. 40.5% of LGB high school students actively use at least one type of tobacco product, a rate that is 33% higher than among heterosexual students. (1) 19.2% of LGB high school students smoke cigarettes, which is nearly double the rate of heterosexual students, while 31% of transgender youth smoke cigarettes. (1,2) LGB youth are twice as likely to be daily smokers and more likely to use multiple tobacco products than are heterosexual youth. (1,3)

LGBT youth also use tobacco products at disparate rates:

- **E-cigarettes:** 3 in 10 LGB youth currently use electronic vapor products like e-cigs, which is 25% higher than heterosexual youth. More than half of LGB youth have tried e-cigs. (1)

- **Hookah:** Black LGB youth use hookah at double the rate of their heterosexual peers, while white and Hispanic LGB youth use hookah at a 50% higher rate than their heterosexual peers. (5)

- **Cigars and clove cigarettes:** Black LGB youth use cigars and cloves at three times the rate of heterosexual black youth; multiracial LGB youth use cigars and cloves at a 60% higher rate than multiracial heterosexual youth. (5)

Tobacco-related health disparities follow LGBT youth throughout their lifetimes:

- LGBT youth smokers have higher rates of acute respiratory illnesses (e.g., strep throat, sinus infection, and asthma) than other youth smokers. (6)

- High rates of LGBT youth smoking results in similarly high rates among adults. (7) Smoking is the most preventable cause of cancer and death, (8,9) killing 30,000+ LGBT people per year. (10)
LGBT tobacco disparities are exacerbated by the discrimination LGBT youth face

- Gay college students are more likely to smoke when they have to conceal their orientation.\(^{(11)}\)
- Increased victimization of LGB youth is correlated with increased smoking.\(^{(12)}\)
- In contrast, LGBT youth who live in more supportive communities (e.g., where schools have LGBT-friendly policies and student groups) face lower risk of smoking.\(^{(13)}\)

LGBT youth can break the cycle with proper support

- LGBT people are less likely than others to intend to use Quitlines,\(^{(15)}\) and only 28% use nicotine replacement therapy\(^{(14)}\) even though it is generally covered by insurance.
- However, LGBT youth respond to targeted, appropriate messaging. A campaign at LGBT nightlife venues resulted in up to 48% reduced odds of smoking.\(^{(17)}\)
- LGBT people who are comfortable asking their doctor for help are 80% more likely to prepare to quit smoking,\(^{(14)}\) so healthcare providers can help end these disparities by reaching out to LGBT youth in a culturally-competent and inclusive way.\(^{(18)}\)

References for this document can be found at:
http://hlthlnk.lgbt/fact-sheets