

Federal government releases document addressing GLBT health

by Anabel Evora
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC — The federal government's release of a document that will help address the health care needs of GLBT Americans over the next decade has been hailed as a significant step forward by national activist and advocacy groups. The *Companion Document for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health* is an historic and federally funded publication that will address the needs of the GLBT community and possibly save lives.

"Having a nation of healthy people starts with policies that are wise enough to recognize specific health care needs and bold enough to find common-sense solutions," said Winnie Stachelberg, Political Director for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). "The *Companion Document for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health* meets this challenge and is a history making attempt to address the unique health care challenges affecting the LGBT community."

The *Companion Document for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health* is written to complement last year's release of *Healthy People 2010*, a publication designed to increase the qual-

ity and years of healthy life and eliminate health disparities among and between populations.

The *Companion Document* was released March 30 at a meeting of the National Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health. This Coalition, first brought together to work on including sexual orientation in *Healthy People 2010*, will continue to work to improve the health and well being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.

"We are pleased to be members of this important coalition," said Stachelberg. "Through our efforts, the LGBT community will receive unprecedented health care representation at the federal level."

There are health care disparities between and among our nation's GLBT population. While increased research is certainly needed, some studies have already highlighted these disparities. For example, research suggests that some types of cancer may disproportionately affect GLBT people. ▼

[To obtain a copy of the *Companion Document* for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health contact the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association at www.glna.org.]

Window Media, parent to Southern Voice, buys Blade papers

by Clay Ollis
Q-Notes Staff

ATLANTA — Window Media, owner of *Southern Voice*, the Atlanta-based GLBT weekly, is expanding its reach again. Just months ago, *Southern Voice* began covering the entire South-

east by merging its New Orleans paper, *Impact News*, with *Southern Voice*, and combining some editorial content with Window's other paper, Texas' *Houston Voice*. Now the company has announced the impending purchase of the nation's oldest and best known GLBT newspaper, *The Washington Blade*, and the affiliated *New York Blade News*.

The acquisition, which was to be completed by press time, will make Window Media the largest GLBT newspaper group in the US. Window will have offices in five major metropolitan areas, including the nation's capital and the city with the largest gay community. Officials at both organizations praised the deal as a new opportunity for gay publications.

Chris Crain, co-founder and editorial director of Window Media, told *Southern Voice* that the "combination of those two papers with the publications we already have takes us to an entirely new and unprecedented level. We now have the ability to cover stories important to gay people in ways no other media company ever has."

Crain has written editorials in *Southern Voice* criticizing other gay media mergers — particularly the acquisition of *Out* magazine by the

parent of the *Advocate* — arguing the merger diminished the diversity of perspectives available to GLBT readers. He argues the same won't be true of Windows Media, because "we aren't buying our competition."

The Washington Blade, founded in 1969, is the country's oldest GLBT newspaper. Current *Blade* publisher Don Michaels was first a volunteer at the paper, and became its first paid staff person in 1977, he told *Southern Voice*. Today *The Washington Blade* numbers weekly readership at

100,000. In 1997, the *New York Blade News* was launched and also reaches 100,000.

Besides *Southern Voice* and *Houston Voice*, Window Media also produces *Eclipse*, a regional guide to gay nightlife that originated in New Orleans, and *SoVo* magazine, a quarterly about gay life in Atlanta. Adding the *Blade* papers will allow all four to cover more issues better, Windows sources said. *The Washington Blade's* coverage of GLBT-related issues in the federal government — unequaled because of their ability to conduct in-person interviews and have reporters on site every day — will now be available to *Voice* readers from Atlanta to Houston. At the same time, being able to share some wider-interest stories written by *Voice* reporters should free *Blade* staffers to make local coverage even better in Washington and New York. But the papers will remain separate publications retaining their current names and each will have a strong local focus, according to Windows Media representatives. ▼



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