

HHS grant will create first national resource center for LGBT elders

by David Stout
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NEW YORK, N.Y. — Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and the Administration on Aging have awarded Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE) a three-year, \$900,000 grant to create the nation's only national resource center on LGBT aging.

The National Technical Assistance Resource Center for LGBT Elders will assist communities across the country in their efforts to provide services and support for older LGBT people. The center will provide training to aging service providers and LGBT agencies nationwide, and will offer critically important educational tools to LGBT older people.

"The creation of a National Technical Assistance Resource Center for LGBT Elders is a monumental step forward for the LGBT community," said Michael Adams, executive director of SAGE. "SAGE is extremely gratified to be given this opportunity to create and oversee the Resource Center in close cooperation with the Administration on Aging.

"We are confident that working with AoA and our partners — who represent an extraordinary collaboration between the aging services network and the LGBT community — we will make a difference in the lives of every LGBT older person in every community in this country."

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius observed, "Agencies that provide services to older individuals may be unfamiliar or uncom-

fortable with the needs of this underserved population. The Resource Center will provide information, assistance and resources for both mainstream aging organizations and LGBT organizations and will provide assistance to LGBT individuals as they plan for future long-term care needs."

Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee said the award signals a new policy direction relative to the LGBT community.

"AoA frequently turns to national organizations to support the Aging Network in their efforts to work with specific minority populations that are traditionally underserved. In the past, AoA has funded national organizations to provide technical assistance on providing supports and services to African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans and Native Americans. With the full support of the current administration, we now recognize that LGBT older adults also represent a community with unique needs that must be addressed."

SAGE is the nation's oldest and largest organization serving LGBT older adults. In creating the resource center, the group will forge partnerships with 10 organizations with expertise in a wide range of areas including mainstream aging, LGBT aging, culture change and competency and program evaluation.

According to a statement, the center "will seek to engage, empower and support mainstream aging providers, LGBT providers and LGBT older adults to ensure that LGBT elders

have the necessary and culturally appropriate supports and services to successfully age in place."

Among other tools, SAGE plans to develop a comprehensive, web-based clearinghouse that will include diverse resources, social networking tools, an "Ask the Experts" service, web-based trainings and other features.

► Lambda Legal has released the first national survey that examines health care discrimination experienced by LGBT people and people living with HIV. "The results of this survey should shock the conscience of this nation and make clear that the system is broken when it comes to health care for many LGBT people and those living with HIV," said Beverly Tillery, Lambda Legal Director of Community Education and Advocacy. Read the report at www.lambdalegal.org/health-care-report.

► Dozens of LGBT youth of color gathered in Dallas earlier this month for a first-of-its-kind Organizing Summit at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Forces' 22nd annual Creating Change conference. The Summit — organized by FIERCE, a group for LGBT youth of color between the ages of 13-24 — included peer-led workshops on the fundamentals of youth organizing.

► Lambda Legal and the ACLU are planning legal action against the State of Hawaii following the state legislature's failure to en-

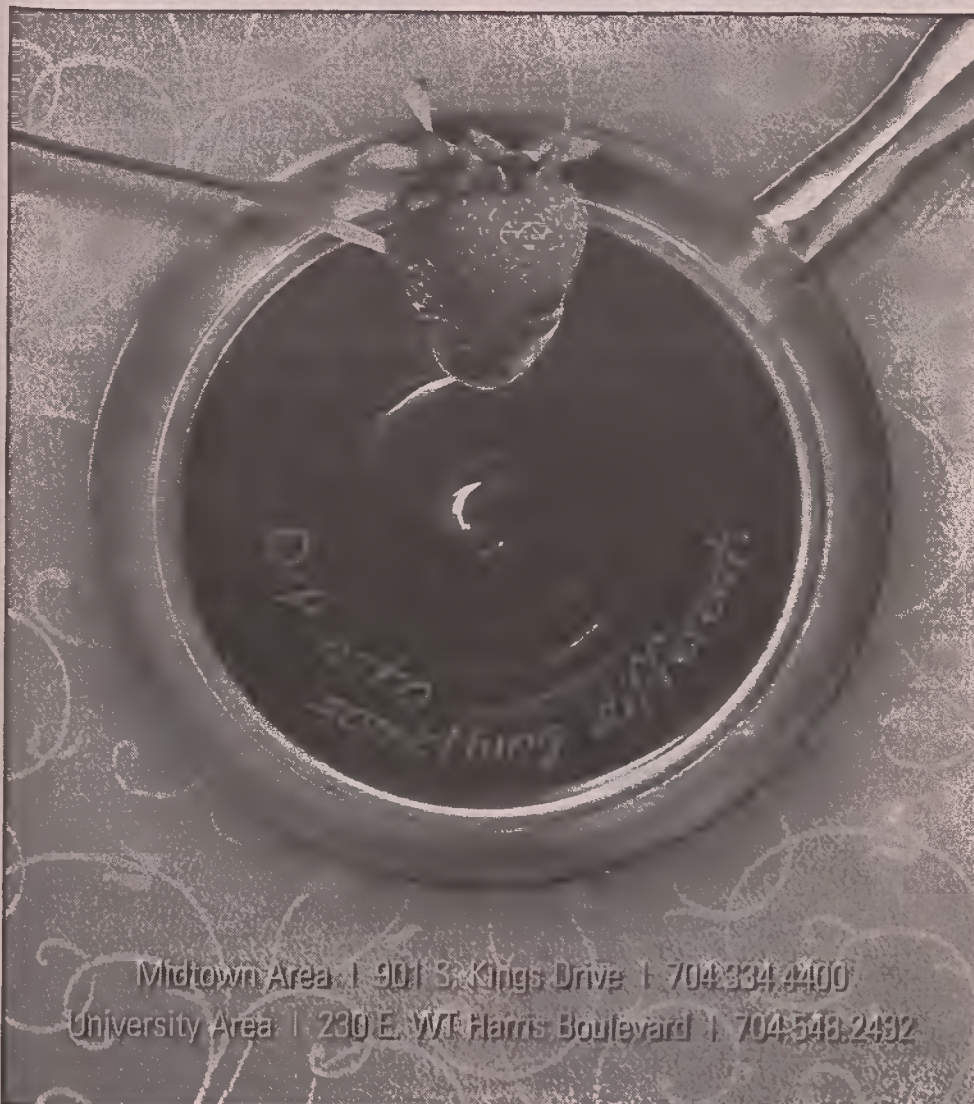
act a civil unions law. H.B. 444 was approved in the state Senate, but state House members used an anonymous voice vote to kill the civil unions bill on January 29.

► On Feb. 2, the U.S. Tax Court ruled that the expenses a transgender woman paid toward her hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery are tax-deductible under federal law due to the medical necessity of the procedures. Rhiannon O'Donnabhain brought suit against the IRS in 2007 for rejecting her \$5,000 deduction for medical expenses associated with her transition.

► Due to demand from educators, this year's No Name-Calling Week expanded beyond its original focus on middle schools to offer a lesson plan and category in its popular Creative Expression Contest appropriate for high school students.

► The National Center for Transgender Equality will hold its annual congressional Lobby Day on Tuesday, March 16 in Washington, D.C. The event will be preceded by two days of trainings and networking opportunities. For details, visit transequity.org.

► Air Force Staff Sgt. Benjamin Ford was stripped of his rank and docked one month's pay after he admitted to three counts of assault and battery for attacking a group of gay men last September in New York's Hells Kitchen neighborhood. "Die of AIDS, you fucking queers!" Ford reportedly screamed during the attack. Ford also wrote apology letters to the victims. : :



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