

Depression, Anxiety, and Dread Spiking Among Trans People after the Election: “My country is no longer the same”

Post Election, 80% of Trans People Report Health Problems That Interfere With Daily Functioning

PROVIDENCE, RI, UNITED STATES, November 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A study conducted by Dr. Lisa Diamond, University of Utah, and the National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network shows that

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Dr. NFN Scout

anxiety increased 45%, depression by 19%, and feelings of dread by 30% among trans Americans from the month before to the election until the week afterward. Over 30% say their overall health status has declined since last year, 60% report disruptions in their sleep over half the time, and 80% report that these health problems interfere with their daily functioning.

“November 5th was not just a political event – it was a public health event for LGBTQ+ individuals, especially trans individuals,” says principal investigator Diamond. The study, Project Lighthouse, is the first to assess within-person changes in LGBTQ+ mental health from before to after a national election. Over 400 participants were recruited through the social media channels of state and national LGBTQ+ organizations; although the sample is not statistically representative, this is less of a methodological problem for studies like this one, which aim to capture within-person change over time. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Utah, and the protocol, de-identified data, analytic syntax, and preliminary findings are publicly registered on the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/cvsyb/>).

The findings show that even before the new administration has begun, trans and nonbinary individuals are already suffering negative consequences from anti-trans rhetoric. Over \$200 million was spent on anti-trans ads during this election cycle, and over 500 anti-trans pieces of state legislation were introduced in 2024 (<https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2024/trump-hammered-democrats-on-transgender-issues-now-the-party-is-at-odds-on-a-response/> & <https://translegislation.com/>). The study’s findings show that the harms of these ads go beyond the ballot box: “They inflict real and lasting damage on the wellbeing of transgender youth and the families who love them,” says Jennifer Solomon, the Parents and Families Support manager for Equality Florida. “No family should have to endure

such hate. Every family deserves to live in a community where every child is valued and protected.” Dr. Scout, the trans-identified Executive Director of the Cancer Network, worries about long-term effects on multiple health conditions. “We just released a video showing how these legislative attacks increase trans individuals’ vulnerability to cancer. We are becoming increasingly distrustful of our government and the health care system, which will affect screening and prevention of multiple health risks.” This new video highlighting the effects of anti-trans legislation can be seen at https://youtu.be/UVt_qHwqcQ.

Family members of trans individuals are also showing these negative effects: As one parent noted, “I’m scared for the safety of my transgender daughter. I’m physically ill, haven’t slept well, and can’t eat much.” One 28-year-old trans man reported frequent nightmares and panic attacks since the election, noting “I don’t know how I will be able to do this for the foreseeable future.” A 48-year-old veteran asked, “How can the country I fought for not fight for me?” Dr. Scout summarizes the impact, “The political environment is now one of the lead social determinants of health for trans people.” For some, moving to another state or country seems like the only option for protecting their and their family’s health: 30% of trans/nonbinary respondents expected they would move in the future, even if it takes them away from friends and family. Project Lighthouse will keep following existing participants, and will continue enrolling new participants in the study until Inauguration Day, in partnership with Equality Florida, Equality Texas, Equality Utah, and other statewide and national organizations. They welcome additional community partners to join their efforts. “We are living through a natural experiment in the health consequences of anti-LGBTQ+ stigma,” says Dr. Diamond, “the effects of which are still unknown.”

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The National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network works to improve the lives of LGBTQI+ cancer survivors and those at risk by educating the LGBTQI+ communities about our increased cancer risks; training health care providers; and advocating for LGBTQI+ engagement in mainstream cancer organizations. Learn more at cancer-network.org.

Dr. NFN Scout
National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network
+1 310-786-8500
scout@cancer-network.org

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