Landmark Textbook Aims to Improve Clinician, Consumer Understanding of Lesbian Health

A landmark textbook focusing on lesbian health, based on extensive research and the clinical experience of its 46 chapter authors, is now available.

San Francisco, CA (Vocus) February 5, 2010 -- A landmark textbook focusing on lesbian health, based on extensive research and the clinical experience of its 46 chapter authors, is now available.

Initially conceived as a textbook for physicians and nurses, the book is written in consumer-friendly language and can be used as a reference for students or by lesbians interested in learning about their own health.

Published by the UCSF Nursing Press, Lesbian Health 101- A Clinician’s Guide covers a range of health-related issues for lesbians along the lifecycle continuum, including health screenings, substance abuse, depression, reproduction, menopause, partner violence, disabilities, and hospice care.

“Many clinicians wrongly assume that lesbians face the same health issues as heterosexual women when in fact, this population is more at risk for cancer, heart disease and substance abuse. As the first evidence-based textbook focused on lesbian health for clinicians, Lesbian Health 101 is intended to help doctors and nurses identify and more sensitively manage the needs of lesbian patients,” said Suzanne L. Dible, DNSc, RN, the book’s co-editor, professor at the Institute for Health and Aging in the UCSF School of Nursing, and co-founder and former co-director of the UCSF Lesbian Health & Research Center (LHRC).

The book comes one decade after the government released two significant reports recognizing the underserved health needs of lesbians. In 1999, the Institute of Medicine reported that the US health care system does not adequately serve the lesbian population. In 2000, the Department of Health and Human Services released “Healthy People 2010,” its 10-year plan which identified lesbian and gay Americans as one of six groups affected by health disparities.

“Lesbians often face barriers in accessing quality health care due to lack of insurance, the non-legal status of their partners, homophobic attitudes among clinicians, and gaps in research on their specific health issues,” said Patricia A. Robertson, MD, the book’s other co-editor, professor in the UCSF Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, and former co-director of the UCSF LHRC. “I hope in another 10 years, as we gather more data on which to base clinical guidelines and as health policies become more enlightened, that the need for this book or its content will have changed dramatically.”

Each chapter in the book begins with a scenario based on the author’s clinical experiences with lesbian patients and provides in-depth information about management of the particular health issue. By putting a face on the issues, the scenarios may help clinicians become aware that some of their patients -- whether they disclose it or not -- are lesbians with unique health needs.

“At long last clinicians now have a primer that challenges the long held medical practice of ‘don’t ask don’t tell.’ The contemporary social and policy debate on costs and inclusiveness in our health care system gets a scientific boost from the authors and researchers who methodically document the importance of culturally competent care for lesbians and their families. Lesbian Health 101 shatters myths with evidence. Our health care system can no longer say we didn’t know,” said Sandra R. Hernández, MD, chief executive officer of The
San Francisco Foundation, the community foundation of the Bay Area, and member of the National Advisory Council for the UCSF LHRC. Hernández previously was director of public health for the City and County of San Francisco.

“This is the first comprehensive textbook on lesbian health, reflecting the exponential increase in research on lesbian health over the past 10 years. I highly recommend this textbook to all clinicians and students who provide health care for women, and to inquisitive patients,” said Susan Love, MD, president of the Susan Love Breast Cancer Foundation, in a statement on the book cover.

For more information, visit http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/public/npress/ord-lh.htm.

About the Lesbian Health and Research Center at UCSF
The UCSF LHRC is dedicated to improving the health of lesbians, bisexual women, transgender people, and their families by creating comprehensive programs of research, education and trainings, public events and community collaborations. LHRC is a collaboration between the UCSF School of Medicine and the UCSF School of Nursing and is located within the Institute for Health & Aging in the nursing school. LHRC directly advances the Institute’s goals of serving women across the lifespan and of providing research data for making public policy decisions, improving public education, and facilitating community interventions. LHRC is also affiliated with the UCSF National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health and is a collaborative partner of the UCSF Center for Gender Equity.

About UCSF
UCSF is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care.

Corinna Kaarlela, News Director
Source: Karin Rush-Monroe (415) 476-2557
E-mail: Karin.Rush-Monroe(at)pubaff(dot)ucsf(dot)edu
Web: www.ucsf.edu

###
Contact Information
Karin Rush-Monroe
UCSF
http://www.ucsf.edu
(415) 476-2557

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.