



Gateways to Improving Lesbian Health and Health Care: Opening Doors

Christy M Ponticelli

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An interdisciplinary book that creates a space for traditionally oppressed voices to speak, *Gateways to Improving Lesbian Health and Health Care* explores the health care experiences of lesbians of different ages, colors, and places. By presenting the particular difficulties lesbians have in accessing excellent, or even adequate, health care, this book is meant to convince lesbians who have been isolated that their health issues and interactions with health care professionals are not just personal troubles, but larger public issues. It is also designed to show health care providers how they can sensitize their care and meet the needs of lesbian clients through the provision of safe and respectful environments. As *Gateways to Improving Lesbian Health and Health Care* addresses the intersection of race, class, and sexuality and how it affects the health care lesbians receive, you learn about lesbians' strategies for coming out to professionals, patient-professional interaction, and the construction of lesbianism as a social problem within the health care arena. You will also learn about:

- the need to view sexualities as local histories and narratives
 - the invisibility of aging lesbians in health and policy arenas
 - domestic violence in lesbian relationships
 - surviving a series of social identity exclusions
 - the difficulties of finding information on heterosexist or lesbian-friendly health care providers in unfriendly communities
 - personal accounts of prejudices lesbians have encountered when seeking health care
 - struggling with alcoholism
- Lesbian health care consumers, health care educators and providers, social service workers, and those in women's studies programs need to know how health care services often fail lesbians in need. With its practical suggestions for improving health care delivery to lesbians, *Gateways to Improving Lesbian Health and Health Care* is essential reading for ensuring quality care to lesbians of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and locations.

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