

# UW Health: Earns top score in Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2022 Healthcare Equality Index

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MADISON, Wis. – Today, UW Health has received a top score of 100 and the designation of “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader*” in the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation’s 15th anniversary edition of the [Healthcare Equality Index](#) (HEI), the nation’s foremost benchmarking survey of healthcare facilities on policies and practices dedicated to the equitable treatment and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, visitors and employees.

“As an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader, we work to have robust, comprehensive inclusive policies as our standard practices,” said Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, chief diversity officer, UW Health. “I hope this designation is an affirming message to our patients, our staff and our community that we see them, and we are here for them.”

The HEI evaluates and scores healthcare facilities on detailed criteria under four pillars:

- Foundational Policies and Training in LGBTQ+ Patient-Centered Care
- LGBTQ+ Patient Services and Support
- Employee Benefits and Policies
- Patient and Community Engagement

“Creating an equitable and inclusive environment is a core priority for us at UW Health,” said Dr. Alan Kaplan, CEO, UW Health. “We are proud to receive this designation again and view it as one of our responsibilities as a healthcare system to continue to meet the expectations of an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader.”

UW Health is amongst only 496 healthcare facilities in the United States, and the only one in southcentral Wisconsin, to have earned the 2022 “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader*” designation. University Hospital, American Family Children’s Hospital, and The American Center were all designated “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader*” facilities.

Facilities that earned HRC’s “*LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader*” designation received the maximum score in each section and earned an overall score of 100.

The remarkable progress reflected in the 2022 HEI includes:

- **93%** of participants met the HEI’s training requirements, completing more than **200,000 hours** of staff training in LGBTQ+ patient-centered care.
- **99%** of HEI participants documented that they include both “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” in their patient non-discrimination policy and in their employment nondiscrimination policy.
- **81%** of HEI participants offer transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits to their employees, up from 75% in 2019, which was the first year this was required to obtain Leader status.

“Every person deserves to have access to quality healthcare, be respected and heard by their doctor, and feel safe in the facility where they are receiving care. But LGBTQ+ people are often subject to discrimination in all spaces, including healthcare facilities, which leads to members of the community avoiding care and anticipating our voices will not be respected in an incredibly vulnerable environment,” said Tari Hanneman, director of Health & Aging at The Human Rights Campaign. “The Healthcare Equality Index strives to ensure LGBTQ+ people are protected and affirmed by their healthcare providers and feel safe seeking services.”

A recorded interview with Bidar-Sielaff is available.