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*Ensuring the health of
LGBT individuals and
communities through the*

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LGBT HEART Unveils State-Specific Advanced Planning Tools

PHILADELPHIA, PA, March 15, 2007 – The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health, Education and Research Trust (LGBT HEART) today unveiled free, state-specific advanced planning documents for all 50 states on its web site. With this new offering, visitors to the LGBT HEART web site will be able to download, complete and execute both a health care proxy and a living will.

With the inclusion of advanced planning documents on its web site, LGBT HEART becomes the first national organization, focused specifically on LGBT health, to provide the LGBT community with tools ensuring they can execute control over critical aspects of their health care. Further, the addition of the advanced planning section to the LGBT HEART web site strengthens LGBT HEART's commitment to protecting the overall health of the LGBT community.

"The past year has seen further assaults on the health and well-being of the LGBT community. These attacks, thinly-veiled under the guise of preventing 'gay marriage,' places the LGBT community at risk through denied partner visitation in health care facilities and exclusion from medical decision making, along with creating an overall environment that is accepting of homophobia and intolerance, said Manuel Hernandez, MD, MBA, President of LGBT HEART. "LGBT patients who are armed with advanced planning documents can ensure that their medical wishes will be honored in the event they are unable to make decisions on their own behalf."

A health care proxy, or durable medical power of attorney, is a document designating a person who will make decisions on a patient's behalf in the event they are unable to make decisions for any reason. The person selected does not have to be a family member. The health care proxy can be any person the patient trusts to make decisions on their behalf.

"In communities where we have seen the LGBT community fall victim to blatant discrimination in access to health care a life partner participating in the care of their loved one, or being shut out of the Emergency Department or Intensive Care Unit," said Dr. Hernandez. "I've personally seen life partners being pushed aside during critical health care decisions in the absence of these documents."

A living will, also known as an advanced directive, is a document created outlining a patient's wishes in the event they are unable to make medical decisions. Items addressed in a living will may include: CPR, insertion of a breathing tube and use of a ventilator, insertion of a feeding tube for nutrition or the withholding of life-sustaining or saving interventions such as medications to support blood pressure, antibiotics to fight infection or the use of kidney dialysis.

"For many patients, the thought of prolonged life-sustaining measures and attachment to life support machines is simply unbearable," said Dr. Hernandez. "Clearly, documented living wills allow health care providers to understand and respect a patient's wishes when the time comes."

The advanced planning section of the LGBT HEART web site is part of a larger overhaul of the organization's web site. Upon entering the LGBT HEART web site (www.lgbtheart.org), visitors can directly link to the advanced planning section where they can [learn more about the importance and use of advanced planning documents](#). From there, [visitors are directed to a](#)

page with links to each state's documents. Both graphic depictions of each state and text are use to make the experience as user-friendly as possible.

Documents available for download were gathered from official state agencies when possible. In states where no government-sanctioned documents have been created, LGBT HEART utilized documents from professional medical and nursing societies, state Bar Associations and other non-profit organizations. In the rare cases where permission to use documents was refused, guests to the LGBT HEART web site will be linked to the appropriate source for advanced planning documents in their state.

For more information about LGBT HEART and the advanced planning documents, please go to <http://www.lgbtheart.org> or contact LGBT HEART at info@lgbtheart.org.

About LGBT HEART

Incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2004, LGBT HEART is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation. The mission of LGBT HEART is to support the health and well-being of the LGBT community through the support of scholarship and research. LGBT HEART targets its programming to meet the health care needs of the diverse LGBT community in the United States, which currently numbers between 16 and 28 million people and is represented in urban, suburban and rural settings and crosses all socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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