

Delaware Hospitals and the Healthcare Equality Index since 2011: How do they rate?

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The Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) published by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the national LGBTQ benchmarking tool that evaluates healthcare facilities' policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees. The HEI 2018 evaluated more than 1,600 healthcare facilities nationwide.¹

Delaware hospitals have participated in the HEI since 2011. The following provides a snapshot by year of the active participation and results of Delaware hospitals in this annual survey (see Table 1).

Beginning in 2011, the HEI awarded the “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality” designation to hospitals that met the following criteria:

- have both sexual orientation and gender identity identified in the patients’ bill of rights/non-discrimination policy;
- have explicitly inclusive visitation policy granting equal access for same-sex couples and for same-sex parents;
- LGBT cultural competency training for key leaders and personnel; and
- have sexual orientation and gender identity in the equal employment opportunity policy.

In 2011, Christiana Care Christiana Hospital and Christiana Care Wilmington Hospital were the first two hospitals to participate in the HEI. Both hospitals achieved the designation of “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality.” They maintained their leader status in 2013, and were joined by Beebe Healthcare and Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in 2014.

There was a concerted effort on the part of the United Way of Delaware’s PRIDE Council’s LGBTQ Health Equity Task Force to visit the Delaware hospitals not participating in the survey in 2014. Information about the HEI survey as an organizing tool for working toward providing equitable care to LGBTQ+ Delawareans and for LGBTQ+ workforce inclusion was provided to key leaders in the five non-participating hospitals. As a result of this organizing effort, four out of the five hospitals participated in the 2016 HEI, which led to 8 out of the 9 hospitals in Delaware achieving Leader status.

The 2017 HEI survey saw a rising of the bar, with a shift to a more comprehensive and demanding survey that scored facilities on their LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices. A score of 100 allowed a hospital to have the designation “Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality”. Facilities receiving between 80-95 points were deemed “Top Performers.”

Criteria 1 – includes the Non-Discrimination and Staff Training requirements from previous surveys (40 points)

Criteria 2 - covers Patient Services and Support: LGBTQ patient services and support; transgender patient services and support; patient self-identification; and medical decision-making (30 points)

Criteria 3 – covers Employee Benefits and Policies (20 points)

Criteria 4 – covers Patient and Community Engagement (10 points)

Christiana Care Christiana Hospital and Christiana Care Wilmington Hospital were the two Delaware facilities that achieved a score of 100 and attained Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality status. Bayhealth Kent General Hospital, Bayhealth Milford Memorial Hospital, and Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children were in the Top Performer category with 80 points each. Beebe Health received 75 points.

2018 Leaders in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Bayhealth Kent General Hospital, Bayhealth Milford Memorial Hospital, Christiana Care Christiana Hospital, Christiana Care Wilmington Hospital, and Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children achieved a score of 100. Beebe Healthcare achieved 75 points.

Table 1. Participation In and Results for Healthcare Equality Index by Delaware Hospitals Since 2011.

Year	Participation in HEI	Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality Status (<i>added 2012</i>)	Top Performer Status (<i>added 2017</i>)
2011	CH, WH		
2012	CH, WH	CH, WH	
2013	CH, WH	CH, WH	
2014	BH, CH, WH, NAIDHC	BH, CH, WH, NAIDHC	
2015/ 2016	KG, MMH, BH, CH, WH, NMH, NAIDHC, VA	KG, MMH, BH, CH, WH, NMH, NAIDHC, VA	
2017	KG, MMH, BH, CH, WH, NMH, NAIDHC, VA	CH, WH	KG, MMH, NAIDHC
2018	KG, MMH, BH, CH, WH, NMH, NAIDHC, VA	KG, MMH, CH, WH, NAIDHC	BH

CH – Christiana Hospital (CCHS), WH – Wilmington Hospital (CCHS), KG – Kent General Hospital (Bayhealth), MMH – Milford Memorial Hospital (Bayhealth), BH – Beebe Hospital (Beebe), NMH – Nanticoke Memorial Hospital (Nanticoke), NAIDHC (Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children), VA – Veteran’s Association (Wilmington)

2019 Healthcare Equality Index is due to be published in the summer of 2019. New to the HEI this year was the additional requirement that participants will be required to have at least one firm-wide employee health insurance plan that affirmatively provides transgender-inclusive coverage to receive a score of 100 in the HEI and obtain the “LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Leader” designation.

References

1. The Healthcare Quality Index. (n.d.) The Human Rights Campaign. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrc.org/hei>

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