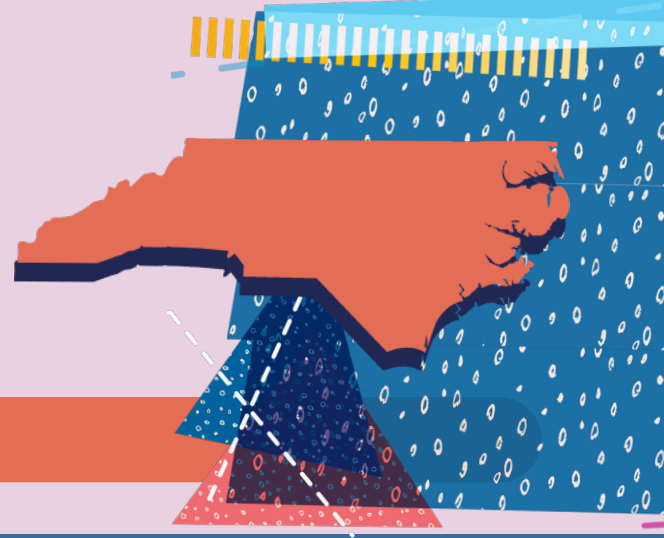


Breakout Report

LGBTQ North Carolinians:

A Report of the 2021 Southern LGBTQ Experiences Survey

May 2023



The Survey of Southern LGBTQ Experiences is a project of the Southern Equality Research & Policy Center and Campus Pride. The survey, conducted in 2021, highlights the experiences of more than 4,000 LGBTQ adults across 13 states in the US Southeast. To learn more about the survey, including our methodology, visit www.southernequality.org/comingofagesurvey

This special report focuses on North Carolina respondents to the 2021 Survey of Southern LGBTQ Experiences.

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Campaign for Southern Equality

works across the South to promote full LGBTQ equality – both legal and lived. Our work is rooted in commitments to empathy and to equity in race, class, and gender. www.southernequality.org

Campus Pride

Campus Pride is the leading national nonprofit organization dedicated to building future leaders and creating safer, more inclusive communities for LGBTQ people and allies at colleges and universities. www.campuspride.org

www.southernequality.org/ComingofAge#NC



Coming of Age as an LGBTQ Southerner

About the 2021 Southern LGBTQ Experiences Survey

The 2021 Southern LGBTQ Experiences Survey is a project of the Southern Equality Research & Policy Center and Campus Pride. The overall survey highlights the experiences of 4,146 LGBTQ adults across 13 states. Population estimates suggest more than one-third of the LGBTQ community in the US resides in the South (Williams Institute 2019), where they are likely to have fewer legal protections and face more anti-LGBTQ policies than their peers in other parts of the country (Harless et al. 2019; Johnson et al. 2020; Movement Advancement Project 2022).

The goal of the survey was to better understand the lived experiences of LGBTQ people across social contexts. The self-administered survey, developed in 2021 by a team of sociologists, political scientists, and community organizers, was completed online between August 3 and December 20, 2021. The survey included demographic questions as well as questions related to home and family, faith and spirituality, school and education, and health and well-being. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. Recruitment took place online through targeted social media advertisements. Our team also hired community research ambassadors to promote the survey to LGBTQ people in their networks throughout the region.

Survey participants represent a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Each of the 13 Southern states had at least 100 participants. The average age for the sample is 28 years and over half of the sample (56.23%) is 24 years old or younger. Racially, the sample identifies as White (87.19%), Black (6.76%), multiracial (5.52%), Native American or Alaskan Native (1.77%), Middle Eastern or North African (0.56%), Asian or Pacific Islander (1.92%), or elected to self-describe (1.73%), and 10.15% of the sample is Hispanic. Just under 30% of the sample (29.32%) are transgender, and 26.07% of respondents are nonbinary. The most reported sexual orientations in the sample are bisexual (32.07%), queer (27.75%), lesbian (22.10%), and gay (20.30%).



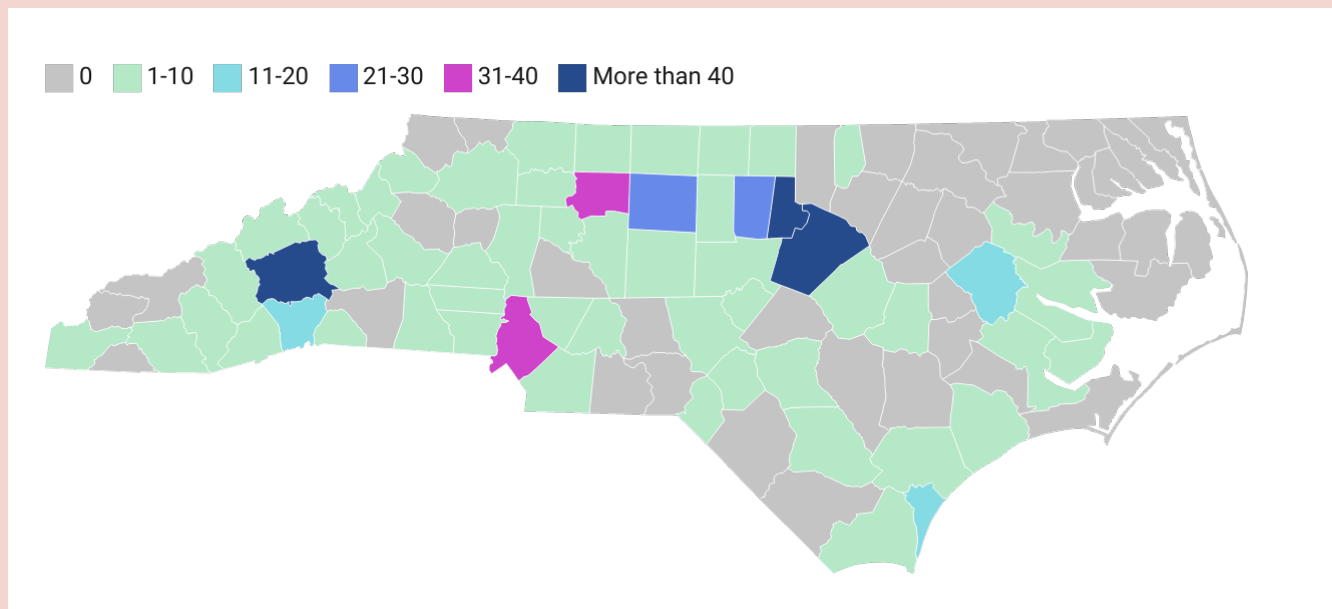
Introduction

Approximately 422,000 LGBTQ+ people call North Carolina home, from the Mountain Region of Western North Carolina to the Coastal Plains, comprising 4% of the state's overall population.¹ According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, North Carolina's LGBTQ+ population includes approximately 71,300 trans and nonbinary adults and approximately 8,500 trans and nonbinary youth between the ages of 13 and 17.² The 2020 US Census estimates that 62.2% of North Carolinians are white, 20.5% are Black or African American, 1.2% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.3% are Asian, and 12.8% are multiracial, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or some other race.³ Among LGBTQ+ North Carolinians, 58% are white, 22% are Black or African American, 11% are Latinx, and 9% identify as other races.⁴

Of the 4,146 LGBTQ+ Southerners who responded to the 2021 LGBTQ Southern Experiences Survey, 539 are LGBTQ+ North Carolinians. This supplement spotlights their experiences.

State lawmakers in North Carolina are targeting their LGBTQ constituents with discriminatory laws impacting their access to healthcare, education, and freedom of speech and expression.⁵ This approach to politics is misguided and out of step with public support of LGBTQ rights and protections among Southerners generally and North Carolinians specifically. According to a 2021 poll from the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), 75% of Southerners support nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people.⁶

Figure 1: Survey Respondents in NC by County



1. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats>
2. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/subpopulations/transgender-people/>
3. <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=2566121a73de463995ed2b2fd7ff6eb7>
4. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats>
5. <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights?state=NC&impact=>
6. <https://www.prri.org/research/americans-support-for-key-lgbtq-rights-continues-to-tick-upward/#page-section-1>

Introduction

A 2018 poll from PRRI indicated that 66% of North Carolinians were in favor of laws that protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in jobs, public accommodations, and housing.⁷ Yet, LGBTQ North Carolinians who participated in our study overwhelmingly described the political climate in the state as hostile toward LGBTQ+ people.

In this radical, anti-LGBTQ political climate, it is important to understand the lived experience of LGBTQ+ North Carolinians. This report highlights their experiences of violence and discrimination, health and well-being, and access to social support. Our findings suggest that LGBTQ+ North Carolinians are already struggling to get their needs met across social contexts and institutions; and these experiences have negative consequences for their physical and mental health. These results lead to poor trust in social institutions from healthcare to government. We urge lawmakers and everyday North Carolinians to stand up for their LGBTQ+ neighbors, to push back against legislative harassment that is intended to limit access to necessary and life-saving resources, and to work to advance access to social support, medical care, and institutional protections for all people.

“We urge lawmakers and everyday North Carolinians to stand up for their LGBTQ+ neighbors, to push back against legislative harassment that is intended to limit access to necessary and life-saving resources, and to work to advance access to social support, medical care, and institutional protections for all people.”

Figure 2: NC Respondents’ Perceptions of State’s Political Climate Toward LGBTQ+ People



7. <https://www.equaldex.com/surveys/support-for-lgbt-protections-by-us-state>

LGBTQ+ North Carolinians' Experiences of Violence & Discrimination

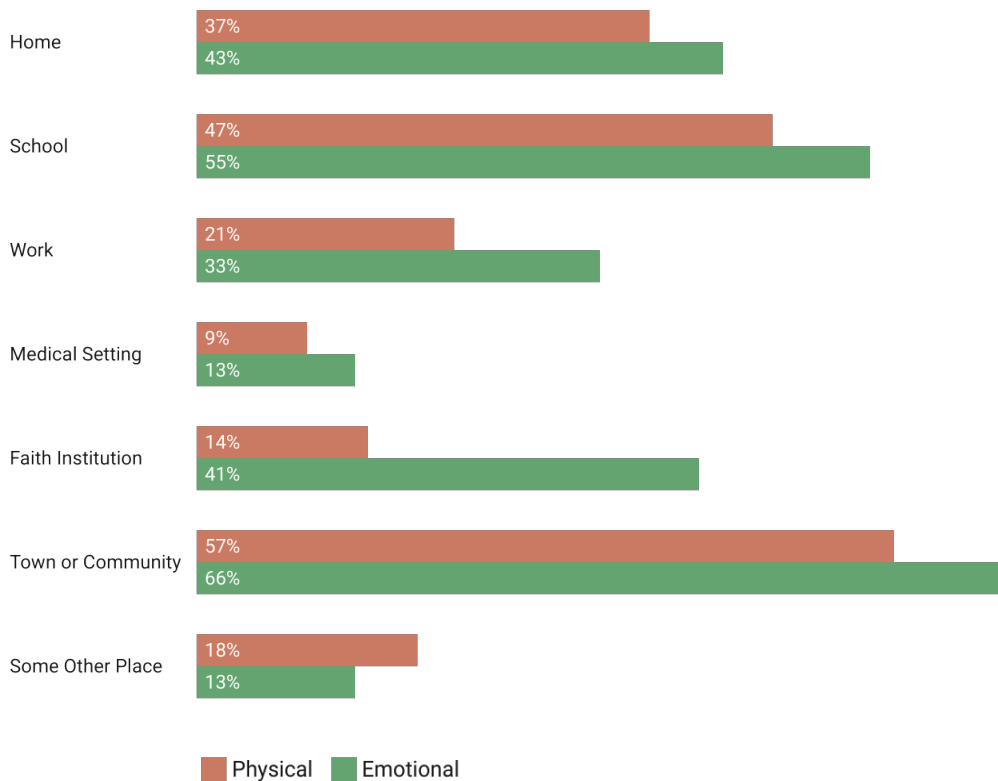
We asked participants if they had ever experienced interpersonal physical or emotional violence related to their LGBTQ identity. Among participants from North Carolina, 21% reported experiences of physical violence and 76% reported experiences of emotional violence related to their LGBTQ identity. Experiences of violence in North Carolina were slightly below the regional averages for both physical (22.7%) and emotional (77.7%) violence.

An alarming number of LGBTQ+ North Carolinians reported victimization across a wide swath of social institutions, including at school, where 47% reported experiences of physical violence and 55% reported experience of emotional violence; at home, where 37% reported experiences of physical violence and 43% reported experiences of emotional violence; in their town or community where 57% reported experiences of physical violence and 66%

Figure 3: NC Respondents' Indicating Experiences of Violence



Figure 4: Places Where NC Respondents Experienced Violence



LGBTQ+ North Carolinians' Experiences of Violence & Discrimination

reported experiences of emotional violence; in their faith institution, where 14% reported experiences of physical violence and 41% reported experiences of emotional violence; at work, where 21% reported experiences of physical violence and 33% reported experiences of emotional violence; and in a medical setting, where 9% reported experiences of physical violence and 13% reported experiences of emotional violence.

Participants from North Carolina also reported experiencing institutional discrimination related to their LGBTQ+ identity. Participants reported experiencing discrimination in hiring or employment (29%), followed by healthcare (18%), retail or business (14%), housing (8%), and education or schooling (5%).

Figure 5: Experiences of Discrimination Among NC Respondents

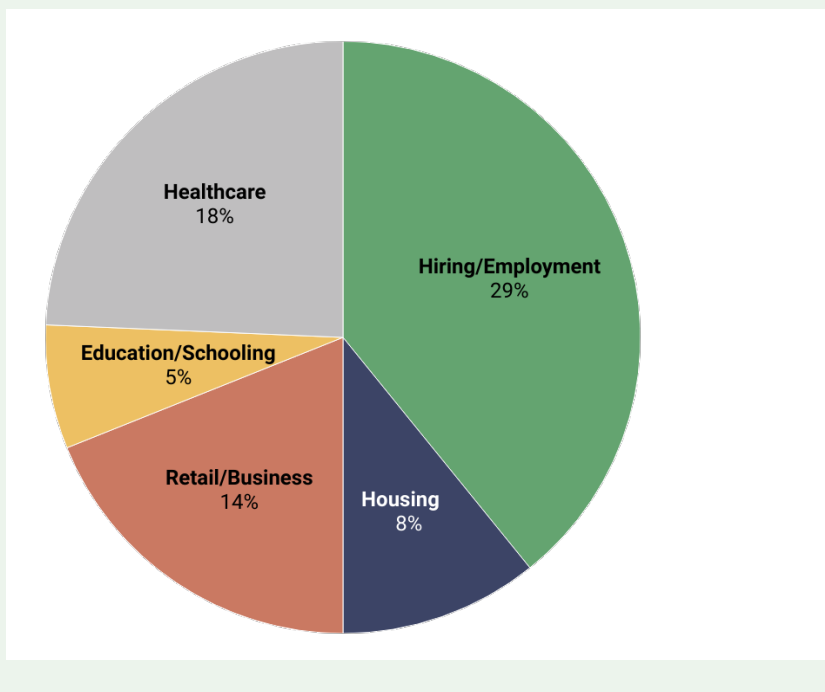
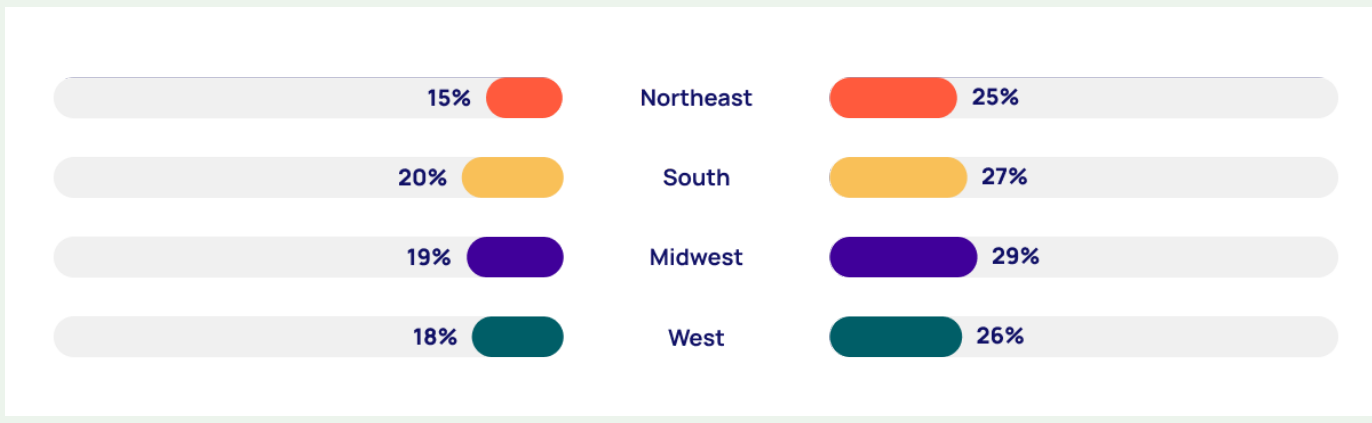


Figure 6: LGBTQ young people who have been physically threatened or harmed in the past year by region (according to The Trevor Project)⁸



Graphic taken from The Trevor Project's 2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People (<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023>).

8. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>

LGBTQ+ North Carolinians' Access to Social Support

In a recent poll completed by The Trevor Project,⁸ 86% of trans and nonbinary youth reported that the debates surrounding anti-trans bills across the country impacts their mental health in negative ways. Similar findings appear in studies of trans and nonbinary adults,⁹ suggesting that members of the trans community do not age out of their vulnerability to the effects of anti-trans legislation. For trans and nonbinary people, social support emerges in a number of studies as a key indicator of positive coping among this vulnerable population,^{10,11} reducing levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidality.

To better understand participants' access to social support we asked them to respond to the following statements, on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

1) *I have people I can talk to about issues I have as an LGBTQ person.*

2) *I feel socially isolated because of my LGBTQ identity.*

In response to question 1, 90% of respondents from NC either strongly (67%) or somewhat (23%) agreed that they have people to talk to about LGBTQ issues.

In response to question 2, 33% of respondents from NC either strongly (7%) or somewhat (26%) agreed that they feel socially isolated because of their LGBTQ identity.

9. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-emphasizes-negative-impacts-of-anti-lgbtq-policies-on-lgbtq-youth/>

10. Horne, S. G., McGinley, M., Yel, N., & Maroney, M. R. (2022). The stench of bathroom bills and anti-transgender legislation: Anxiety and depression among transgender, nonbinary, and cisgender LGBTQ people during a state referendum. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 69(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000558>

11. Gorman, K. R., Shipherd, J. C., Collins, K. M., Gunn, H. A., Rubin, R. O., Rood, B. A., & Pantalone, D. W. (2022). Coping, resilience, and social support among transgender and gender diverse individuals experiencing gender-related stress. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 9(1), 37-48. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000455>

12. Lance S. Weinhardt, Hui Xie, Linda M. Wesp, Jennifer R. Murray, Immaculate Apchemengich, David Kioko, Caleb B. Weinhardt & Loree Cook-Daniels (2019) The Role of Family, Friend, and Significant Other Support in Well-Being Among Transgender and Non-Binary Youth, *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 15:4, 311-325, DOI: 10.1080/1550428X.2018.1522606

Figure 7: "I have people I can talk to about issues I have as an LGBTQ person"

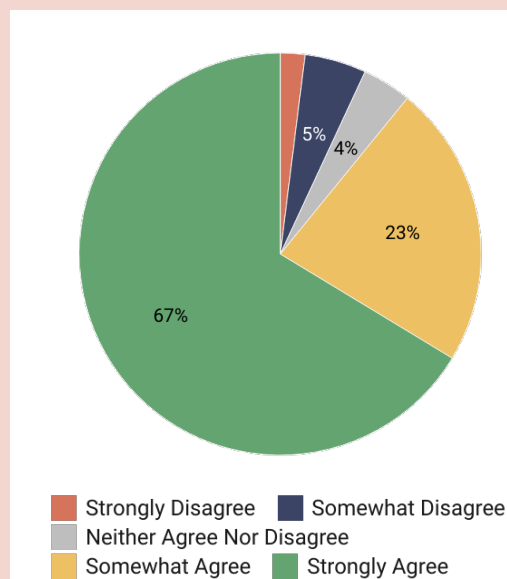
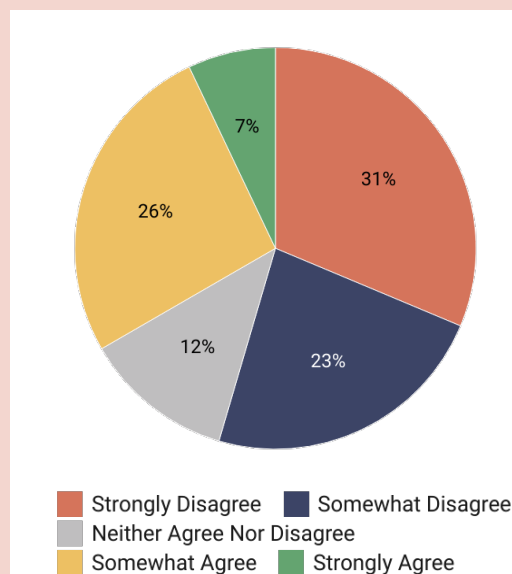


Figure 8: "I feel socially isolated because of my LGBTQ identity"



Health & Healthcare Experiences

We asked participants how they would rate their physical and mental health on a scale from poor to excellent. Among respondents from North Carolina, 56% rated their physical health as poor (9%) or fair (47%) and 72% rated their mental health as poor (26%) or fair (46%).

Respondents from North Carolina reported delaying or avoiding seeking healthcare due to fear of denial of service (45%) and fear of discrimination or harassment (44%); and, only 33% of respondents from North Carolina agreed that doctors in their community are prepared to treat LGBTQ+ patients.

When asked to report on their mental health experiences over the 12 months prior to participation in the survey, respondents from North Carolina indicated alarming rates of negative mental health outcomes.

Among participants from North Carolina, 67% reported self-isolating from their support networks; 57% reported experiencing suicidal ideation or serious suicidal thoughts; 48% reported experiences of disordered eating; 29% reported engaging in self-harm behaviors; 14% reported experiencing a suicide attempt; and 10% reported being hospitalized for their own safety.

Fig. 9: Mental Health Experiences in 12 months Prior to Participation

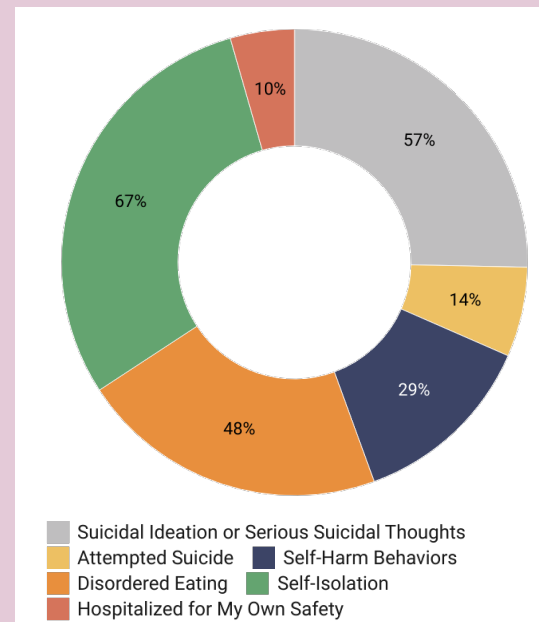


Fig. 10: Self-Reported Health Among LGBTQ North Carolinians

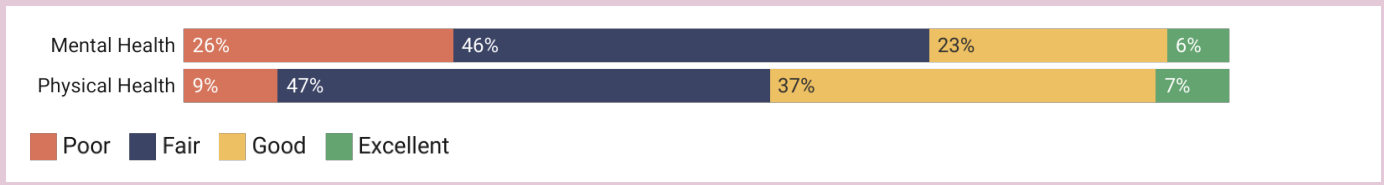
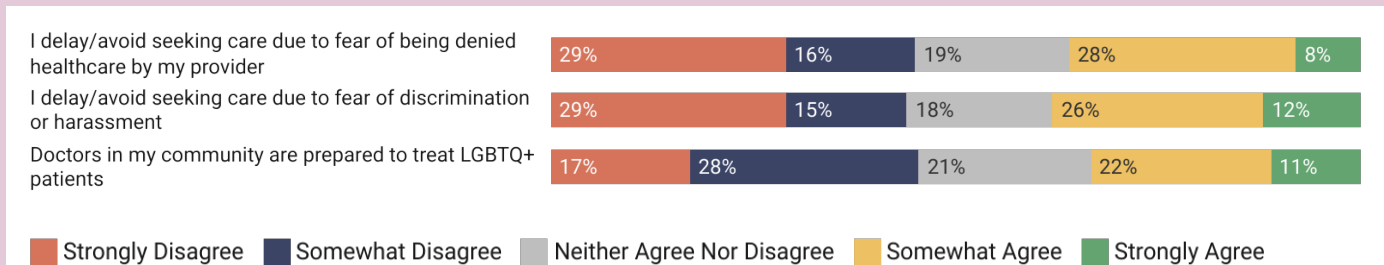


Fig. 10: Behaviors & Perspectives Related to Healthcare Access



North Carolinians' Guide to Supporting LGBTQ+ People



Make sure you are registered to vote in North Carolina.

Register or check your registration status at www.vote.org




Contact your North Carolina state lawmakers and urge them to protect LGBTQ+ North Carolinians by voting against legislative discrimination.

Find your lawmakers and their contact information: www.openstates.org/find_your_legislator



Get to know North Carolina's political landscape and stay up to date on all issues affecting LGBTQ people in North Carolina.

Check out the Movement Advancement Project: www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile_state/NC



Get involved in the NC is Ready campaign: This coalition, led by Equality NC and the Campaign for Southern Equality, is committed to defeating anti-LGBTQ+ legislative attacks and promoting inclusive nondiscrimination protections in communities across North Carolina. Learn more at www.ncisready.org.



Stay up to date on anti-LGBTQ+ bills that are being filed in North Carolina

Follow a tracker, like the one at ACLU: www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights



Support the work of local LGBTQ advocacy organizations working in North Carolina, including:

ACLU of North Carolina
Blue Ridge Pride
Campaign for Southern Equality
El Centro Hispano
Equality NC
The Freedom Center for Social Justice
Guilford Green Foundation
NC AIDS Action network
Time Out Youth
Tranzmission
Youth OUTright