The Rainbow Book
A Student-Written Guide to LGBT Life in Rochester and URSMD

Presented by Members of Spectrum at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
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PREAMBLE

Hello and congratulations, Class of 2023!

We are so happy, grateful, and excited to have you here. The LGBT contingent of URSMD is growing exponentially and every new addition has made incredible contributions to their class and to our institution as a whole.

It’s not easy to be queer in medicine, whether you are a patient or a provider. In many ways you are a pioneer. LGBT providers remain a minority in our healthcare system, and LGBT-specific medical training can be hard to come by. However, this is less and less true as time goes on, and we pride ourselves at URSMD for improving the rates of both. Medicine continues to grow and change in ways our predecessors could never have imagined and LGBT medicine specifically is experiencing a time of great innovation. Despite this there may be times when you feel intimidated, isolated, or misunderstood due to your identity. So above all, remember this: You are not alone. We, the LGBT contingency of URSMD, are always here, and beyond that there are many outstanding networks of LGBT medical students, doctors, researchers, and more out there just waiting to meet you. Whatever identities you may hold connect you to a long history, powerful present, and promising future of LGBT students passionate about supporting and empowering future LGBT generations, providers and patients alike.

In truth your queerness is a great strength in medicine. You are entering this field with profound insight into the sociocultural aspect of medicine we all value so much. Understanding the many ways in which discrimination impacts care, valuing diversity and inclusion, and being able to communicate unique lenses through which to look at the world-- these are all things you already have a head start in.

Where you choose to go with your extraordinary potential is up to you, and we greatly look forwards to getting to know you along the way.

With love and pride,
Spectrum
OVERVIEW/FAQ

1. What is the purpose of this book?
We, the LGBT contingency of URSMD, wish to properly welcome all LGBT students into our community. The purpose of this Rainbow book is to address all your LGBT-specific wants and needs as you begin this new exciting part of your journey.

2. Who created this book?
This guidebook was created by Spectrum, a student-run LGBT club and resource for graduate and medical students at UR. Each year Spectrum hosts a variety of events ranging from monthly potlucks, to educational seminars, to student-created and student-run initiatives related to LGBT health and wellness. Anyone is welcome to join Spectrum, including allies!

For more information on Spectrum, you can always reach out to Spectrum@lists.rochester.edu

3. Will being openly LGBT hurt or otherwise affect my application?
“Being openly LGBT will not negatively affect anyone’s applications to URSMD, and we encourage and embrace all backgrounds, identities, and experiences.”

-Dr. Nobay, Associate Dean for Admissions
WHERE TO GO

Rochester as a whole is a very LGBT-friendly city, and there are a variety of places to go that specifically cater to the queer community. There is even a phenomenal Rochester Pride Parade in the summer!

Community

Out Alliance

About: A community organization that has many events and resources, such as their “T-35 Trans Support Group”, an LGBT library, and LGBT gallery shows.

Contact: 100 College Ave, 585-244-8640

Ambush

About: As an alternative to the lack of lesbian bars in the area queer women and allies take over a different straight bar on the second Friday of the month. This is meant to be a low-key, fun, casual way to hang out with your friends and meet other lesbians and queer-identified women from the WNY area.

Contact: https://www.facebook.com/ambushrochester/

Neighborhoods

Park Ave and South Wedge are both local neighborhoods known for being LGBT-hotspots. Many queer people live here, and you can find lots of queer-friendly shops and events!

Food

Equal Grounds

About: A popular LGBTQ cafe where you'll find many students studying on weekends. Alongside food and drink they also have queer board games and books.

Contact: 750 South Ave, 585-256-2362
Edibles Restaurant

**About**: A gay-owned upscale bistro that hosts a popular drag brunch event.

**Contact**: 704 University Ave, 585-271-4910

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Exercise

YogaVibe

**About**: YogaVibe hosts a pay-what-you-can Queer and Trans Yoga Class. Check online for the schedule.

**Contact**: 80 Rockwood Pl, 585-242-0059

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Bars/Pubs

The Spirit Room

**About**: Drag shows and Queer inclusion

**Contact**: 139 State St

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Abilene

**About**: Intimate venue known for its regular live music shows, with a limited menu & back deck with views. Queer friendly spot that hosts events occasionally.

**Contact**: 153 Liberty Pole Way

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Avenue Pub

**About**: Queer bar with pool, $10 card minimum. 5 stars on Yelp. A favorite of locals.

**Contact**: 522 Monroe Ave

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Bachelor Forum

**About**: Gay landmark providing weekly drink specials in an old-school space, plus TVs, a pool table & darts.
Contact: 670 University Ave

140 Alex Bar
About: Laid-back, LGBT-friendly watering hole with a classic pub grub menu & weekend drag performances.
Contact: 140 Alexander St

Soul Rehab
About: A monthly queer-focused rager that showcases regional talent in the underground techno and house community
Contact: https://www.facebook.com/SoleRehabRoc/

Haircare
Barbertorium
About: LGBT+ inclusive stylists (who also sign!). Side shaves, Tom boi cuts, longer hair trim, special etchings all for an affordable price.
Contact: Nico Merritt, 25 Circle St #202, 585-271-8120

World Hair
About: Super approachable to all, walk-ins welcome, they have at least two out trans stylists on staff!
Contact: 121 Park Ave #13, 14607, 585-473-5452

More places and events can be found at: https://rocwiki.org/LGBT_Community
HEALTH RESOURCES

Resource Centers

University Health Services: Counseling

About: This mental health service is free for students and includes several LGBT-identified counselors on staff. They also host an LGBT-specific support group.

Contact: River Campus, UHS Building, Floor 3, 738 Library Road, 585-275-3113

Trillium Health

About: A health center with LGBT-specialized care, including mental healthcare, STI screening, and reproductive health services.

Contact: 259 Monroe Ave, 585-545-7200

Planned Parenthood

About: LGBT-friendly healthcare center

Contact: 866-600-6886
Location 1: 114 University Ave, 14605
Location 2: Greece, 2824 W Ridge Rd, 14626

Center for Disability Rights

About: LGBTQ-friendly disability resource center

Contact: 497 State St, 585-546-7510

Non-Discrimination Policy & Reporting

The University of Rochester is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals regardless of age, color, disability, domestic violence status, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, military/veteran status, national origin, race, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by law.

You may find info on how to report discrimination here:

https://www.rochester.edu/respect/how-to-report-an-incident/
TRANS/NON-BINARY RESOURCES AT U of R

Registering Your Gender

You can register your gender at URSMD by doing the following:

1. Log in to Medsis
2. Go to the Settings menu → My profile → Self Identity information
3. Select the Self Identification Tab. The gender identity is the top section with the self-identification in the bottom section. Please verify/update each section one at a time.

If you have any trouble please access the following link:
https://admissions.urmc.rochester.edu/oee/mdorientation/index.html

Go to Helpful Information → Informational Videos → MedSIS Part 1. A more detailed explanation on changing your self-identification information on Medsis will be found within the 8:50-9:33 minute markers.

Pronoun Recognition

Email Sign-Offs

Many students edit their Rochester email sign-offs to reflect their new status as students. Some students and faculty of all genders have chosen to include their pronouns as part of this.

For example, a common sign-off is:

*Sincerely,*

*Your Name*

*Your Pronouns*

*MD(PhD) Candidate, 20XX*

*University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry*
In order to edit your sign-off, turn on your iPad and go to Settings → Mail → Signature. Here you can write whatever you want!

**Notifying Faculty**

You may wish to speak directly with your teachers about pronouns. Don’t worry, you aren’t the first! In the past students have communicated their pronouns to faculty through email, before class, and during initial/class introductions. Your AD (advisory dean) or a faculty member from the ally list can also help you figure out which method is most comfortable for you.

A suggested email script:

*Dear ____,*

*My name is ____, and I am an MS1 about to begin your course in _____. I wanted to make sure the faculty was aware that I use the pronouns _____. I greatly look forward to meeting you in person!*

A suggested in-person script:

*Hi Professor, my name is _____. I just wanted to let you know before we start that I go by ______ pronouns. Thanks!*

**ID Pins**

Some students choose to attach pronoun pins to their student IDs, which we wear everywhere in the hospital. We encourage everyone no matter what their gender identity or pronoun use to use these to help make URSMD a more informed and accepting space!

Pronoun pins and pronoun stickers can be acquired online, at many LGBT events, and at LGBT organizations like Trillium, Out Alliance, and Spectrum.
**Pronouns in Lecture**

We as a society are still learning and creating the best terminology for all types of bodies and identities. You will at some point note binary language used in class, in text, and in your overall career. That said, many people are adjusting their language, changing from wording such as “men and women” to “biological male”, “genetic female”, and more. It is not perfect, but it is a work in progress, and in the past both students and faculty have successfully worked together to change things for the better in our curriculum. Your input is always welcome!

**All-Gender Bathrooms**

There are multiple all-gender bathrooms scattered throughout the school and hospital. These bathrooms are single occupancy and lockable. Students may choose to use them as an alternative to the assigned men's and women's locker rooms. The all-gender bathrooms closest to first-year classes are:

- On the ground floor past student services there is a bathroom between the elevators and the women's locker room.
- On the first floor inside Miner Library there is an all-gender bathroom to the right of the entrance area printers.
- On the second floor there is a hallway between the elevators and the FLEX rooms. If you go down this hallway and to the right the bathroom will be on your left.

If you have any difficulty finding these bathrooms a member of Spectrum would be happy to guide you. Access to a unisex locker room is also available upon request at Student Services.

An in-depth map of local all-gender bathrooms can be found at: [http://www.rochester.edu/lgbtq/resources.html](http://www.rochester.edu/lgbtq/resources.html)

**Further Resources**

The “Trans at Rochester” handbook for UR undergraduates is very comprehensive and can be found at: [https://www.rochester.edu/lgbtq/assets/pdf/Trans%20Booklet.pdf](https://www.rochester.edu/lgbtq/assets/pdf/Trans%20Booklet.pdf) and [http://www.rochester.edu/sba/resources/trans-uofr/](http://www.rochester.edu/sba/resources/trans-uofr/)
CURRICULAR INCLUSIONS

Required Lectures
The following lectures focus on LGBT inclusion and education and are a required part of our curriculum:

*Taking Sexual History in ICM*
*Intersex Talk in MTC*
*LGBTQ Health Day in Scope/PCC*

Optional lectures
There are many optional lectures outside of class time that students may attend. Many of these are related to addressing diversity in healthcare. Examples of past LGBT-related lectures include:

*Mental Health in LGBT Refugees*, by Dr. Messih
*Primary Care for LGBTQ Communities*, by Dr. Bill Valenti
*Transgender and LGB Patients: Addressing Disparities and Health Care Needs*, by Dr. Cullen
*The Impact of Universal Healthcare on LGBTQ People*, by Dr. Hartman
*Adolescent & LGBTQIA Care*, by Dr. Greenberg and Dr. Tran Ngoc
*In Their Own Words: A Narrative Medicine Approach to the Transgender Transition Memoir*, by Allison Shen

**PBLs**
At URSMD we have a class called “Problem-Based Learning” in which we work through a medical case in small groups and try to diagnose what is wrong. Many of these cases are based off real life examples and some include LGBT patients and issues.
**Electives**

There are several LGBT-specific electives offered in the 3rd and 4th years if you would like to explore specific health concerns for LGBTQ+ populations, such as an adolescent medicine elective focusing on gender affirmation (procedures, mental health, etc).

**Conferences**

Students may apply for medical LGBT conferences and even receive a budget to attend them. Some well-known conferences include:

- *Yale’s Q-Med: Building LGBTQI+ Leaders in Health Care Conference, March*
- *UCSF’s National Transgender Health Summit, April*
- *Emory University’s National LGBTQ Health Conference, May*
- *TSER’s Trans Youth Leadership Summit, July*
- *Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference, July*
QUEER PROJECTS AT U of R

At UR you will find many opportunities to create and be part of a variety of LGBT-related events, initiatives, research, and more. Below are examples of past and present projects done by UR students!

Admissions & Second Look

Spectrum reaches out to all students who mark an interest in learning more about/hearing from Spectrum in their initial applications. Students can email, call, or meet face-to-face with Spectrum participants throughout the application process. There are also several LGBT student hosts who welcome prospective students to stay in their homes when visiting Rochester (you can find their names and contacts on the general hosting list).

Rallies, Petitions, Advocacy

Rainbow Book: A student-produced resource made to supplement the student Blue Book

Trans Rights Rally: A Spectrum-run rally in response to President Trump’s transphobic bills

LGBT Rights Petition: In Opposition to Department of Health and Human Services memo

Research

In the past, students have engaged in the following LGBT research projects:

“Evaluating Interest in and knowledge change after LGBT-focused trainings for HIV/STD/HCV clinicians”, 2018

“A Comparison of the Unique Language Use Among Transgender Communities in Healthcare Settings in London and New York”, 2019

Outreach/Volunteering

Spectrum can be a phenomenal way to engage in outreach to the larger community. Currently Spectrum is running a project in which its members present information about PrEP to primary care providers across Rochester in the hopes of encouraging prescriptions. If you have specific passions you would like to enact, you may find the financial and human resources you need through Spectrum. You may also volunteer your time with any of the
major LGBTQ+ organizations in Rochester, such as Trillium (medical clinic) or the Out Alliance (general LGBTQ+ resource).

**Language Improvement**

*Class Profile Initiative*

The 2019 class profile is the first to feature non-binary applicants and students at URSMD. This initiative was even featured on the local WROC news!

*Mandatory Peer Assessments*

The binary language of the mandatory peer assessments every class must take was changed to trans-friendly gender-neutral alternatives.

**Curricular Improvement**

Students in the past have been able to partner with faculty in order to make the URSMD curriculum more inclusive and LGBT-friendly. Examples include editing the terminology of the lecture on taking sexual history and encouraging asking pronouns when learning how to do patient intake interviews.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

To help get a sense of the student body you will be joining, featured below are spotlights of the past and current heads of Spectrum written by their fellow Spectrum members.

Davy Ran is a first year medical student at URSMD and Spectrum board member. They are an activist, artist, and incredibly compassionate soul. Trilingual in Hebrew, Spanish, and English, Davy has completed medical volunteer work in over 10 countries, advocating for greater support in mental, sexual, and relationship health through their work as a Social Justice Organizer, the director of an LGBT resource center, and the co-founder of a student counseling organization. At URSMD, you may find them writing eloquently, loving their chirping bird, singing harmoniously in the piano room, painting various internal organs on their anatomy scrubs, or working diligently on this book for you.

Leanna Knight is a true leader among medical students as a board member of Spectrum and director of RMAC (Rochester Medical Accessibility Coalition). Leanna’s superpower is to help bring out the potential in everyone they meet. Their strong background in both the scientific and sociopolitical elements of health paired with their powerful belief in justice and compassion has led them to do truly astounding work in the empowerment of underrepresented groups in STEM. Their past and current work focuses on aiding those dealing with systemic discrimination due to economic status, disability status, and more.

Kevin Vo is a first year medical student who is actively involved in Spectrum and URWell clinic leadership. He has been proudly out as bisexual for over a decade. His diverse skills and passions include fencing, archery, art, and, of course, LGBT justice. His deep commitment to honesty of expression and refusal to let LGBT folx be boxed into stereotypes, archetypes, or expectations has profoundly influenced the inclusivity of our community here. For his future, he is interested in oncology and pediatrics.
Christian Griffin entered medical school and immediately found a drive to help his LGBTQ+ peers—within his first year, he joined a program to educate people in the Rochester community about PrEP, an HIV-prevention drug. A Renaissance man, his skills and talents truly run the gamut: he can explain the chemistry of cholesterol metabolism, sing better than most birds, and use the full knowledge of an Eagle Scout, should he be out in the wilderness. Rest assured however, Christian makes a point to ensure everyone on a team has a chance to participate, and has a strong emotional connection to the URMC community. Being of Indo-Persian and Caucasian descent, he brings to Spectrum the perspective of a queer person of color, but more importantly, the best musical skills. If you ever find Christian out leading a tour of the medical school or volunteering in one of the free clinics, he’ll always provide a cheerful hello.

With a jovial grace and loving embrace, Wesleyan University graduate Tresne Hernandez employs their diverse background to create a more just and harmonious environment at URMC. They infuse their steadfast dedication to ethics – for example, serving as an honor board member – with the humility to seek to understand the multitude of perspectives within the student body. Their own multiplicity of perspectives has been garnered from their experiences in Mexico, growing up in Albany, NY, working as a clown and as a doula, and non-profit program development and evaluation work. Their identity as a queer, non-binary, and trans person adds fervor to their passion for LGBTQ+ advocacy and serves as a reservoir for the deep, palpable empathy they exude in every interaction they have.
URMC FACULTY “OUT AND ALLY” LIST

URSMD has compiled a list of faculty who have identified themselves as LGBT and/or an ally to the LGBT community. These are great resources to reach out to. Listed below is an excerpt from the list consisting of faculty you will often see in your first year of medical school.

Administration:

**David R. Lambert, MD** - He, Him, His; Ally Cis Man
Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education
“I am committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment in our medical school and in our broader community. Embracing the diversity of others enriches us as individuals and as a school and as a university.”

**Flavia Nobay, MD** - She, Her, Hers; Ally Cis Woman
Associate Dean for Admissions
Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine
“As an Emergency Medicine physician and Associate Dean for Admissions, it is my distinct pleasure to work toward an environment of service and learning where all are treated with respect and equality.”

**Adrienne L. Morgan, PhD** - She Her, Hers; Ally Cis Woman; safe space trained
Assistant Dean for Medical Education Diversity and Inclusion, Office for Inclusion and Culture Development
Senior Director for the Center of Advocacy, Community Health, Education, and Diversity, Offices for Medical Education
Assistant Professor, Division for Medical Humanities and Bioethics
“I am an administrator for the medical school and medical center. As a diversity and inclusion leader, I am committed to ensuring that our university is a welcoming and inclusive environment.”
Spectrum Advisors & Advisory Deans:

**Chunkit Fung, MD** - He, Him, His

As a clinical and administrative leader in the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine and through his role in the Faculty Senate, Dr. Fung makes every effort to support diversity and inclusivity. Dr. Fung has led efforts in promoting an inclusive environment for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) community as an advisory for SPECTRUM, as a participant of the URMC LGBTQ Advisory Committee, and in developing the URMC Out & Ally List. In addition to his advocacy for inclusivity for URMC's LGBTQ community, Dr. Fung has been a strong advocate for gender equality in medicine.

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**Scott Hartman, MD, FAAFP** - He, Him, His

Dr. Hartman is a family physician with a passion for promoting health equity and caring for marginalized populations. Dr. Hartman cares for patients in the URMC Primary Care Network and supervises residents at Highland Family Medicine and Highland Hospital, and also serves as an advisor for the SPECTRUM student group. He has served as a strong advocate for LGBT+ health issues by serving as the Co-Convener for the LGBT Caucus of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and also by serving on the Academy's Subcommittee on Health Equity.

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**Erik Rueckmann, MD, MPH** - He, Him, His; Gay Cis Man

Advisory Dean, School of Medicine and Dentistry
Medical Director American Medical Response, Rochester, NY
Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine

“I believe that diversity creates a stronger more vibrant world and have seen how strong we become when we build a community built on understanding each other.”

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**Betsy Naumberg, MD** - She, Her, Hers; Ally Cis Woman, straight

SMD Associate Dean, Advising, Professor of Family Medicine

“I am committed to unconditional positive regard towards all individuals and social justice throughout communities. My career in medical education has included a long-time commitment to diversity training and support for learners from all backgrounds.”
Lecturers:

Christopher J. Mooney, PhD, MPH, MA - He, Him, His; Ally Cis Man
Director of Assessment, School of Medicine and Dentistry
Offices for Medical Education; Division of Medical Humanities
“As an administrator, educator, and researcher, I am committed to building a more inclusive and supportive environment that celebrates our diversity and differences at the University of Rochester.”

Katherine Blumoff Greenberg, MD - She, Her, Hers; Ally Cis Woman
Assistant Professor, Divisions of Adolescent Medicine and General Gynecology; Safe space trained
Departments of Pediatrics and Obstetrics & Gynecology
Director, Gender Health Services Clinic, Adolescent Medicine
“I have been an ally since my teen years, way before that term was in popular usage. My professional career centers around the care of transgender youth and young adults, and I teach about health care for gender diverse populations across the medical center, the region, and nationally.”

Keith Nehrke, PhD - He, Him, His; Ally Cis Man
Professor of Medicine, Nephrology
“I am privileged to be a parent to a non-binary child who is a leader of a high-school LBG+ support group, and I am committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse environment both at home and in my laboratory.”

The full updated list of LGBT faculty and allies can be found at:
https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/inclusion-culture-development/urmc-resources/urmc-faculty-out-and-ally-list.aspx
LGBT HISTORY

Never forget that you are now part of a stunning, resilient, and powerful history of LGBT folx in medicine. Below is a small sampling of famous LGBT doctors in both the past and the present who have made great contributions to LGBT health. We can't wait to add your name to the list!

Marci Lee Bowers (1958-Present)

Dr. Bowers is considered the “rock star” of gender confirmation surgery. She is the first out transgender woman to do such surgeries (over 4000 in total!) and has made great innovations in the gynecological field.

“I believe the surgery should be responsibly performed... It is the only morally responsible approach to this problem... and I will live to see that change be made globally.”

Ben A. Barres (1954-2017)

Dr. Barres, a brilliant neurobiologist, was the first openly transgender scientist in the National Academy of Sciences. He has done astounding work on CNS glial cells and on being transgender in medicine in his book, The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist.

“I marvel at how far the world has come in recent years... I did not know of any successful transgender scientists, and I worried... [but] My career went on as before without a hitch.”

Oliver Sacks (1933-2015)

Dr. Sacks was a gay Jewish neurologist and prolific medical writer who spoke openly about his own struggle with depression and prosopagnosia. He in many ways defined the field of novelistic, humanitarian and patient-centered medical literature and did seminal work on innovative therapeutic treatments for previously-thought incurable or untreatable neurological conditions, such as the use of musical therapy and levadopa on post-encephalitic patients.
“What I write shows respect and appreciation, not any wish to expose or exhibit for the thrill... In examining disease, we gain wisdom about anatomy and physiology and biology. In examining the person with disease, we gain wisdom about life.”

Louise Pearce (1885-1959)

Dr. Pierce was a lesbian feminist activist in the field of medicine. She was an American pathologist who graduated at the top of her class from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1912 and proceeded to become the first woman researcher at the Rockefeller Institute. Dr. Pearce helped develop a treatment for trypanosomiasis at a time when it was decimating entire populations worldwide. She also did seminal work on syphilis and cancer research. She lived with Dr. Baker and her life partner Ida Wylie from the 1930s until their deaths.

Pío del Río Hortega (1882-1945)

Dr. Río Hortega was a gay leftist sociopolitical activist and physician whose research on glial cells and discovery of oligodendroglia and microglia (also known as Hortega cells) got him nominated for a Nobel Prize in Medicine twice. He led Spain’s national cancer institute in the 1930s studying brain tumors specifically and during the civil war rescued 5,000 histological preparations for radiotherapy.

“Whoever possesses a refined sensitivity for artistic manifestations will appreciate...the science of histology.”

Sara Josephine Baker (1873-1945)

Dr. Baker was an out lesbian suffragist who saved millions of lives with her minority public health innovations. Her practices, detailed in her autobiography Fighting for Life, continue to be utilized worldwide, like the required presence of school nurses.

“I have, perhaps unwittingly, done my share to bring state medicine into existence. I am reasonably certain that the next generation will see it immeasurably advanced.”
Magnus Hirschfield (1868-1935)

Dr. Hirschfield, a gay Jewish socialist who lived through Nazi Germany, defined the field of sexology through his Scientific Humanitarian Committee's motto ‘Justice Through Science’. He used medicine as a stepping stone towards LGBT equality, estimating over 43 million types of sexualities and genders.

“Soon the day will come when science will win victory over error, justice a victory over injustice, and human love a victory over human hatred and ignorance.”

Do you have physicians you'd like to add to the list? Please shoot us an email- we welcome all contributions!