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**WHITMAN-WALKER, MAUTNER PROJECT TEAM TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO LGBT ELDERLY**

*Whitman-Walker Health and Mautner Project: The National Lesbian Health Organization Introduce New, Joint Program to DC Metropolitan Area - People Advocating for LGBT Seniors (PALS)*

**WASHINGTON** - Whitman-Walker Health and Mautner Project: The National Lesbian Health Organization are introducing a new program for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) seniors - *People Advocating for LGBT Seniors (PALS)* - to the Washington area. PALS is a free program that connects compassionate, trained volunteer visitors with LGBT elders, 55 and older, who are living at home or in assisted living and nursing facilities. The program also provides companionship and help, when needed, to access community, health, and government services.

“There are currently few culturally-competent, targeted services in the metro DC area for the needs of LGBT seniors,” said Leslie Calman, Executive Director of Mautner Project. “It makes sense to expand our long-established, professionally-led volunteer services for lesbian and bisexual women with cancer to embrace these members of our community. Working with Whitman-Walker hugely expands the reach of this new program, and provides resources well beyond what Mautner Project can offer alone.”

“Creating a partnership between Whitman-Walker Health and Mautner Project makes so much sense,” says Don Blanchon, Executive Director of Whitman-Walker Health. “Both of us have a long-established base of volunteers of all ages who want to serve the LGBT community. The mental and physical health needs of seniors are often magnified when

people are isolated. We hope that PALS will alleviate that isolation, and help LGBT seniors access many available resources.”

The PALS program:

- minimizes the social isolation experienced by many elder LGBT people;
- increases individuals’ ability to age in place in their own homes and communities;
- helps elders become aware of and access culturally competent services, including health care; and
- improves the overall health, safety and quality of life of LGBT seniors.

Additionally, PALS fosters connections between LGBT people across generations to strengthen the LGBT community ties while honoring and validating its history.

All Whitman-Walker and Mautner volunteers are trained and supervised by professional staff. PALS welcomes adults of all ages as volunteers, so long as they commit to professional training and are willing to serve at least six months in the program.

The PALS program welcomes LGBT-identified adults aged 55 and over who would benefit from home visitor services.

Those interested in volunteering or in receiving services should contact: 202.332.5536 or e-mail [PALS@wwhmp.org](mailto:PALS@wwhmp.org) .

***About Mautner Project** - founded in 1990, Mautner Project is committed to improving the health of women who partner with women including lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, through direct and support service, education and advocacy. [www.mautnerproject.org](http://www.mautnerproject.org)*

***About Whitman-Walker Health**, Established in 1978, Whitman-Walker Health is a non-profit community health center located in Washington, DC. Our mission is to be the highest quality, culturally competent community health center serving greater Washington’s diverse urban community, including individuals who face barriers to accessing care, and with a special expertise in LGBT and HIV care. Whitman-Walker Health offers primary medical and dental care; mental health and addictions counseling and treatment; HIV education, prevention, and testing; legal services; and medical adherence care management. We are especially committed to meeting the health needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and people living with HIV/AIDS. [www.whitman-walker.org](http://www.whitman-walker.org)*