



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Ensuring Culturally Competent Aging Services for LGBT and other Underserved New Yorkers

THOMAS K. DUANE June 28, 2011

The passage of Marriage Equality was not the only legislative victory for LGBT New Yorkers this year. On June 14, the New York State Senate overwhelmingly passed my bill (S.1303) which requires the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) to assess the needs of traditionally underserved older adults—including veterans, immigrants, the disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) seniors. This legislation will help ensure that traditionally underserved communities have access to appropriate health services. The legislation also requires NYSOFA to provide technical assistance to the organizations that serve LGBT older adults, including providing these organizations grants if available, and to report annually on the effectiveness of those services to the Governor and State Legislature.

By focusing on the needs of marginalized New Yorkers, NYSOFA can play a crucial role in reducing health disparities across the state. For the first time, New York's laws will be required to acknowledge and respond to the needs of our LGBT seniors.

Assemblymember Micah Kellner successfully sponsored the bill in the Assembly and it now awaits Governor Cuomo's signature to officially become law. I will continue to keep you updated on the bill as it winds its way through the final stages of the legislative process.