



ASHWELL
Sexual Health + Wellness

POLICY AGENDA

2023

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2025



INTRODUCTION

As ASHwell continues to grow alongside our vibrant community, we recognize the need to evolve our advocacy methods for our patients, clients, and community. During the 88th Texas Legislative Session, we faced an unprecedented number of anti-queer, anti-trans, and bills targeting reproductive rights. In response, ASHwell's leadership actively defended our patient-clients and community by actively engaging at the Capitol. Moving forward, we remain dedicated to supporting Austin's queer health and will persist in advocating for those we serve, both in the exam room and within the halls of the Texas Capitol.

ABOUT ASHWELL

Our Mission

Empowering central Texans by providing sexual health and wellness services that serve the body, mind, and spirit.

Our Vision

We envision a community made up of individuals, regardless of status, station, or background, that are empowered to navigate their own sexual health and wellness without shame, stigma, or judgment.

Diversity, Equity, & Belonging

ASHwell is passionately committed to diversity, equity, and belonging. We strive to provide a safe, discrimination-free space for all. Predominately serving the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities, our aim is to empower individuals through comprehensive sexual health and wellness services, challenging norms, and fostering dignity, respect, and liberation for all.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Defend Lifesaving Gender-Affirming Care

- Support policies that ensure access to gender affirming care for transgender and gender-diverse individuals, promoting their overall mental health and wellbeing.

Access to PrEP and PEP for All

- Ensure access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) & Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for those at risk of HIV, including those facing financial or insurance barriers.

Reproductive Justice

- Expand access to reproductive healthcare, including contraceptives and family planning, empowering folx to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

Protect 340B Funding

- Collaborate with state government and community partners to advocate for the federal 340B program, protecting affordable access to care and medications for all.

HARM REDUCTION

Legalize Fentanyl Testing Strips

- Advocate for the legalization of fentanyl testing strips to enhance harm reduction efforts and protect the lives of individuals at risk of opioid overdose.

Naloxone Access

- Support policies that increase access to naloxone, a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses, to prevent overdose deaths in the community.

Drug Decriminalization & Safe Use Education

- Support the decriminalization of drug possession for personal use, therefore shifting the focus from punitive measures to public health interventions, including access to treatment and harm reduction services.
- Advocate for safe consumption and needle exchange spaces to reduce the risk of overdose and provide intervention opportunities and connection to health services.

LGBTQIA+ PROTECTIONS

Expand Non-Discrimination Laws

- Advocate for comprehensive non-discrimination laws that protect LGBTQIA+ folx from discrimination in employment, housing, education, and healthcare settings.

Support for LGBTQIA+ Youth

- Advocate for increased funding and resources toward support programs to provide safe spaces and resources for young queer and trans people.
- Support legislation that bans conversion therapy for minors.

EQUITABLE ACCESS

State Funding for Sexual Health + Wellness

- Advocate for state funding to properly address increased HIV contraction rates and hep-C cases, ensuring equitable access to treatment.

Address Health Disparities

- Advocate for targeted initiatives that address health disparities faced by BIPOC & LGBTQIA+ communities, with the goal of eliminating barriers to equitable access.
- Support language access services to be provided in healthcare settings to ensure language barriers do not prevent folx from accessing care.

PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

Destigmatize HIV with Education Campaigns

- Work toward reducing stigma around HIV by supporting public health campaigns and policies that promote education, awareness, and testing.

Funding Cultural Competency Training

- Support policies that require cultural competency training for all healthcare providers to ensure inclusive and respectful care for diverse communities.
- Advocate for funding toward peer education programs, where trained, culturally-competent individuals from the community can educate on sexual health topics.

DISCLAIMER

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit provider of sexual health and wellness services to central Texans, ASHwell is not allowed to endorse specific pieces of proposed legislation or candidates for elected office. To a limited extent, ASHwell is permitted by law to educate the public about certain issues being discussed in the legislature, as well as advocate for or against policy campaigns that impact our clients or our ability to provide sexual health and wellness services and fulfill our organization's core mission. ASHwell will participate in social advocacy to guarantee equitable access to care and improved quality of life to the extent allowed by 501(c)(3) restrictions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about ASHwell

Visit our website to read more about ASHwell's history, services, and impact, and follow us on social media to stay up to date on the latest.



Get in touch

To support this work, learn more about ASHwell and our community impact, or hear more about our policy priorities, please contact:

Garrett R. Chase he/him

Assistant Director of Strategic Partnerships

gchase@ashwellatx.org