

Laura E. Durso, Ph.D.

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EXPERIENCE

**Whitman-Walker Institute
Executive Director and Chief Learning Officer**

**January 2020 to present
Washington, D.C.**

Founding Executive Director of the research, policy, and education arm of Whitman-Walker Health. The mission of the Whitman-Walker Institute is to advance science, reform laws, and change culture so that all people can live healthy, love openly, and thrive in a more just and equitable world. The Institute integrates a real-world research portfolio, local, regional, and national policy expertise, and educational content across multiple health care and related disciplines to advance the health and rights of diverse LGBTQ communities, people living with HIV, communities of color, and others traditionally underserved by health care systems.

- Reporting to the CEO of the Whitman-Walker Health System, responsible for the overall leadership, financial management, and learning agenda of the Institute. Also serves as a key strategic advisor and senior leader within the Health System's management team to advance institutional mission.
- Engages directly with Institute Board of Directors to provide programmatic updates and conduct strategic planning. Oversees development and Board submission of annual operating budgets.
- Oversees day-to-day Institute operations and responsible for administration of all policies and programs, including risk management, compliance with regulatory requirements, and grants management.
- Develops systems and reporting practices to effectively monitor the progress and impact of the Institute's research, education, and advocacy initiatives.
- Actively monitors monthly financial performance to budget and, where appropriate, implements specific initiatives to increase revenue and/or reduce expenses. Identifies and assesses specific business diversification opportunities and makes formal recommendations to the Board.
- Serves as spokesperson and thought leader to internal and external stakeholders, including variety of research, education, and policy venues.

**Center for American Progress
Vice President, LGBTQ Research and Communications Project**

**July 2013 to December 2019
Washington, D.C.**

Served as nationally recognized expert influencing federal, state, and local policy related to LGBTQ civil rights at a multi-issue think tank. Research and advocacy secured protections for LGBTQ people across range of areas of life, including under the Affordable Care Act and Fair Housing Act, and is cited in briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court. Developed strategy to secure comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people at the federal level, culminating in the 2019 passage of the Equality Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. Named one of Washington, D.C.'s 2019 40 Under 40 Queer Women of Washington. Three-year co-chair of Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

- Crafted multi-pronged strategic plan to advance LGBTQ equality through evidence-based public policy, including long-term research development and national, state, and local communications plans.
- Directed government relations with members of Congress, state legislators, and their staff. Engaged with federal, state, and local executives and staff to advance both legislative and regulatory agendas.
- Conducted all budgeting and development activities, including prospecting, grant reporting and management, and donor relations.
- Hired and managed team of experts on range of LGBTQ equality issues, including health care, immigration, housing, poverty, and family law.
- Communicated regularly with a wide range of stakeholders in LGBTQ and allied movements to achieve policy goals, disseminate research findings, and maximize effectiveness of public education campaigns.
- Represented CAP and the LGBTQ Research and Communications Project in the press and public engagement opportunities, including invited addresses at conferences and universities and national and international media outlets such as CNN, U.S. News and World Report, Vox, and The Guardian.

- Co-authored written reports and related multimedia products to advance policy recommendations, including comprehensive data on the experiences of LGBTQ people with health insurance systems and the first-ever data on the need for paid leave policies to cover chosen family members.

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law
Public Policy Fellow

Sept 2011 to July 2013
 Los Angeles, CA

One of two public policy research fellows at university-affiliated think tank on sexual orientation and gender identity public policy and law. Conducted research on the needs and characteristics of LGBTQ communities, including: health disparities and health behaviors; perceptions of prejudice; issues facing youth of color; issues among LGBTQ youth in foster care; impacts of employment discrimination and LGBTQ-inclusive workplace policies; service provision to LGBTQ homeless youth; and other topics.

Geisinger Medical Center
Pre-doctoral Intern, Department of Psychiatry

July 2010 to June 2011
 Danville, PA

APA-accredited Adult Behavioral Medicine pre-doctoral internship program. Clinical rotations included: individual outpatient psychotherapy through the Department of Psychiatry and Primary Care; group-based weight management interventions; bariatric surgery psychiatric evaluations; multidisciplinary psychosocial evaluations within oncology and cardiology clinics; Consultation-Liaison service

National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Pacific Islands Division
Health Sciences Technician
 Department of Veterans' Affairs Pacific Island Healthcare System

Aug 2009 to May 2010
 Honolulu, HI

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Durso, L.E. & Gruberg, S. (2019). *HHS Proposal Puts Millions of Americans at Risk of Discrimination When Accessing Federally Funded Services*. Washington D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Durso, L.E. (2018). Progress and challenges in sexual orientation and gender identity measurement in the first year of the Trump administration. *American Journal of Public Health, 108*(7), 894-895.

Barbot, O. & Durso, L.E. (2017). Promoting a policy and research agenda to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health in the new political era. *LGBT Health, 4*(4), 241-243.

Gallagher Robbins, K., **Durso, L.E.**, Bewkes, F.J., & Schultz, E. (2017). *People need paid leave policies that cover chosen family*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Singh, S., & **Durso, L.E.** (2017) *Widespread discrimination continues to shape LGBT people's lives in both subtle and significant ways*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Baker, K. & **Durso, L.E.** (2017). *Why repealing the Affordable Care Act is bad medicine for LGBT communities*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Badgett, M.V.L., **Durso, L.E.**, Kastanis, A., & Mallory, C. (2013). *The business impact of LGBT-supportive workplace policies*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute.

Lick, D.J., **Durso, L.E.**, & Johnson, K.L. (2013). Minority stress and physical health among sexual minorities: Recent evidence and new directions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8*, 521-548.

Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund.

SELECT COMMENTARY AND RELATED MEDIA

- Burns, K. (2020, April). "Coronavirus isn't transphobic. But America's economic and health systems are." Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/4/3/21204305/coronavirus-transgender-economy-health-care>
- Gibbs Léger, D., Chung, E., Epstein, K., & Ford, C. (Producers). (2019, May 16). *The urgency of equality, with Charlotte Clymer and Laura Durso* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2019/05/16/469977/urgency-equality-charlotte-clymer-laura-durso/>
- Associated Press. (2018, February 5). Study finds more teens identify as transgender. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJZTjP3XeQQ>
- Press, B. (2017, December 6). Republicans Reverse Course on Roy. *Bill Press Show*. Podcast retrieved from: <https://player.fm/series/the-bill-press-show/republicans-reverse-course-on-roy-12617>
- Casselmann, B. (2017, March 30). Why won't the census ask about sexual orientation? *FiveThirtyEight*. Retrieved from: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-wont-the-census-ask-about-sexual-orientation/>
- Lopez, G. (2017, May 2). "Discrimination is doing its dirty work": a new survey looks at the effects of anti-LGBTQ hate. *Vox*. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/5/2/15505132/lgbtq-discrimination-cap-survey>
- Williams, J.P. (2017, September 8). Justice dept sides against same-sex couple. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2017-09-08/justice-department-sides-with-bakery-against-same-sex-coupletd>
- Durso, L.E., & Goldberg, N.** (2016, September 14). Our juvenile justice system is failing LGBTQ youth. *Rewire*. Retrieved from: <https://rewire.news/article/2016/09/14/juvenile-justice-system-failing-lgbtq-youth/>
- Durso, L.E.** (2016). How police fail to 'protect and serve' LGBTQ communities of color. *The Root*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theroot.com/how-police-fail-to-protect-and-serve-lgbtq-communities-1790856644>

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Philosophy, Clinical Psychology** **December, 2011**
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Dissertation: *The Relationship of Internalized Weight Bias to Weight Change among Treatment-seeking Overweight Adults*
- Master of Arts, Clinical Psychology** **December, 2007**
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Thesis: *Discrimination as a Risk Factor for Binge Eating in Stigmatized Groups*
- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, cum laude** **June, 2003**
Harvard University