FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Creates Unique Challenges for Older LGBTQ+ People: UA SIROW Researchers Share Pioneering Survey Results

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After a lifetime of fighting for their basic human rights, aging LGBTQ+ people face a whole new series of social and medical challenges. We can now add COVID-19 to that list of hurdles.

Quickly recognizing unique threats the corona virus may hold for this vulnerable population, local research scientists Beth Meyerson and Sally Dodds sprang into action early in the pandemic to create and administer a survey of COVID risks and impacts for LGBTQ+ older people in Arizona--perhaps the first such study ever conducted. They will present to the public five important takeaways from their survey results on Tuesday, October 13 at the Southern Arizona Senior Pride monthly Speaker Series, held at 2pm online (via Zoom).

The program will emphasize Pima County data important to LGBTQ+ community members, their friends, family, and support networks. Key topics will include: (1) health status of older LGBTQ+ adults, (2) risk reduction and protective behaviors, (3) impact of staying home and quarantine isolation on mental health, (4) what individuals and (5) service organizations can do to help.

Dr. Sally Dodds, a retired UA professor of psychiatry and medicine with a career background in HIV/AIDS research, explains: “We believe that work like this will really build a stronger community infrastructure for LGBTQ people.” She notes that these survey results are only the prelude to a much larger critical needs assessment currently underway “to help determine the priorities for programs and policies needed by older queer adults.”

Describing herself as a “pracademic” because of her decades of public health practice and policy experience, Dr. Beth Meyerson is currently a research professor with the Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) and an affiliate with the Institute for LGBT Studies, both programs of UA. She notes: “This project was made possible by partnerships with LGBTQ organizations throughout the state. During the COVID19 ‘stay home’ order, it was almost impossible to reach people; but we could do so electronically and through their vast networks. We are grateful for the collaboration.”

Southern Arizona Senior Pride celebrates, supports, and unites Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender older adults in southern Arizona.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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FOR AN ONLINE PROGRAM (ZOOM) INVITATION, CONTACT:
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