





# The Health Care Experiences of Lesbian Women Becoming Mothers

As the nature of family changes in our society, so must our understanding of the individuals who form a family unit. “With the increasing availability of alternative childbearing options, a new population of parents has emerged to challenge the established norms of human reproduction and the traditional notion of family” (Wojnar & Katzenmeyer, 2014, p. 50). In the past four decades, alternative family structures have been on the rise in the United States and other developed countries and have gained acceptance and visibility. It is estimated that there are between 1 million and 5 million lesbian mothers in the United States (Chapman, Wardrop, Zappia, Watkins, & Shields, 2012).

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**Abstract:** As modern family composition shifts—for many, away from a heteronormative nuclear family—so, too, must the health care that families receive. Lesbian women and their families face particular difficulties with maternity care in the United States and internationally, because many care providers lack an understanding of this population’s specific health care needs. In this article, I examine the challenges faced by lesbian women during the transition period to new motherhood and recommend improvements that can be made by individual providers and the health care system as a whole to better provide culturally competent health care for this population. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2017.12.003>

**Keywords:** assisted reproductive technology | cultural competence | lesbian health care | lesbian motherhood | LGBTQ

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