INTRODUCTION: Our country’s elderly population is living longer. The population does not look like the typical elderly population of yesterday. Today’s elderly population is more diverse. The lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) elderly population is part of that diversity. Health challenges and disparities are part of the aging process. However, the LGB elderly population faces significantly different challenges than their heterosexual counterparts (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013). To further complicate the matter, the stigma and discrimination that accompanies being gay only exacerbates an already difficult process.

PURPOSE: Much research has been done on LGB youth, however, the knowledge base for elderly LGB 65+, their health disparities, how they plan for, and access healthcare is limited (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013). Elderly LGB’s current health, relationship, gender, and socioeconomic statuses may be a factor in planning and accessing healthcare. Perceived or real obstacles, such as lack of recognition of same-sex relationship (de Vries, Mason, Quam, & Acquaviva, 2009), rejection from family of origin (Almack, Seymour, & Bellamy, 2010), discrimination from the healthcare community, and the lesser chance of having children to care for them in their older age (Institute of Medicine, 2011) may also be factors in planning and accessing healthcare. This study will address the needs of this population group, the barriers they face, and how they access healthcare.

METHOD: This study will use a mixed methods approach. It will involve a one-time interview with 12-18 lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) or same gender loving adults age 65+. Participants will be given a survey asking about their individual backgrounds, social networks, and well-being. The sample will be gathered primarily through organizations in Atlanta who provide services to this population group, key gatekeepers who share the study with potential participants, non-LGBT organizations who serve elderly populations, and participant referrals who share the study information within their networks.

RESULTS/CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS: The poster will highlight initial findings from the research study and discuss implications for social work practice and future research.

KEYWORDS: gay, lesbian, bisexual, health disparities, older adults, aging, mixed-methods research