

Pediatricians' Groups Differ On Attitudes Toward Homosexual Parenting

A new group is formed to counterbalance the AAP's activism.

By Roy Waller and Linda Nicolosi

In February 2003, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement declaring its support for homosexual parenting. The statement urges the states to extend the status of legal parent to same-sex partners, as well as marriage-equivalent status to homosexual and lesbian couples.

However, the American College of Pediatrics—a newer, Tennessee-based alternative organization headed by Dr. Joseph Zanga—has just responded by requesting that its fellow organization reverse its stand.

Zanga's group was formed by 100 dissenting members of the AAP. His organization disagrees with the AAP's point of view on gay parenting, as well as numerous other social issues.

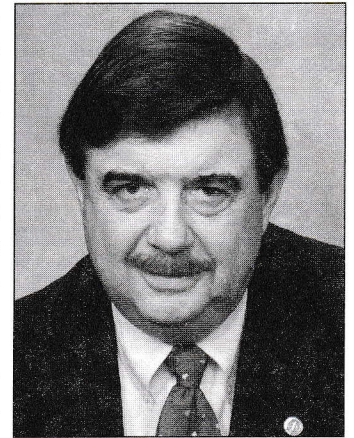
In a recent interview with NARTH, Dr. Zanga said that the policy statement did not have the support of the AAP membership as a whole. In fact, the position paper—entitled "Co-Parent or Second Parent Adoption by Same-Sex Parents" — was released to the public despite the objections of one-third of the committee which drafted it, he noted.

Zanga is still an active member of the larger AAP. In fact, he chairs its Bioethics Committee, which, he says, objected to the release of the position paper, citing what it felt were numerous flaws in the research and its foundation in "very weak science."

Because there was considerable opposition within the larger organization's membership ranks to its pro-homosexual stance, Zanga says, the AAP commissioned a "technical report" to investigate its decision, authored by Boston pediatrician Ellen Perrin.

In that report, Perrin herself questioned the reliability of the studies used by her organization to measure the effects of same-sex couples raising either biological or adopted children. "The small and non-representative sample [of children raised by same-sex couples] studied," she said, "and the relatively young age of most of the children, suggest some reserve [concerning the policy statement]."

Although most ACP members retain their membership in the larger pediatrics group, Dr. Zanga said he and his fellow ACP members "do not want the media, the government, or the public to think that all pediatricians agree with the AAP's policies on controversial issues."



Dr. Joseph Zanga

"We are essentially a Judeo-Christian, traditional-values organization," he noted, "open to membership for pediatric medical professionals of all religions who hold to our core beliefs." Those beliefs, he said, are that "life begins at conception, and that the traditional family unit, headed by an opposite-sex couple, poses far fewer risk factors in the adoption and raising of children."

The chief purpose of his organization, Zanga commented, is to see to it that children and adolescents receive optimal healthcare, with children's needs coming first, taking precedence over the political goals of socio-political activists.

Zanga's group defends its support for the traditional family unit, citing the Carnegie Report of the early 1990s, which found increased risks for children raised in alternative family situations. They also endorse recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control to incorporate HIV testing into standard prenatal care. (In 2001, an estimated 175 newborns contracted HIV from their mothers).

Future activities on his group's agenda include sponsorship of research, writing opinion pieces for the media, and providing scientific information to physicians and other medical professionals. The group hopes to contact state and national political leaders, to increase their current 100-physician membership, and to develop a professional journal.

(An article on this new organization may be read at www.cultureandfamily.org/articledisplay.asp?id=4053&department=CFI&categoryid=cfreport)