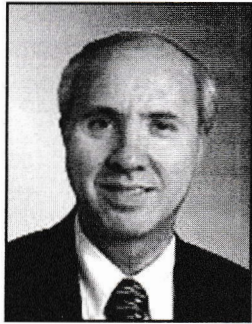


President-Elect To Focus On Science And Ethics In NARTH

By Frank York

NARTH's President Elect, Dr. A. Dean Byrd, comes to NARTH with excellent credentials from the academy--a doctorate in psychology, postdoctorate in child and family psychology, postdoctorate in behavioral medicine as well as a master's degree in



A. Dean Byrd, Ph.D.

business administration and a master's degree in public health. A strong supporter of evidence-based practice, patient autonomy, patient self-determination and diversity, Dr. Byrd is an ardent supporter of choice.

"Individuals have the right to claim a gay identity," stated Dr. Byrd, "or to seek psychological care in diminishing unwanted homosexual attractions and making changes in their lives." Dr. Byrd noted that there is clear and compelling

evidence that homosexuality is neither innate nor immutable. Citing the Spitzer research and the recent Karten study, Dr. Byrd indicated that the malleability of homosexuality is no longer in question.

"The evidence for born gay simply isn't there," stated Dr. Byrd, "because identical twins are not concordant for homosexuality." He noted that Friedman and Downey, the Columbia University researchers correctly concluded when they noted, "At clinical conferences one often hears...that homosexual orientation is fixed and unmodifiable. Neither assertion is true...The assertion that homosexuality is genetic is so reductionistic that it must be dismissed out of hand as a general principle of psychology."

Dr. Byrd opined that diversity, real diversity, includes different worldviews, not the narrow politicism which seems to be ever-present in the academy and so often echoed by the national organizations. Dr. Byrd indicated, "Ethicality would suggest that the suppression of data and the discouragement of further scientific research should not be tolerated. It is well within the purview of science to study issues such as the change from homosexuality. The well-intentioned caretakers of our national organizations slide down a slippery slope when advocating what amounts to a virtual censorship of the scientific investigation of politically unpopular views." He further noted that science only progresses by asking interesting questions, not by avoiding questions whose answers might not be helpful in achieving a political agenda.

Dr. Byrd says that he will encourage NARTH to adopt the Leona Tyler principle which states that scientific organizations should only take positions based on scientific data and demonstrable professional experience. "Certainly," noted Dr. Byrd, "NARTH professionals, individually or as a group, should speak freely as concerned citizens but when NARTH takes positions, they should be supported by research and clinical experience." He emphasized that NARTH simply cannot not follow the course

taken by national organizations like the American Psychological Association where "activism is so often masqueraded as science."

"Like Cummings and Wright," he noted, "we must bring to the attention of the public the lack of science behind many of the public proclamations made by the national associations for which there is inadequate science." (Cummings and Wright, longtime leaders within the American Psychological Association published a well-documented book where they revealed the dearth of science behind many of the positions taken by APA.) Finally, Dr. Byrd concluded, "Being supportive of the basic civil rights of self-identified gays and lesbians does not require a belief in the false notion that homosexuality is invariably fixed in all people. It is not." ●

New Evidence Found for Childhood Family Factors Influencing Sexual Orientation

By Linda Ames Nicolosi

("Childhood Family Correlates of Heterosexual and Homosexual Marriages: A National Cohort Study of Two Million Danes," by Morten Frisch and Anders Hviid, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* Oct 13, 2006; [E-publication ahead of print])

A major study has been published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, which provides striking new evidence for the influence of childhood family factors on sexual-orientation development.

The study used a population-based sample of 2,000,355 native-born Danes between the ages of 18 and 49. Denmark -- a country noted for its tolerance of a wide variety of alternative lifestyles, including homosexual partnerships -- was the first country to legalize gay marriage. The researchers assessed detailed marriage records for all Danish-born men and women marrying a same-sex partner from the years 1989 through 2001.

With access to the "virtually complete registry coverage of the entire Danish population," the study sample therefore lacked the problematic selection bias that has plagued many previous studies on sexual orientation.

Parental Influences On Sexual Orientation Development

The authors conclude: "Our study provides population-based, prospective evidence that childhood family experiences are important determinants of heterosexual and homosexual marriage decisions in adulthood."

(Continued on page 29)