

TRANSADVOCATE

uh-oh.

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Article

(crossposted in several places, and people are welcome to forward this on freely to others in the transgender and GLBT communities, as I see this as being very serious -- Mercedes)

A short time ago, I'd discussed the movement to have "Gender Identity Disorder" (GID, a.k.a. "Gender Dysphoria") removed from the DSM-IV or reclassified, and how we needed to work to ensure that any such change was an improvement on the existing model, rather than a scrapping or savaging of it.

Lynn Conway reports that on May 1st, 2008, the American Psychiatric Association named its work group members appointed to revise the Manual for Diagnosis of Mental Disorders in preparation for the DSM-V. Such a revision would include the entry for GID.

On the Task Force, named as Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders Chair, we find Dr. Kenneth Zucker, from Toronto's infamous Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH, formerly the Clarke Institute). Dr. Zucker is infamous for utilizing reparative (i.e. "ex-gay") therapy to "cure" gender-variant children. Named to his work group, we find Zucker's mentor, Dr. Ray Blanchard, Head of Clinical Sexology Services at CAMH and creator of the theory of autogynephilia, categorized as a paraphilia and defined as "a man's paraphilic tendency to be sexually aroused by the thought or image of himself as a woman."

Drs. Blanchard, Zucker, J. Michael Bailey (whose work has even gone so far as to touch on eugenics) and a small cadre of others are proponents of dividing the transsexual population by sexual orientation ("homosexual transsexuals" vs. "autogynephilic") and have repeatedly run afoul of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH, formerly HBGDA), and openly defied the Standards of Care that WPATH maintains (modeled after the original SoC developed by Dr. Harry Benjamin) in favor of conversion techniques. Blanchard and Bailey supporters also include Dr. Alice Dreger, who re-stigmatized treatment of intersex, controversial sexologist Dr. Anne Lawrence, and Dr. Paul McHugh, who had set out in the beginning of his career to close the Gender Clinic at Johns Hopkins University and has been one of our most vocal detractors.

An additional danger that gay and lesbian communities need to be cognizant of is that if Zucker and company entrench conversion therapy in the DSM-V, then it is a clear, dangerous step toward also legitimizing ex-gay therapy and re-stigmatizing homosexuality.

I am not familiar with others named to the Work Group. It would be worthwhile looking into any history with WPATH that they might have, to know if we have any positive advocates on board, or just more stigmatizing adversarial clinicians. They may be appointed primarily to address other listings

categorized as “Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders,” I don’t know. They are:

- Dr. Irving M. Binik, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- Dr. Peggy T. Cohen-Kettenis, VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam
- Dr. Jack Drescher, New York Medical College, St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital Center, NY
- Dr. Cynthia Graham, Isis Education Centre, Warneford Hospital, Oxfordshire, UK
- Dr. Richard B. Krueger, NY State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University, NY
- Dr. Niklas Langstrom, Karolinka Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden
- Dr. Heino F.L. Meyer-Bahlburg, Columbia University, NY
- Dr. Robert Taylor Segraves, MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland

The APA press release states that for further information regarding this, to contact Rhondalee Dean-Royce (rroyce@psych.org) and Sharon Reis (sreis@gymr.com), though it’s possible that they may govern the press release only, rather than have any involvement in the decision to appoint Zucker. The APA itself is headquartered at 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825, Arlington VA, 22209. Their Annual General Meeting is currently being held (May 3-8, 2008) in Washington, DC.

I’m poorly situated (Western Canada, with no travel budget) to lead the drive for this, which I see as a very serious danger to the transgender community. So I am calling on the various Transgender and GLBT organizations to band together to take action on this, and will assist in whatever way that I and AlbertaTrans.org can.

I am also calling upon our allies and advocates in the medical community and affiliated with WPATH to band together with us and combat this move which could potentially see WPATH stripped of its authority on matters regarding treatment of transsexuals.

-- Mercedes Allen, May 5, 2008

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