



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
CHILD & ADOLESCENT
PSYCHIATRY

American Academy
of Psychiatry and
the Law



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**Psychiatry Applauds American Medical Association's New Policy Against
Physicians Participating in Interrogations**

***Statement of the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry, and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law***

Today the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL) praised the American Medical Association (AMA) for its new policy prohibiting physicians' participation in interrogations of prisoners and detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and elsewhere. The AMA's House of Delegates – in which the three psychiatry groups are represented – passed the policy today as part of its 2006 annual meeting in Chicago. The vote came after the APA, AACAP, AAPL gave detailed suggestions and comments to the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA), which wrote the policy.

The three psychiatry groups state:

The American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law applaud the American Medical Association for its ethical policy prohibiting physicians' participation in interrogations of prisoners and detainees. This new policy is the result of a collaborative process and reaffirms that physicians are healers.

We commend the AMA House of Delegates for upholding the primacy of physicians' ethical duty and obligation to patients. We are especially pleased with the clarity and forcefulness of the AMA guidelines, which state in part:

- "Physicians must neither conduct nor directly participate in an interrogation, because a role as physician-interrogator undermines the physician's role as healer..."
- and "Physicians must not monitor interrogations with the intention of intervening in the process, because this constitutes direct participation in interrogation."

We believe it is essential to patients' trust in their medical care that all physicians and the military respect and observe this new policy.

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Key Events in Establishing Appropriate Roles for Psychiatrists and Other Physicians:

In June 2005, following troubling news accounts of alleged violations of professional medical ethics at Guantanamo Bay and other U.S. military sites, the APA announced it would work to create specific, unambiguous guidelines for psychiatrists and other physicians with respect to interrogation. Representatives of AAPL and AACAP have been integral to that process.

On October 19, 2005, then-APA President Steven S. Sharfstein, M.D., traveled to Guantanamo Bay to urge U.S. military and defense officials to exclude psychiatrists from participating in any way in the interrogation of detainees. He was accompanied by representatives of several medical and professional organizations, including the AMA.

In November 2005, AACAP introduced the resolution at the AMA House of Delegates meeting in Dallas that led to the AMA's development of appropriate ethical guidelines regarding physician participation in the interrogation of prisoners and detainees. Throughout development, all three psychiatry groups have worked with CEJA to create a strong and clear policy.

In May 2006, the APA approved its own official position statement barring psychiatrists from participating in interrogations. To view the APA position statement, "Psychiatric Participation in Interrogation of Detainees," visit:

http://www.psych.org/edu/other_res/lib_archives/archives/200601.pdf

On June 6, 2006, Pentagon officials announced a new Department of Defense (DoD) policy, "Medical Program Support for Detainee Operations," that discusses standards and procedures for Behavioral Science Consultants (BSCs). To view this policy, visit:

http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/231008_060606/231008p.pdf

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose more than 36,000 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

About the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:

Representing over 7,400 child and adolescent psychiatrists nationwide, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is the leading authority on children's mental health. AACAP members actively research, diagnose, and treat psychiatric disorders affecting children, adolescents, and their families. Visit AACAP at www.aacap.org.

About the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law:

The American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law is an organization of psychiatrists dedicated to excellence in practice, teaching, and research in forensic psychiatry. Founded in 1969, AAPL currently has more than 1,500 members in North America and around the world. Visit AAPL at www.aapl.org.

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