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APA Opposes Administration's Pick for Family-Planning Post

Keroack an Opponent of Contraception as a Family-Planning Option

Arlington, Va. – Today the American Psychiatric Association (APA) announced its opposition to the Bush administration's appointment of Eric Keroack, M.D., as the nation's new head of family-planning programs. The APA's stance is based on Keroack's prior work against contraception as a family-planning option.

Keroack has been named deputy assistant secretary for population affairs, a post within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that does not require Senate confirmation. In the position, Keroack advises HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt on reproductive health, teen pregnancy and other matters.

Until his appointment, Keroack, an obstetrician-gynecologist, was the medical director of a religious pregnancy-counseling organization that views contraceptives as "demeaning to women." The APA, the nation's oldest medical specialty, regards this view as directly competing with Keroack's responsibility to direct a \$283 million grant program "designed to provide access to contraceptive supplies and information to all who want and need them with priority given to low-income persons," according to HHS.

The office Keroack oversees was created more than three decades ago to support thousands of family-planning clinics nationwide that now provide services and counseling to some five million people each year. The APA calls on the Bush administration to assure that all Americans who are entitled to such services and information are provided the full array of family-planning services that they want and need.

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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