

NEWSLETTER

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Caucus of the
American Psychiatric Association

TASK FORCE READIES QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey of gay psychiatrists is slated to appear in an upcoming issue of Psychiatric News. Planned by the newly created APA Task Force, the survey's purpose is to find out how many gay, lesbian and bisexual psychiatrists there are and what they are doing. Dr. Jim Paulsen, GLBC vice chairperson and Task Force chairperson, said that the survey would be used to document to the APA leadership that there are many psychiatrists who identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. This documentation will be used to plan for the needs of the group, for example, by working against job discrimination and by including unbiased information in medical school curricula.

The exact form of the questionnaire is not settled, but Paulsen stressed that it will be completely anonymous and urged Caucus members to respond. This view was seconded by Dr. Nanette Gartrell, Task Force member and GLBC treasurer. "Don't toss out your Psychiatric News; we hope everyone will look for the questionnaire and return it." She noted that a strong response to the questionnaire would give the Task Force more power to make the APA responsive to gay issues.

Questionnaire data are to be received and collated by the Task Force in time for their meeting at the Chicago convention in May.

AREA GROUPS MEET

Many members of the GLB Caucus have begun regular meetings at the initiative of area representatives. By January of this year, groups had formed in Boston, New York, Washington, Philadelphia and San Francisco. A quick survey showed diversity in membership and purposes of the groups.

Dr. David Seil, New England area rep, said that about 20 psychiatrists had formed the New England Association of Gay Psychiatrists, a group limited to psychiatrists and those in training. Seil stressed the importance of the group as a support base for psychiatrists isolated from other gay professionals. The group has discussed how to handle resident and job application interviews and how open to be with colleagues. One member, Dr. Jalna Perry, has organized two presentations on the subject of homosexuality at McLean Hospital, a Harvard teaching center. Many psychiatrists in the group also provide supervision to therapists at the Homophile Community Health Service, a Boston gay counselling center.

Dr. David Kessler, president of San Francisco's Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (BAPHR) described a different organizational form. About a year ago, Kessler met with a small group of psychiatrists who wanted to participate more actively in gay rights in the wake of the fight against the Briggs Initiative.

This group merged with another local association of gay doctors to become BAPHR. The group now has over 300 members with psychiatrists making up 30-40% of the total. BAPHR has organized the first grand rounds on homosexuality ever held at the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute (Kessler came out to colleagues at that session). The group meets in offices of the San Francisco Medical Society and publishes a newsletter.

Members wishing to attend meetings in the cities named or to form new meeting centers should get in touch with their area reps whose names and addresses are listed below.

Area I - New England and Eastern Canada

David Seil, M.D.
196 West Springfield Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02118

Area II - New York and Puerto Rico

Stuart Nichols, M.D.
Morris J. Bernstein Institute
307 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10003

Area III - Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

Eugene Frank, M.D.
3340 North Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Area IV - Middle West

No representative

Area V - South

Edward Askren, M.D.
1085 Winding Creek Trail
Atlanta, Georgia

Area VI - California

No representative.
David Kessler, M.D. (San Francisco contact person)
401 Parnassus Avenue
San Francisco, California 94143

Area VII - Western and Mountain states, Hawaii and West Canada

Jaime Smith, M.D.
4508 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. CANADA
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RUNDLE ASKS APA TO REGISTER LOVERS

GLBC Chairperson, Dr. Frank Rundle, requested that APA register the lover or companion of a gay member on the same basis as the spouse of a non-gay member. In a letter to APA president, Jules Masserman, Rundle suggested that the phrase "accompanying person" be used on the APA's registration form. He noted that this phrase was used at a recent meeting of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. At press time, Rundle said that the APA had deferred action on his request.

The change in registration would make it possible for lovers or companions to register officially at the meetings and to attend the various programs and social events free of charge. Most important, Rundle said, this proposal would grant a gay relationship the same dignity accorded to the spouses of all other APA members.

MEETINGS, FILM, EXHIBIT PLANNED FOR CHICAGO

The GLBC steering committee at a meeting in Washington made plans for many events of interest to Caucus members at the Chicago convention. Among the highlights: a hospitality suite for meetings and informal socializing, an exhibit "The Visible Gay Psychiatrist", a cocktail party, business meetings, a formal luncheon, film, dinners and panels.

Dr. Ed Askren, Atlanta area rep, volunteered to plan the exhibit which will encourage conventioners to meet and talk with visible gay psychiatrists. The purpose will be to address negative stereotypes and to support isolated gay members. The positive effects of visibility will be presented through visual media.

Funds are being solicited to allow the exhibit to be built by a professional firm of exhibit planners. Contributions for this purpose should be sent to Caucus secretary, Dr. Emery Hetrick, using the form on the back page of this issue.

By-laws will be presented for adoption at the business meetings. A draft of proposed by-laws is being readied for circulation to members in advance of the convention. The by-laws will address questions of Caucus' purpose, membership, the duties of officers and how they are to be selected.

A formal luncheon is being planned for Thursday, May 17. Negotiations are underway for a prominent outside speaker to address members at this event. Luncheon and dinners will be by prior subscription and details will be announced in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Sociability will not be neglected. Chicago area rep, Dr. David Ostrow is organizing a subscription dinner at a local gourmet restaurant on Wednesday evening, May 16. There will be a dutch treat cocktail party and the hospitality suite, a favorite attraction at the Atlanta convention, will be open throughout the week for drinks and socializing.

A new feature for the Caucus will be small experiential and CR group discussions on selected themes at a buffet lunch. Dr. Eugene Frank of Washington D.C. is planning for topics and leaders.

The widely acclaimed film, Word Is Out, has been accepted for showing to the APA membership by the program committee on Wednesday afternoon. This 2 hour and 40 minute film by the Mariposa Film Collective shows informal interviews with 26 gay men and women who talk about their lives and occasionally make trenchant

comments on their treatment by psychiatrists. Word Is Out has been shown in theaters and on educational TV and has received favorable reviews by both the gay and straight press.

A lot will be happening in Chicago, so the steering committee urges members to make hotel reservations at once (forms from the APA will already have reached you). A detailed schedule of events will be circulated in the Newsletter in late April.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

OF THE APA

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: (____) _____

DATE OF BIRTH (OPTIONAL): _____

APA MEMBERSHIP STATUS: _____

AREAS OF WORK IN PSYCHIATRY (CHECK ALL APPLICABLE - OPTIONAL):

Private Practice () Hospital () Agency ()
Academic () Other ()

Membership is kept confidential. If you do not wish to receive mailings, check here: ()

Optional contribution to Caucus exhibit \$ _____

Annual membership dues are \$25.00. Make check or money order payable to Nanette Gartrell, M.D., Treasurer GC of APA and mail to:

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