



AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

June 23, 2006

The Honorable William Winkenwerder, Jr., M.D., M.B.A.
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1200

Dear Assistant Secretary Winkenwerder:

I am writing on behalf of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and its approximately 43,000 members to request an updating of the current Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 1332.38, regarding physical disability evaluations. This instruction includes a reference to "homosexuality" in reference to "certain mental disorders" which is out of date with the American Counseling Association's position and with general mental health principles and practice.

ACA supports the American Psychiatric Association's decision from 1973 which removed homosexuality from that Association's official list of mental disorders. ACA strongly opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and adults as "mentally ill" due to their sexual orientation, and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation and mental health. The ACA *Code of Ethics* prohibits counselors from condoning or engaging in discrimination based on sexual orientation, and ACA encourages its members to counteract bias against individuals based on their sexual orientation. ACA has formally opposed employment and other forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation since 1971.

ACA requests that a review and update of DoD Instruction 1332.38 take place to ensure that homosexuality is no longer identified as a mental disorder. We are deeply concerned that such a document still exists and is in use today, more than thirty-two years after the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality as a mental disorder. If your staff would like to discuss this issue with our organization, please feel free to contact Brian Altman, Legislative Representative, at 703-823-9800, ext. 242. I appreciate your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Patricia Arredondo, Ed.D.
President
American Counseling Association