

# North Carolina Psychiatric Association

## Opposition to the Proposed Constitutional Amendment Related to Marriage

### Position Statement

*Approved by NCPA Executive Council February 5, 2012*

***The North Carolina Psychiatric Association (NCPA) supports the American Psychiatric Association position of supporting the legal recognition of same-sex civil marriage with all rights, benefits, and responsibilities conferred by civil marriage, and advocates, based upon empirical evidence, that the State of North Carolina adopt such policies. Moreover, in the interest of maintaining and promoting mental health, and in light of available empirical evidence, the NCPA opposes the attempt to change the North Carolina Constitution to make civil marriage between one man and one woman the only legal domestic union recognized in the State.***

### Background

The North Carolina Psychiatric Association consists of physicians who frequently evaluate the impact of social and family relationships on child development, and the ability of adults and children to cope with stress and mental illness. As psychiatrists we note the invariably positive influence of a stable, adult partnership on the health of all family members based upon the ample evidence that long-term spousal and family support enhances physical and mental health at all stages of development.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that homosexuality poses no inherent obstacle to leading a happy, healthy, productive life, and allows for the formation of healthy, satisfying intimate relationships with another person of the same sex. Moreover, empirical evidence supports that homosexuality is generally not chosen and is highly resistant to change.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that the psychological and social aspects of same-sex committed relationships, including legally recognized ones, closely resemble those of heterosexual partnerships. Civil marriage provides a unique set of rights to adults in committed relationships and their children, providing legal, economic and social benefits and protections, including protections provided by employers and governmental entities.

Individuals with a homosexual orientation are often subjected to stress beyond what is experienced by heterosexual people, due to stigma, discrimination, and violence, all of which may contribute to higher levels of illness. Statewide campaigns to deny same-sex couples access to civil marriage have been associated with significant increases in anxiety, mood and alcohol use disorders not only for same-sex couples, but also for all homosexual persons. By contrast, empirical evidence also shows that supporting lesbian and gay human rights may have positive effects on their mental health.

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