

US pediatricians back gay marriage, cite research (Update)

March 21 2013, by Lindsey Tanner

(AP)—The most influential U.S. pediatrician's group says gays should be allowed to marry to help ensure the health and well-being of their children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics' new policy, published online Thursday, cites research showing that the parents' sexual orientation has no effect on a child's development. Kids fare just as well in gay or straight families when they are nurturing and financially and emotionally stable, the academy says.

The academy believes that a two-parent marriage is best equipped to provide that kind of environment. Their policy says that if a child has two gay parents who choose to marry, "it is in the best interests of their children that legal and social institutions allow and support them to do so."

The policy cites reports indicating that almost 2 million U.S. children are being raised by gay parents, many of them in states that don't allow gays to marry.

The academy announced its position Thursday. Officials with the group said they wanted to make the academy's views known before two gay marriage cases are considered by the U.S. Supreme Court next week.

"We wanted that policy statement available for the justices to review," said Dr. Thomas McInerney, the academy's president and a pediatrician

in Rochester, New York.

The pediatricians' gay marriage stance is not surprising. They previously joined other national groups including the American Medical Association in supporting one of the Supreme Court cases, which contends the federal Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional. The federal law defines marriage as between one man and one woman.

The academy also previously supported adoption by gay parents.

The academy's statement notes that several other national health groups have supported gay marriage. Those are the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association and the American College of Nursing.

Dr. Ben Siegel, a Boston pediatrician and chairman of the committee that developed the new policy, said its focus is on "nurturing children. We want what's best for children."

The academy has a history of taking a stand on politically touchy issues. It has discouraged families with children from having guns in their homes and urged pediatricians to give teens advance prescriptions for emergency birth control.

Policy positions typically start in the academy's committees and are based on a review of scientific literature. These recommendations then go to the academy's board of directors, and if approved, sent on to a three-member executive committee for a final vote. The group's 60,000 members do not vote on policy.

The gay marriage policy came from the academy's committee on psychosocial aspects of child and family health, and an academy spokeswoman said it was adopted with no objections.

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: US pediatricians back gay marriage, cite research (Update) (2013, March 21) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-pediatricians-group-gay-marriage.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.