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**APA President-Elect Candidate Statement for the Association of
Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists**

Question 1: The representative structure of the APA is at a turning point. The Assembly now has a greatly reduced number of councils and committees. If you are elected, how will you assure minority members, specifically members of the gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual community, continue to have a voice in the APA?

Question 2: If you are elected, what are your responses to the critical tasks that the APA faces?

The 2009 APA election comes at a time of significant challenge for our organization. In an effort to address the current fiscal concerns the leadership imposed draconian expense reductions and component reorganization that now put at risk the inclusion of a plurality of important voices within APA governance, specifically those of minority and underrepresented groups. As an African American psychiatrist, I am conscious of the concerns of members of all underrepresented groups that their voices will not be heard in the newly restructured APA. I believe that this omission was not intended to be exclusionary, but was an effort to solve fiscal problems and streamline the organizational structure. However, during the process of downsizing, insufficient attention was paid to the impact of reducing numerical presence of underrepresented groups in governance. This action has great potential to endanger the rich diversity of the APA membership

As President of the APA I will endeavor to increase the number of minority and underrepresented group members involved in the work of APA. This will require the use of less expensive methods of working together than in-person meetings necessitating travel. The Internet, telephone and video conferencing and other emerging technologies should be our main tools for supporting the communication and active involvement of our members. Even with the value of technology for member to member interaction, we must remember that this is not a replacement for face-to-face communication which will continue to occur at the members' expense at the Annual Meeting in May and in the fall at IPS.

I will work to assure both quality and humane care for our patients and to safeguard our profession for the future. I want to work closely with AGLP and its membership to make sure that APA is addressing the mental health needs of the GLBT community, which as we all know, is an underserved community. I want the upcoming DSM-V to reflect issues like prevalence and risk factors of mental disorders in the GLBT community in ways that will increase the community's visibility and encourage more research in addressing its mental health needs.

This is an exciting period in our profession and in the country. Some form of health care reform, however incremental, is likely and it is crucial that the APA be a part of the process. Innovative strategies will be needed to implement new health reform legislation. Enlightened thinking will be required to comprehend how changes in the health care system will affect the scope of professional practice. These major concerns demand our attention and that of the entire APA membership as we determine how best to proceed to enhance our ability to provide care to our patients. We must use this critical moment as an opportunity to reinforce our collaborative work together with allied psychiatric and medical organizations as well as mental health advocacy groups.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my ideas with your membership. I invite you to view my website, www.donnanorrismd.com. My extensive and long-standing leadership in the APA and allied groups has prepared me to lead the charge in crafting new and timely solutions for the future. I look forward to hearing from you about the best ways we can work together to improve care for our patients.