



American Public Health Association

Working for a Healthier World

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July 11, 2007

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), I write to express our serious reservations regarding the nomination of James Holsinger Jr., MD, for surgeon general of the United States. APHA is the nation's oldest, largest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 public health occupations, dedicated to protecting all Americans, their families and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and assuring community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States.

As our nation's most trusted advisor and leading educator on health, the surgeon general plays a vital role in promoting health, preventing disease and protecting the public. Scientific objectivity must be the standard for any nominee.

APHA is very concerned with Dr. Holsinger's past writings regarding his views of homosexuality, which put his political and religious ideology before established medical science. We have long opposed discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation. At a time when one of our association's top priorities is to eliminate disparities in health, including disparities in the gay and lesbian community, we cannot support a nominee with discredited and non-evidence-based views on sexuality. While we have no doubt that Dr. Holsinger has made positive contributions throughout his medical and public health career, we believe his previously expressed views on sexuality are inconsistent with mainstream medicine and public health practice and ask that you thoroughly examine them.

We are hopeful that the Senate will reject his nomination and urge the president to put forth another nominee. This nominee must be an established leader on a broad range of public health and health care issues. The nominee should have experience and training in population health and be respected and accepted by his or her counterparts at the federal, state and local levels. Finally, he or she must be able to engender trust, bring people together and be a professional with the highest level of ethics and objectivity while working to protect the health of all Americans.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns regarding Dr. Holsinger's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (Emeritus)
Executive Director