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NARTH RELEASE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH & THERAPY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Prominent Psychiatrist Announces New Study Results: "Some Gays CAN Change"

Dr. Robert Spitzer Announces Study Findings at Annual APA Convention

New Orleans—In a report released today at the annual American Psychiatric Association (APA) convention, psychiatrist Dr. Robert Spitzer announced the results of a new study on homosexuality. Efforts to change sexual orientation can---in some men and women---apparently produce significant success.

Dr. Spitzer's personal involvement in this particular study is historically significant: He was the leading figure in the 1973 APA decision which removed homosexuality from the official diagnostic manual of mental disorders. Today, he is Chief of Biometrics Research and Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University in New York City.

"Contrary to conventional wisdom, some highly motivated individuals, using a variety of change efforts, can make substantial change in multiple indicators of sexual orientation," said Spitzer.

"Like most psychiatrists, I thought that homosexual behavior could only be *resisted*, and that no one could really change their sexual orientation. I now believe that to be false. Some people *can* and *do* change," said Spitzer.

Dr. Spitzer interviewed 200 men and women who have experienced a significant shift from homosexual to heterosexual attraction, and have sustained this shift for at least five years. Many of the subjects had sought change because of disillusionment with a promiscuous lifestyle and unstable, stormy relationships. Many reported a conflict with their religious values, and many had desired to be (or to stay) heterosexually married. By the time of the study interview, three-quarters of the men and half of the women had become married.

One surprising discovery was that 67% of the men who had *rarely* or *never* felt any opposite-sex attraction before the change effort, now report significant heterosexual attraction. Even those whose orientation did not change--but who gave up homosexual behavior---experienced a significant improvement in emotional health.

Dr. Spitzer cautioned against an "either/or" view of orientation change. A better way to conceptualize change "is to see it as a diminishing of unwanted homosexuality and an increase in heterosexual potential---recognizing that for some, change is possible along a multi-dimensional continuum." While cautioning against any form of coercive treatment, he added, "I believe patients should have the right to explore their heterosexual potential."

Media can attend the A.P.A. panel discussion, **"Clinical & Ethical Concerns Regarding Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation: An Update"**

Wednesday, May 9, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Hilton Riverside Hotel, Rosedown Room, Third Floor

2 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA