

# Elders offers church no apology

## Separates views from Clinton's

By Frank J. Murray  
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Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders intends to make no apology to churchmen offended by her "difference of opinion" on homosexuals, but she dissociated her views from President Clinton's yesterday after the archbishop of Washington complained about her to the White House.

"She hasn't had any comment, nor does she intend to have any," Elders spokesman Michael Russell said as the White House remained silent on Cardinal James Hickey's letter.

"There is no connection between her views and the president's views. . . . There wasn't any consultation at any level," Mr. Russell said.

In comments published in the March issue of the *Advocate*, a magazine which focuses on homosexual issues, Dr. Elders endorsed

homosexual adoptions, called the Boy Scouts' ban on homosexual Scouts and Scout leaders "unfair," and said Americans need to know that sex is a "healthy part of our being, whether it is homosexual or heterosexual."

Vice President Al Gore went out of his way to spotlight Dr. Elders, resplendent in the gaudy black and gold uniform of the health service, at yesterday's health care reform promotion on the White House South Lawn.

He pointed her out in the front row of the audience and made a jocular remark about her growing fame.

"You're becoming more recognizable, Dr. Elders," the vice president said, setting off a wave of laughter.

Gore spokeswoman Lorraine Voles said he had not known about Cardinal Hickey's letter when he made the comment.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said the president has not read Dr. Elders' interview with the *Advocate*, and Mr. Clinton has not responded to Cardinal Hickey's letter condemning her views.

"I believe the letter arrived here last night, and the president has

not had a chance to review it," Miss Myers said.

Cardinal Hickey's letter said Dr. Elders made irresponsible accusations about the sexual views of religious leaders and called her words a "misleading caricature."

As for her remarks on homosexuals, Cardinal Hickey said: "It is one thing to defend the human rights of homosexual men and women; it is quite another to encourage, as she does, a lifestyle which puts so-called homosexual unions on a par with marriage and family, and condones homosexual behavior among young people."

Dr. Elders' spokesman said she had not seen the letter but minimized the impact of her remarks. "It's just a difference of opinion. She has an opinion, the archbishop has an opinion," he said. "They are her personal views given in an interview."

This was the second time in eight months that a Roman Catholic archbishop has complained to Mr. Clinton about Dr. Elders' remarks. In July, when she was the nominee for surgeon general, Baltimore Archbishop William Keeler wrote that he was offended by her "contemptuous" remarks

about the church.

Dr. Elders and Mr. Clinton wrote letters of apology to the archbishop.

A spokesman for the Southern Baptist Convention, the religious denomination of both the president and the vice president, also rebuked Dr. Elders' latest comments on homosexuality.

"We have passed resolutions affirming the traditional heterosexual lifestyle and opposing the homosexual lifestyle," spokesman Herb Hollinger said.

Dr. Elders spoke out yesterday in favor of taking a public-health approach to gun violence, including suicides and accidental shootings, "because it kills and injures so many people, especially our young people."

She said gun violence should be dealt with in the same way as traffic deaths and cigarette smoking. Among the steps she advocated were more education of adults and children and the redesign of guns to ensure that children cannot fire them accidentally.

Dr. Elders' brother was killed in his home by a burglar with a handgun.