

Brief Bio for Heather O'Beirne Kelly, PhD

Heather O'Beirne Kelly is a senior legislative and federal affairs officer in the Science Government Relations Office of the American Psychological Association, a post she has held since 1998. In this role, Dr. Kelly advocates for behavioral science on Capitol Hill and in federal agencies and directs APA's Executive Branch Science Fellowship Program. Within her advocacy portfolio are the psychological research programs within the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Science Foundation. She also is the team leader for all of APA's military and Veteran-related issues. Dr. Kelly sits on the Executive Committee of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research Coalition; represents APA on the VA Office of Mental Health Services Stakeholders Group; has testified before Congress regarding funding for VA research and mental health services; and has coordinated numerous Capitol Hill briefings on topics of interest to the veteran population, including suicide prevention, PTSD, and traumatic brain injury.

Dr. Kelly graduated from Smith College in 1987 and worked in non-profit development for clients including the Children's Defense Fund, UNICEF and the March of Dimes before becoming director of corporate relations for Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in 1989.

Dr. Kelly received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Virginia in 1998, where she taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in psychology. She completed her pre-doctoral clinical internship at Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C. Dr. Kelly's research focused on adolescent social development, child sexual abuse and adolescent dating violence. As a therapist, she worked primarily with children and families.