Chapter 1
EAP Program Overview

A. Introduction to Employee Assistance Programs

Employees are the most valuable asset of any organization. When employees are unable to function successfully in the workplace because of problems at work or home, the cost to business, industry, and government in lost time, decreased productivity, medical expenses, low morale, and on-the-job accidents is estimated to be billions of dollars annually. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) are designed to help employees address and alleviate problems that affect their job performance so they can return to productive employment.

R. H. Macy and Co., the New York City department store, was one of the first employers to recognize the need to help employees with personal problems and in 1917, Macy’s established one of the first EAPs in the country. In the 1940’s, many more employers established EAPs, based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model, to deal with alcoholism in the workplace. EAPs in the 1970’s broadened their focus to address any personal or family concern. Sources of referral shifted from supervisors, based on job-performance criteria, to self-referrals for personal concerns of which supervisors and managers might be completely unaware. There are currently over 10,000 EAPs in the United States. Research studies have shown that EAP services result in increased morale, improved productivity and attendance, and a decrease in illness and on-the-job accidents, leading to lower costs for sick leave, medical care, and workers compensation.

B. New York State Employee Assistance Program Overview

The New York State Employee Assistance Program (NYS EAP) is a negotiated benefit designed to help state employees identify and resolve personal and work-related problems so they can balance the demands of work, home, and life. NYS EAP services are confidential, voluntary, and offered at no cost to New York State executive branch employees and their families. EAP helps employees by providing information, assessment and referral services, and support for a broad range of issues including anxiety and depression, relationship conflicts, workplace issues, gambling, substance abuse, grief, health and wellness, finances, elder care, parenting, domestic violence, legal, child care, and stress.

C. NYS EAP History

The first EAP for New York State employees was established in 1976 at nine work sites in the Mid-Hudson Region of the Department of Mental Hygiene. Funding for the program was provided through a grant from the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA). The program was very successful and quickly spread to other state agencies and facilities.
In 1983, the State and its employee unions recognized the importance of offering EAP services to employees to enhance their physical and emotional well-being and reduce pressures that may affect their ability to be productive at work. The State, along with CSEA, PEF, UUP, and Council 82, (later joined by NYSCOPBA, DC-37, and GSEU), created the Statewide Labor/Management Employee Assistance Program Advisory Board to oversee the program.

In 2004, EAP and the programs administered by the Family Benefits Program (FBP) were brought together under the umbrella of Work-Life Services to help state employees identify and access employee benefits more easily. In addition, the Work-Life Services Advisory Board was established as a single advisory board for both units, combining union and management board members from the FBP and EAP Advisory Boards. The Work-Life Services Advisory Board meets quarterly and oversees both programs, sets general policy, and approves major program initiatives.

D. **NYS EAP Model and Training**

NYS EAP is unusual in that it is a peer assistance model. Services are provided by state agency employees who serve as EAP coordinators. The coordinators understand the unique culture of their agencies and are approachable and knowledgeable resources for other agency employees. There are currently over 300 full and part-time EAP coordinators serving state employees at 250 work sites.

Each state agency has an EAP labor-management committee with representatives appointed by labor and management. The EAP committee is an integral component of the peer model. Committee members are responsible for promoting their agency’s EAP and selecting the coordinator from among their peers in the agency. EAP coordinators are selected because they are compassionate, trustworthy, and committed to helping others.

To ensure quality services, all coordinators receive ongoing training so they are able to skillfully assess an employee’s situation and provide a referral to an appropriate community resource. In addition, new coordinators are required to attend the New Coordinator Institute (NCI) designed to provide them with the basic knowledge and skills needed to begin assisting employees.

E. **Labor-Management Collaboration and Commitment**

The State of New York and CSEA, PEF, UUP, Council 82, NYSCOPBA, DC-37, and GSEU all support NYS EAP. They recognize their joint efforts result in a healthier and more productive workforce and are committed to NYS EAP, its mission, goals, and services including:

- providing a resource that helps employees balance the demands of work, home, and life
- supporting EAP committees and coordinators in fulfilling their responsibilities
promoting an awareness of EAP services
fostering collaboration between labor and management
supporting training for supervisors and union representatives on the early signs of work performance problems and the benefits of referring to EAP

F. Organizational Structure

The NYS EAP main office is located in Albany and regional offices are located throughout the state. These offices are staffed by state employees who oversee and provide day-to-day management of EAP staff and oversight of the EAP coordinators and EAP committees. The Albany main office houses the EAP program manager, the assistant program manager, training director, wellness coordinator, and support personnel.

Regional offices are located in Albany (Capital Region), Buffalo (Western Region), Rochester (Rochester/Finger Lakes Region), Syracuse and Watertown (Central NY Region), Utica (Utica/Binghamton Region), Poughkeepsie (Mid-Hudson Region), Brooklyn and Hauppauge (New York City/Long Island Region), and Raybrook (Adirondack Region). EAP regional representatives oversee the EAPs in their region.
New York State
Employee Assistance Program

Office Locations and Contact Information

Main Office
55 Elk Street, Suite 301-A,
Albany, NY 12210-2316
(518) 486-9769 or (800) 822-0244
FAX: (518) 486-9796
www.worklife.ny.gov/eap

Adirondack Region Office
1115 State Route 86
Ray Brook, New York 12977
(518) 891-0735 * Fax: (518) 891-0946

New York City/Long Island Region Office
55 Hanson Place, room 916
Brooklyn, New York 11217
(718) 923-4321 * Fax: (718) 923-4382

Capital Region Office
55 Elk Street, Suite 301-A
Albany, New York 12210-2316
(518) 486-9769 * Fax: (518) 486-9769

Alternate location:
Suffolk State Office Building
Veteran’s Memorial Highway, Room 2B-42
Hauppauge, New York 11788
(631) 952-7032

Central NY Region Office
Hughes State Office Building
333 E. Washington St., Room 420
Syracuse, New York 13202
(315) 428-4963 * (866) 879-5591
Fax: (315) 428-4717

Rochester/Finger Lakes Region Office
109 S. Union St., Room 100
Rochester, New York 14607
(585) 529-3690 * (585) 529-3727

Alternate Location:
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington, Street, Sixth Floor
Watertown, New York 13601

Utica/Binghamton Region Office
207 S. Genesee Street, Room 100
Utica, New York 13501
(315) 793-2518

Mid-Hudson Region Office
Eleanor Roosevelt State Office Building
4 Burnett Boulevard
Poughkeepsie, New York 12603
(845) 431-5738 * (845) 431-5997

Western Region Office
Electric Tower Building
535 Washington St., Suite 306
Buffalo, New York 14203
(716) 847-3911 * (716) 847-3936