

EAP ASSOCIATION

EXCHANGE

MAY 1990

GOU

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Appreciating Labor



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Standing Tall

VOICES OF DISQUIETUDE were heard in our membership during the two years prior to the association's change of name from Association of Labor-Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism (ALMACA) to the more homogenous Employee Assistance Professionals Association. Would labor—the capital "L" in the alliance that comprised ALMACA—continue to be regarded as a fully participating partner in the association? Out in the field, would there continue to be a true jointness of ownership in labor-management programs? Was an opening created for polemics to supercede cooperation between the two interests?

A year later, here are some markers. Labor-management EAPs and labor-based programs (usually called "members assistance programs") are as vitally active as ever in EAPA and the EAP field. EAPA has continued its development as a professional association under our union-affiliated president, Tom Pasco, and five other members of our Board of Directors who also represent labor. The work of the Employee Assistance Certification Commission continues to reflect labor and labor-management concerns. The record speaks for itself.

LABOR RESILIENTLY adheres to the same time-honored, homespun values as when many unions were founded early in this century, but labor is also on the vanguard

of the so-called "Workplace 2000" issues. The lead articles this month portray a labor movement in the EAP field that emphasizes compassion for fellow human beings, advantageously teams up with management for mutual betterment, and looks for new ways of preserving our human resources. It is praise-

worthy that, while some of the loudest voices in business & industry advocate curtailing utilization of the health care system and restricting benefits, labor is helping to keep us focused on the long-term health and welfare of the individual instead of near-sighted penny-pinching.

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER is a painting entitled "Detroit Industry," by Mexican-born Diego Rivera. It captures the virtues of individual fortitude and team unity which labor holds near and dear. Between the brushstrokes of Rivera's tribute to working people, housed at the Detroit Museum of Art, is the message that these virtues will provide a better livelihood for everyone. EAPA acknowledges the valuable contributions of organized labor to the EAP field over the years and looks forward to its continued partnership.

Rudy M. Yandrick
RUDY M. YANDRICK
 EDITOR

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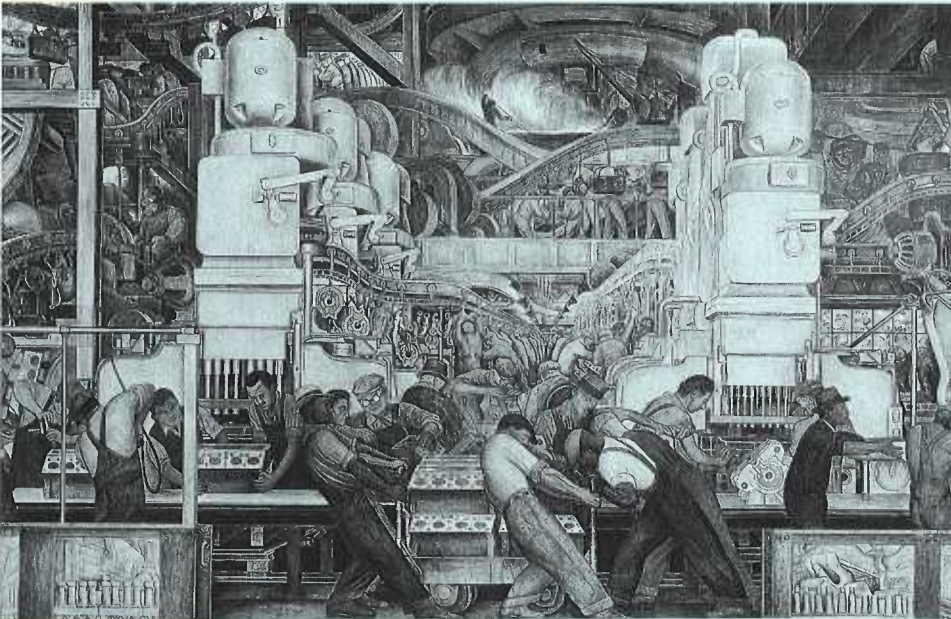
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ON THE COVER

Title of art: Detroit Industry

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thomas G. Delany

An increasing number of state legislatures are considering and passing bills that define EAPs. It is essential that they agree on the definition of an EAP. Fortunately, back in February 1987 this development was anticipated by the Executive Committee of EAPA (then known as ALMACA). At that time, the Executive Committee approved a public-policy agenda that specified the establishment of "a competency-based legal definition which permits the uniform national growth and development of EAP programs."

By May 1988, the legal definition was developed. It is this EAPA-model definition of EAPs that all of us need to diligently promote with Congress, state legislatures and municipal governments. It was printed in the May 1988 issue of *THE ALMACAN* but bears repeating because, as I will explain, its advocacy is vital to assure that EAPs are correctly understood by employers and organized labor. It reads:

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) shall be a worksite-based program designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns including, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance.

The specific core activities of EAPs shall include both of the following: 1) expert consultation and training to appropriate persons in the identification and resolution of job-performance issues related to the employee personal concerns listed above. 2) confidential, appropriate and timely problem-assessment services; referrals for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance; establishing linkages between workplace and community resources that provide such services; and follow-up services for employees who use those services.

Why is the definition so important now? Because the "National Drug Control Strategy" which President

Bush sent to Congress last fall called for the adoption of a "model state drug-free workplace law." In April, EAPA learned that drug czar William Bennett's office is considering a draft of such a bill that provides a more limited definition of EAP, but calls upon each governor to develop a "model EAP." This will provide EAPA with numerous opportunities to educate government officials about what an EAP is and how an EAP is the best strategy for addressing workplace drug problems.

The first opportunity is on the national level, where EAPA will have to use all opportunities to have policy makers in all agencies use the definition developed by our professional association. The early drafts of the "model" described EAP as "agency-based counseling programs that offer assessment, short-term counseling and referral services . . ." Obviously, the EAPA legal definition is more encompassing. Now, the Bennett draft does have the qualifier that the definition should only be "for the purposes of the statute." The problem with that is that no one reads that statement and that whatever winds up in the law gets quoted and suggested for other purposes. The field has run into this problem with the NIDA guidelines to federal agencies on how to develop a drug-free federal work force. In spite of assurances that these were not intended for the private sector, some people are recommending just that.

Another example of how a limited federal EAP role can confuse the private sector is in the FAA regulations. The regulations assign education and training responsibilities to the EAP. There is nothing in it to say that the airline EAP should not carry out the other EAP functions. In fact, all of the major carriers now seem to recognize that EAP has a broader mission. But there are people outside the airline industry who have incorrectly interpreted the FAA regulations to mean that education and training is all that an EAP does.

"There are people outside the airline industry who have incorrectly interpreted the FAA regulations to mean that education and training are all that an EAP does."

The second opportunity to educate government officials that EAP is much broader than the language in the draft is in the state legislatures. In whatever shape the model state law finally emerges from Washington, it will not take effect in any state unless adopted by the state legislatures and signed by the governors. Whether a state legislature is considering a model law proposed by the federal government or any other state law affecting EAP, you are the EAP experts and should share your expertise with the legislators. In fact, you are the experts in dealing with workplace drug problems, but the legislators will only know that if you tell them. So, you can advise your legislature on what kind of workplace drug law should be adopted for your state.

The third opportunity, of course, would be to work with your governor in developing a model EAP for state programs. In a number of states, the model exists and is up and running. The new EAPA standards for EAPs are being proposed to the Board of Directors at its May meeting. They are the result of nearly two years of hard work by the Program Standards Committee and are likely to receive Board approval before summer. These standards can then be used by governors in states that do not have a program for state employees or want to improve their current programs.

An issue to watch out for is how a person would be referred to the EAP.