

EAP ASSOCIATION

EXCHANGE

APRIL 1991

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With the Drug-Free Workplace whizzing at a fever pitch, some fear that skillful assessment and referral of persons addicted to



the continued favorite drug of choice—alcohol—is endangered. Others say that the instruments of managed care are decimating



the alcohol treatment system.

**In this issue,
two commentaries.**



**EAPA
at twenty**

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

Employee Assistance

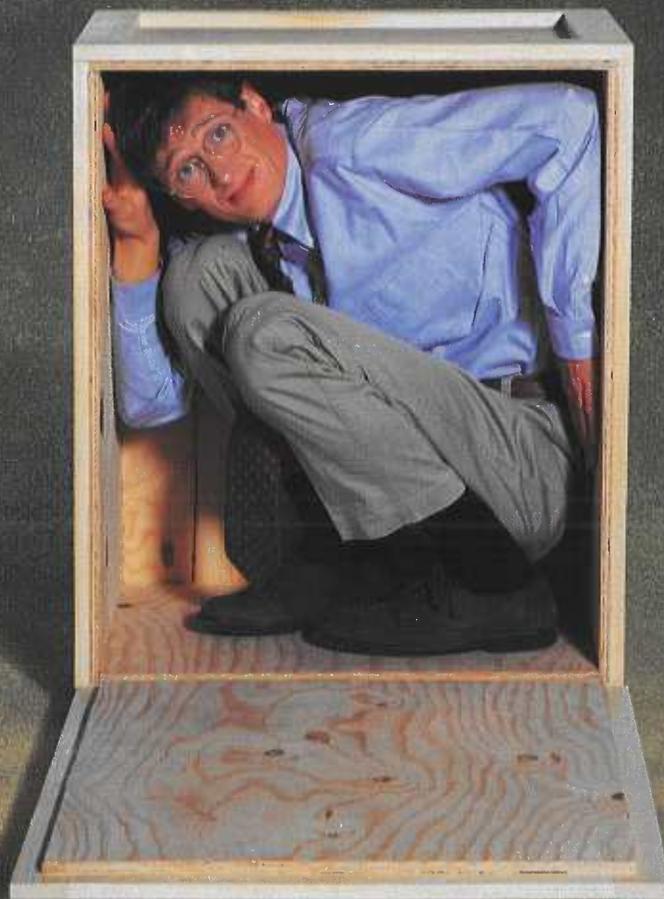
Programs have proven to be an effective way to address personal problems and chemical dependency in the workplace.

**MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE SHOULD
CONSTRAIN COSTS, NOT EMPLOYEES.**

However, most systems of cost control do little more than create barriers to effective treatment. Inevitably giving a mixed message to the employee.

Integrating managed care and Employee Assistance Programs is a first step toward eliminating the conflict that can exist between cost containment and effective treatment.

It is clear that implementing creative solutions will be no easy task. But those of us committed to protecting the work environment must strive to find innovative approaches to mental health benefits, simply so that we may continue to provide them.



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HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.

Continuity

THIS MONTH, two historical views: one on alcoholism as a priority issue for EAPs, and one observing the 20th anniversary of EAPA (known as ALMACA for most of the association's existence).

Before you get the wrong impression, our coverage of alcoholism is not a trip down some worn-out path. We offer a pair of contemporary "think pieces": one by Frank Huddleston, who explains why the ability to confront alcoholics and initiate their rehabilitation is as vital to the EAP field as ever; the other by John McPeake, who explains how managed care is damaging the rehabilitative work of alcohol treatment centers. These articles have timely significance in that many EAP professionals believe droves of drug addicts are reverting to alcohol as a substitute drug of choice in the specter of the drug-free workplace. A third article highlights the incipient NAATP/ASAM admission, continued-stay and discharge criteria. The sponsors of the criteria hope that their work will lead to better checks and balances in the provision of managed care by being accepted as an industry standard.

APRIL 21, 1991. On this date, EAPA/ALMACA marks 20 marvelous years as a membership organization. A special

full-length feature recounts the growth and development of the association in this issue. The coverage is presented in a 15-page "Special

Advertising Section," which contains congratulatory advertisements from some of our friends and supporters.

WE'RE NOT DWELLING ON THE PAST, though. EAPA is an organization on the move. Our strategic planning is evidence of an organization in control of its own destiny, and we ask that you help us to chart our development by completing and returning the FAXback Survey on page 7. But even with sights set on new accomplishments, the future of EAPA and the EAP field will be predicated on continuity. We have the benefit of experience and know what is tried-and-true. EAPA's Membership Department reports that the vast majority of our members have belonged to EAPA for less than five years. One bonus of our feature coverage this month is that it provides members with an appreciation for continuity.

Rudy M. Yandrick

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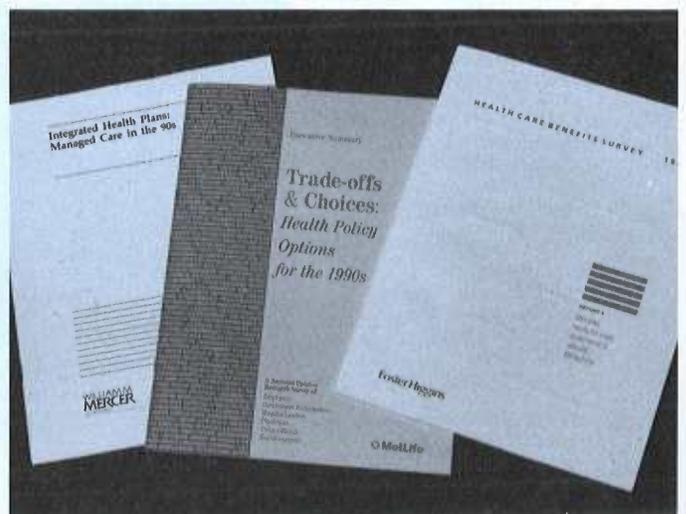
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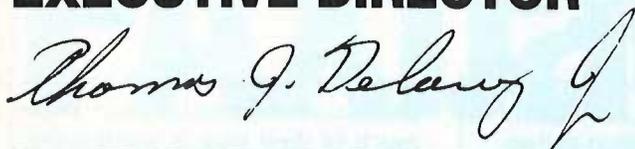
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



by Thomas J. Delaney, Jr., CEAP
EAPA Executive Director

In the small town in New York's Hudson Valley where I was raised, the major employer was a carpet mill. Since then, textiles first went south, then offshore. It goes to show how a lot has changed in the American economy and our style of life. In the 20 years that I have been in the substance abuse field, however, I have often thought of one man from the town of my upbringing and how, unfortunately, the way that society treats his counterparts today has not changed in many communities.

There were even company-owned houses in this town that were rented to the workers. The man that I am thinking about did not live in a company house, but rented a small apartment for his family about a mile from the factory. My home was between the mill and his apartment. On days when I would be outside playing ball after school, I could often hear his loud, but always cheerful, voice as he made his way up the street. He always had loud, fond words of encouragement for me, although, more often than not, they were unintelligible. He usually came along about 90 minutes after the factory whistle had blown. You see, there was a tavern between us and the mill, and he always stopped there.

Just down the street, there was a well-kept home of the man who was a combination director of personnel and community affairs officer for the carpet company. He was well-respected and, in fact, had the distinction of being the only Democrat within memory to ever be elected to public office in the overwhelmingly Republican town. As I recall, he was a very understanding man who could arrange company loans if a sudden emergency struck, would put in a word for you if a merchant was going to shut off your credit or turn the account over to the sheriff, and could help get you reasigned from the second or third shift.

**“Unfortunately, if
EAPs are lessening
their commitment
to alcoholism, they
are in step with
the national mood.”**

I have often wondered if he did not run an early version of an EAP. However, this was before the pioneering work of the National Council on Alcoholism, which spread the word about occupational alcoholism, and I don't believe that the man in the well-kept house was ever able to do anything for what I now know was an alcoholic employee, except to see that his wife got a turkey for Thanksgiving and that his children had new clothes for the first day of school.

MODERN-DAY (LACK OF) ALCOHOLISM AWARENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

A couple of recent occurrences have led me to share these memories with you. I was told about an EAP that has been revamped so that it now is providing the services that the employees want instead of just substance abuse services. The mix of EAP clientele has changed. Apparently, around half of the clients in the old EAP had been identified as having a substance abuse problem, but with the installation of a new program it has digressed to the point where less than 15% of clientele are substance abusers. I wonder if my boyhood friend would have filled out a questionnaire and said that he wanted substance abuse services. I hope the new EAP is still identifying and intervening with alcoholics and that the change in caseload mix merely reflects an expansion of services to others. I hope it has not lessened awareness of the problems of substance abuse in the workplace.

Unfortunately, if EAPs are lessening their commitment to alcoholism, they

are in step with the national mood. On March 8th, Congressman Wyman of Oregon chaired a congressional hearing about the federal government's efforts to assist small businesses with substance abuse problems. Witnesses from state governments, the EAP field and the small-business community all pointed out that the federal government's "War on Drugs" of the last five years had a major flaw in its failure to address alcoholism. Given the seeming inability of federal policy makers to see the public health component of the drug problem, it may be better to have a separate, but equally intensive, commitment to address alcoholism. (By the way, NIAAA continues to support important alcoholism research, but the federal impetus for treatment, prevention, intervention and education is lacking.) While EAPA and other groups fight for the alcoholism program on the federal level, we now have to look to the states and the private sector to restart the national commitment to fight alcoholism.

Of course, it is not just the federal government that has neglected the alcoholism field. The insurance industry has brutalized the entire substance abuse treatment field. I know the argument that they are just writing the types of policies that their customers want but, frankly, I just don't believe them. The insurance industry reflects the stigma and denial toward alcoholics and drug addicts that still permeates our society. If they took the time to explore the issue, they would realize that EAPs are in their own best interest, as the Paul Revere Life Insurance Company has done.

The mill that I mentioned earlier was (for those of you who had any doubts) a nonunion plant. By and large, the labor movement continues to recognize the impact of substance abuse on its members and the importance of including programs to help workers with substance abuse as part of their strategies to strengthen the economy.