

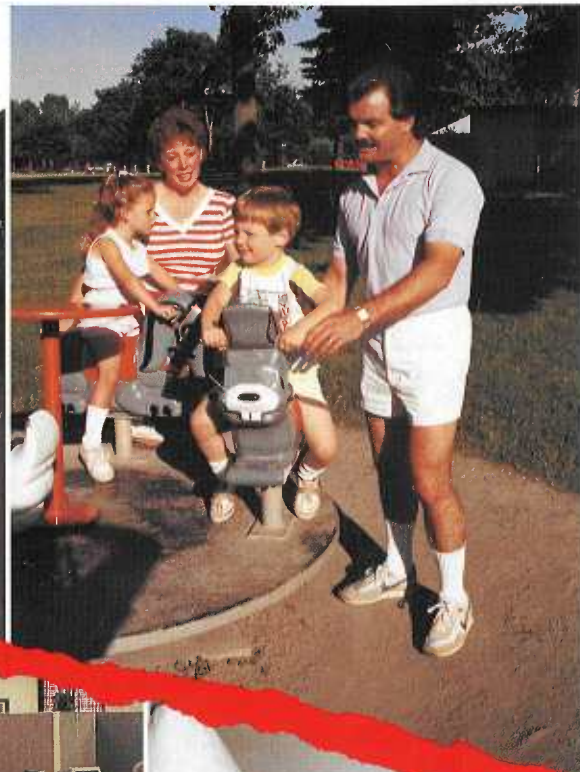
EAP ASSOCIATION

# EXCHANGE

JUNE 1991



VOL. 21 NO. 6



**EAPs offer help to employees torn between work and caregiving responsibilities**



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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

"QUALITY OF LIFE" is a phrase that has consistently been used by the media during the 1980s and so far in the 1990s. It calls into question people's everyday activities and whether those activities enrich their lives. As a consequence, employed adults are more aware that they spend the majority of their waking hours on weekdays working, getting ready to work, or commuting to work. Thus, "quality of work life" (QWL) is a vital piece in the whole "quality-of-life" panoply.

One complicating aspect of the quality-of-life issues is that non-work-related problems can manifest as QWL issues, such as when employed caregivers are preoccupied on the job with worries about whether those under their guardianship are being properly attended. Many progressive companies and unions recognize workers as valued commodities and are making accommodations to help them balance these competing interests, even though the workplace is not the source of problems.

**EAP SERVICES**, in and of themselves, enhance QWL. However, the question arises about how far an EAP's responsibilities should be stretched to provide additional services that help employees meet family needs. Here is a situation that hits right on the nameplate: A company has one internal EAP professional who serves 5,000 employees. Her time is already stretched thin in providing traditional services that

# QWL and the Work/Family Issues

affect job performance, access the health benefit plan, and require case management after referral to treatment. How can she possibly administer child care,

eldercare and other family-focused problems that purportedly impact on job performance, but are not a part of the traditional EAP focus?

The pivotal factor seems to be whether the sponsoring employer is willing to make additional financial outlays for more staff. If so, these additional employee investment programs can be administered through the EAP or other occupational programs. In this issue, EAPA President Daniel Lanier introduces readers to the concept of "Employee Assistance Services," or EAS, an umbrella function inclusive of "Family/Child Activities," along with traditional EAP and other functions. EAS is an investment that President Lanier feels more employers will make in the 1990s as workers try to hold down their jobs, marriages and caregiving responsibilities in the face of a family unit in transition.

**EAPA MEMBERS** are asked to turn to pages 42-43 for a report of EAPA's 1991-92 budget. As a "shareholder" in EAPA, you are entitled to know where EAPA gets all of its revenue and how it is spent.

*Rudy M. Yandrick*

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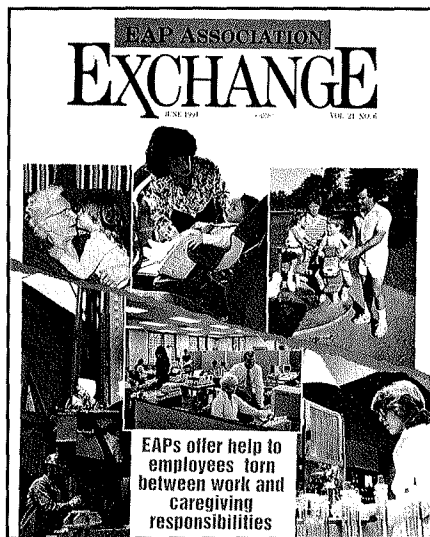
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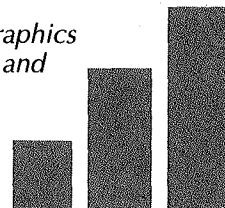
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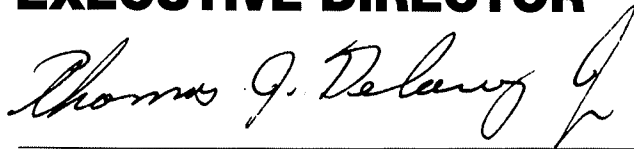
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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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

A collection of articles appears in this issue under the theme "Work/Family Issues." To a person outside of the EAP field, this may seem like a completely new focus for EAPs. However, the EAPA membership knows that an EAP practitioner has long functioned at the crucial juncture between work and family and has had to deal with the related issues. Nevertheless, the opportunities and roles are changing. It means that EAPA and its membership are addressing work/family issues from the perspective of the 1990s and the challenges that face labor, industry and society for the rest of this century and the early years of the next.

The litany of work/family issues is long and growing. Both the workplace and the family have undergone tremendous changes which impact each other. Other societal changes impact both labor and employers, who increasingly look to EAP staff to give these issues relevancy to the workplace. Not only is the EAP called in to help with the casualties of such changes, they are increasingly asked to participate in policy planning on these issues. Just as in the early days of the "War on Drugs," those EAPs which aggressively seek to be included in the policy decisions will be in a better position than those which just volunteer to carry out the decisions of others.

The changes in the family are well-documented. They mean that old industrial relations policies, such as those for health insurance and child-birth leave, are not relevant to many current workers. It also means new challenges posed by child care and eldercare. The informal "policies" of a generation ago or less often relied on the strong family and community supports which either no longer exist or are being overwhelmed by other demands.

A number of social critics have been trying for a long time to get the school systems to assume the roles of the family. More recently, there has been increasing criticism of the schools' apparent inability to provide pupils with basic education and the skills necessary to be prepared for the workplace. A few months ago, one of our members from a very large manufacturer told me that practically none of their blue-collar hires had the education necessary to perform the needed work. His industry and others are having to do what they perceive as the school's job. As industry increasingly searches for the causes of this problem, it recognizes its systemic nature. It will have to work in conjunction with schools, government, families, churches and all of our institutions if it is to be assured of a productive work force. While employers will necessarily have to continue focusing on their primary mission, there is also a recognition that their markets and competitive position are affected by work/family issues.

**"Once the broadbrush technique was identified as the best way to deal with alcohol and drug abuse problems in the work force, EAPs had to get involved with work/family issues."**

Does this mean that EAPs will be abandoning their role in the substance abuse field? Of course not! Once the broadbrush technique was identified as the best way to deal with alcoholism and drug abuse problems in the work force, EAPs had to get involved in work/family issues. What seems to be changing is an expansion away from the "micro" focus of assisting individual worker/family problems to

include EAP in the "macro" role of helping industry deal with the larger issues that impact work and family. Does this mean EAPs are to assume a "do-gooder" role of trying to eliminate all societal woes? That hardly seems likely. EAPs should be in the forefront of industry's role in addressing the work/family problems that impact on the work organization.

In addition to embracing the broadbrush technique, another way that EAPs and their predecessor—occupational alcoholism programs—have dealt with families is through the "family disease" nature of substance abuse. We have known through our work with dysfunctional families, children of alcoholics and the strain that substance abuse puts on all of the addict's significant others, that the rehabilitation of the troubled employee often requires family services. Although all societal problems are not caused by substance abuse, it will be helpful to industry in understanding its role in work/family issues.

Just as the EAP practitioner has had to acquire more knowledge to deal with the War on Drugs and managed care issues, so too are we finding the same situation with work and family. As the population becomes increasingly diversified by culture and race, as the population "grays," as our economies become increasingly international, we will have to broaden, not only the scope of practice, but the education, training and accountability for what we do.

In the last few weeks, I have done even more than my usual amount of airplane travel. I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of "seat mates" who not only know about EAP, but speak highly of its utility to them as business managers. In many industries, EAP is now seen as an integral HR function, but we can increase this by assuming leadership for work/family issues. If we don't, someone else will because the issues will be on industry's front burner for the 1990s. 