

DAY FOUR – EAPA’s annual World EAP Conference wrapped up its last morning with its annual fun run/walk, keynote from **Neal McCord** with Give Kids the World Village, and the annual awards luncheon and address from outgoing EAPA President **Steven Haught**, and look to the future by incoming President **Lucy Henry**.

❖ *Current State of EAP in China* was led by a panel of four Chinese EA professionals... including Zhao Ran and Zhanbiao Shi ...and was translated from Chinese into English. The presentation outlined the development of EAP in China, its structure, growth, and future. Some highlights included:

- As of July 2013, there were 82 EAP vendors in mainland China... most (75%) are private and provide comprehensive services. Health management is an emerging trend.
- Twenty-five Chinese EA professionals attended the 2013 World EAP Conference in Phoenix.
- In terms of service coverage, 91% offer packaged EAP; 83% offer mental health; and 66% offer health checkups.
- The EAP outlook in China depends upon: the ability of EA professionals to provide HR for EA-developed, systematic training; and a collaboration of government, EAP, EAP customers and research organizations.

Conference attendees also had the rare opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children and their families from around the world who are facing life-threatening illnesses at Give Kids the World Village, where attendees delivered gifts, greeted families, decorated cookies and assisted with other volunteer activities.

Award Recipients

Each year EAPA recognizes and celebrates the achievement of members, individuals and organizations who have distinguished themselves through their work and leadership in the EA profession. **David Worster**, CEAP, received EAPA’s highest individual award, the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Annual Awards Luncheon during EAPA’s 2014 World EAP Conference in Orlando. Other award recipients in 2014:

Maria Lund (EAPA Member of the Year); **Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company AAP** (EAP Quality Award); **Alabama EAPA Chapter** (Outstanding Chapter Award); **China EAPA Branch** (Outstanding Branch Award); **Brenda Blair** (President’s Award); and **Brian LeBlanc** (John J. Hennessy Award).

Banner Year for EAPA

EAPA’s revenues this year were up 9% over the previous year, according to the audited financial

results released at the 2014 World EAP Conference in Orlando. At the same time, expenses were down by 2%, resulting in a positive net margin of more than \$231,000 and raising EAPA’s net assets to nearly \$900,000, the highest level since 2001.

“Our continually improving financial position will allow us to implement major improvements in services to members and the EA profession,” according to EAPA CEO, Dr. **John Maynard**. “One significant improvement that’s currently underway is the conversion to a substantially upgraded association management database system, which will allow us to operate much more efficiently while improving the member and customer service experience. Connected with that will be a total redesign and upgrade of EAPA’s website in coming months, which will be easier to navigate and much more customer friendly than our current site.” ■



First Sun EAP in Columbia, S.C., was well represented at the World EAP Conference. From left are: Christina Isenhower, current VP of SC-EAPA, risk manager at First Sun; Maria Lund, President/COO of First Sun, EAPA Member of the Year; Lucy Henry, VP of Stakeholder Relations at First Sun and new EAPA President; and Laura Hall, VP of EAP Services at First Sun. (Photo by Boyd Scoggins.)

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

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Volume 18, No. 1
January 2015

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Magical Experiences in Orlando

Highlights from 2014 World EAP Conference

Editor’s note: Going to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) annual World EAP Conference isn’t something that every EA professional can afford to do. As a result, the intent of this article is to pass along some of the key findings from this important gathering to enlighten those who were not able to attend. Watch for more in-depth articles from some of these sessions in future issues of both the *Employee Assistance Report (EAR)* and EAPA’s *Journal of Employee Assistance (JEA)*, which is edited and designed by Impact Publications, publishers of this newsletter.



The Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista was the site of this year’s World EAP Conference.

“Imagine ...” was the theme of the 2014 World EAP Conference, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista. As usual the highlight of day one was the annual *EAPA Marketplace Grand Opening Reception*. The event is a great way to meet the conference exhibitors to network and see what types of products and services they have to offer. Some of the nearly 100 vendors included: Crisis Care Network, Crisis Management International, Father Martin’s Ashley, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation and many others.

DAY TWO – **Wolfgang Seidl**, M.D., head of health management consulting with Mercer Marsh Benefits in the United Kingdom, presented the opening keynote titled: “Work, Love & EAP in the 21st Century: Imagine Employee Assistance as a Confident and Unique Profession.” His discussion mentioned how new opportunities, such as the global drive to create corporate wellness services and a compelling employee value proposition, are challenging the EA profession. Breakout sessions I attended were:

❖ *Design and Create 21st Century Supervisor Training that*

Makes an Impact – Presented by Greg Brannan, Susan McDonald-Conroy and Roz Laraway, this session featured the details of a real-world continuous quality improvement project that used the Workplace Outcome Suite and the A.U.D.I.T (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test). Of particular note was the “Supervisor’s Quick Reference”

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that Susan and Roz (with Franciscan Healthcare) created for the Mayo Clinic. The handout featured key points for supervisors such as: **Step 1** (You've noticed a problem); **Step 2** (Should you refer?); **Step 3** (Preparing for your referral conversation); and **Step 4** (During your conversation with the employee). Each step contained pertinent considerations presented in an easy-to-read fashion.

❖ *An Investigation into EAP Counsellors' Experiences in Kenya* – Offered by Cecilia Rachier, this breakout utilized key findings from a recent study to illustrate the current state of EAP in this African nation. They included:

- EAP services are growing, mostly with influence from the West;
- Many counsellors have no specific EAP training, using models influenced by Western EAP vendors;
- EAP counsellors in Kenya face numerous challenges from clients including: ignorance about counseling and its benefits; missed sessions; insistence on concealing the fact they are attending counseling;
- Employers in Kenya tend to: encourage employees to seek counselling, but deny them time off for it; refer employees for counselling almost too late for real help; fail to explain what to expect, causing employees to become hostile; ignore counsellor's recommendations and advice; and
- Counsellors' lessons learned include: the "presenting" issue is often not the client's "real" issue; schedule counselling around other activities; recognition that home issues will manifest at work and vice versa.

❖ *Demonstrating the Impact of EAP Services on Workplace*

Outcomes: Preliminary Research Findings – Presented by Elizabeth Merrick, Bernie McCann, Melissa Richmond, and Randi Wood, these professionals explained how a landmark study conducted by the OMNI Institute is examining the relationship between EAP services and work-related outcomes... research that is often lacking in the EA field. "Many of us have been waiting for research like this to happen," Wood stated. "Don't underestimate what this will do for [EAP] credibility."

Study goals included: quantifying EAP impact on workplace outcomes (such as absenteeism, presenteeism and workplace distress); identifying where EAP is most effective; and estimating cost savings from reduction in absenteeism.

Strengths from the study included: with 4,000 employees in the Colorado State EAP who completed the online survey, there was a demographically and geographically diverse employee base; with a selection of matched controls, it also had a rigorous study design. (The study was funded by the Employee Assistance Research Foundation.)

❖ *Making EAP Services Relevant to the Facebook Generation* – Scott Cousino, co-founder and CEO of myStrength, Inc., shared his observations of how technology needs to be actively integrated as part of EAP services... but not as a replacement and treatment in and of itself. According to Cousino, digital delivery needs to address these key points: participation, scalability, cost (of delivery), efficacy, ownership, and return on investment.

"Seventy percent of [digital EAP] users are female, which is not shocking as more seek help

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

Editor - Mike Jacquart
 Publisher - Scott Kolpien
 Designer - Laura J. Miller
 Circulation - Kim Bartel

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than men," he noted. "Nineteen percent have health apps, with 20-year-olds using apps much more actively." Overall, Cousino reiterated that digital EAP services, "need to be actively integrated and promoted, not just passively 'there' on a website."

I also got to attend this year's *International Attendees Reception* at the Hilton. It's a great opportunity

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Keeping Financial Fitness Resolutions

By Rick Rodgers

The New Year is a great time to get pointed in the right direction financially. Just as a person would embark on an exercise program to lose weight and get physically fit, there are simple steps anyone can take that will lead to being financially healthy and fit. Here are some tips for improving employees' financial lives in 2015.

❖ **Review credit reports** – Borrowing money isn't the only reason to check one's credit. Employers and insurance companies also check credit reports. A credit score can have a profound effect on the amount a person pays on all types of insurance. Order a free report at AnnualCreditReport.com.

❖ **Set up an Automatic Savings Plan (ASP)** – If an employer doesn't offer this through payroll deduction they can be set up through a bank or brokerage account. Simply have a certain amount of money withdrawn from a checking or savings account each month and deposited into an investment account. That way, it's saved before there's a chance to spend it. The goal should be to increase the amount invested at least once a year.

❖ **Establish a cash flow plan** – Business owners know you can't control what you don't track. Take the



time to forecast your income and expenses for the year, and put it in writing. Then adjust those numbers to reach individual goals, such as paying down debt or replacing a car. Track progress on a regular basis by holding a monthly meeting to review the plan.

❖ **Pay off credit cards** – It's especially important to take action on *debt* in 2015. Cash doesn't earn much interest sitting in a deposit account (less than 1%) and even "low interest" credit cards charge 10 to 12%. So any extra savings should be used to pay down credit card debt *first*. A cash flow plan should include a schedule to eliminate credit card debt as quickly as possible.

❖ **Shop insurance** – Insurance agents are often paid commission based on premium levels, so they have no incentive for finding existing customers lower premiums. However, there is a huge incentive for a competing agent to find the

lowest premium in order to win a customer's business. Make note of the coverage levels for homeowner's and auto policies and use them to comparison shop. Look at ways to save on *health insurance* coverage, too, such as switching to a high-deductible plan and opening a Health Savings Account.

❖ **Meet with a financial adviser** – An adviser is to financial planning as a personal trainer is to an exercise program. It's important to be held accountable by a third party who will push you. Good advisers will help develop a budget, and examine debts, taxes, retirement and college savings, estate planning and insurance. An individual does *not* have to have a high net worth to seek the assistance of a financial adviser. Go to the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA) and search for one in your area.

Summary

Don't just make a vague resolution to save money. According to *Psychology Today*, of the millions of Americans who make a New Year's resolution, 40% have already failed by Jan. 31! Let 2015 be the year the employees of your corporate clients make lasting changes to improve their financial lives. ■

Rick Rodgers, CFP, is the author of "The New Three-Legged Stool: A Tax Efficient Approach to Retirement Planning" (www.rodgersspeaks.com).

Employee Assistance Report is published monthly. For subscription information contact: Employee Assistance Report, P.O. Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. (From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers.) Employee Assistance Report does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review which must credit Employee Assistance Report as the source, and include the publisher's phone number, address, and subscription rate.

Prescription Drugs Endangering Troops

The unprecedented use of prescription drugs by soldiers and veterans began during the second Gulf War and continues unabated today, said Dr. Peter Breggin, a psychiatrist and author who's written extensively about the potential dangers of the use of psychotropic drugs to treat mental illness among servicemen and servicewomen.

He added, "The combination of increasing prescribing of such drugs during and after military service has led to violence and suicide and in many cases to chronic mental disability while being treated at the VA. This becomes a disability from which they often can't recover because of multiple psychiatric drugs."

Breggin, who has testified before Congress about what he describes as the over-drugging of troops and its consequences, said

there is a "disturbingly rampant practice" of prescribing psychotropic prescription drugs to young soldiers both in combat and after they return home.

The extent of the military's use of prescription drugs was quantified in a 2012 analysis by the Austin American-Statesman of nearly every drug purchase made by Department of Defense during that period, which found that spending on drugs ballooned by more than 123 percent, from \$3 billion in 2002 to \$6.8 billion in 2011, which outpaced by nearly double the overall increase in reported pharmaceutical sales in the U.S.

The military spent at least \$2.7 billion on antidepressants alone in the decade after 9/11, and the free dispensation of meds has continued after soldiers' care passes to VA. In September 2013, CBS

News obtained VA data through a records request, which showed that while the overall number of patients treated by VA was up 29%, narcotics prescriptions were up 259%.

Breggin attributes such dramatic increases to the influence of big pharmaceutical companies over the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA, do not share this view. Both agencies insist that their doctors and therapists offer alternative therapies to address mental health issues and responsibly manage chronic pain, and that awareness of the risks of prescription drugs has increased with initiatives as well as literature given out to troops and veterans. ■

Source: International Business Times.

Quick Ideas

Whistle, but don't Tweet while You Work

❖ *Know what's allowed.* Make sure you understand and adhere to your company's social networking policy.

❖ *Keep it professional.* Use social networking sites while at work to make connections with others in your field or follow industry trends – not to catch up with family and friends.

❖ *Stay positive.* Avoid complaining about your manager and co-workers. Once you've hit "send" you can't take back what you said, and there's a chance the message could be read by the very people you're criticizing!

❖ *Be careful when "friending" in the workplace.* First, never friend a boss, as this can become awkward. Second, you

might be friended by an acquaintance you don't want to connect with, but it may be best to accept friend requests from colleagues to avoid slighting them. However, add them to a "work" list and adjust privacy settings so you can separate your job from your personal life. ■

Source: Robert Half International (www.roberthalf.com).

to catch up with EAP acquaintances from across the world that I've met previously ... and to meet a few new terrific EA professionals as well!

DAY THREE – The third day of the conference began with a keynote address, "From Imagination to Implementation" by **David Mineta**, who oversees the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Mr. Mineta described how he sees the EAP's role in a paradigm shift that has substance use clients moving through EAP to treatment to community resources. He also answered questions from a roundtable panel immediately following his keynote. (Watch for an article on Recovery Community Organizations and the new ASAM criteria in a future issue of the *JEA*.)

❖ *Video Counseling: Digital Delivery of EAP Clinical Services* was led by Stan Pope and Barbara Veder with Shepell, fgi. This interactive session examined the role of video counseling as an innovative opportunity for supporting current and future employees. The presenters discussed the findings and lessons they've learned since launching video counseling in Canada in September 2011.

"In your day-to-day interactions, how much technology are you using?" Veder asked the audience. "I'll bet it's more than last year, or the year before. Then think of how this affects you professionally."

Shepell has used video counseling for over 3,000 clients. It is convenient, and simulates real time, person-to-person access from anywhere with an Internet connection, crucial in a large country like Canada, Veder stated. "In addition



Editor's Notebook

Business travel – do you like it or hate it? Travel TOO MUCH, like some of the busy

EA professionals I spoke with at the recent World EAP Conference, and it can be very stressful. I can see where hotels and airports would tend to look alike over time.

While I enjoyed the conference itself immensely, I didn't enjoy the traveling part of it very much myself this time, which was a switch for me. Our original flight out of Milwaukee was scrapped due to a disgruntled employee who sabotaged the regional radar facility in Chicago, which caused the cancellation of several thousand flights. We were at the airport at 5 a.m., only to finally learn at 3 p.m. that we weren't going anywhere that particular Friday! We finally flew out on Monday, the 29th, and were able to extend our stay for two days, so no harm done, right?

Not exactly. Upon our return, we found our car stolen from a hotel park-and-fly, and had to rent a car to get home. I think I'm finally understanding why weary business travelers complain. Oh well, that's life I guess. Don't get me wrong, the trip was still worth it!

In addition to this month's overview article, in-depth articles on several of the important conference sessions are in the works for 2015. Other articles to watch for this year include workplace culture and spirituality & EAP. As always, YOUR ideas are welcome, too! Just shoot me an email. Happy New Year to all.

Mike Jacquart

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to mobility and geographic issues, some users also have a higher need for privacy. They live in a small town and don't want to be seen as using this service.

"It also represents a paradigm shift since we're going into a client's home," she added. "How many times do we usually go into a client's space?" she asked. "So in video counseling we need to set boundaries. For instance, can family members be present? Would smoking be allowed?"

Pope explained that EAP practitioners using video counseling need to:

- Be confident about using technology, curious to learn and willing to learn new skills as they adapt to this medium;

- Have a basic understanding of cameras and lighting, including the need to look at the camera, and not the person's face, and minimizing use of gestures; and

- Be comfortable counseling in a client's home.

While attending "formal" sessions is certainly useful at most any conference, the importance of more *informal* learning, networking – and just plain fun – can't be overlooked either! Chestnut Global Partners (www.chestnutglobalpartners.org) again hosted a terrific reception, this time at the Fulton Crab House in Downtown Disney.

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Medical History Requests enter Murky Territory

Asking an employee for access to his or her family's medical history is difficult to justify in court, legal experts say, just as a new lawsuit puts the issue of "overbroad" medical inquiries in the spotlight.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is alleging in a recently filed lawsuit that Indiana-based Cummins Power Generation broke federal laws — both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) — when it required an employee to submit "overbroad" medical-release forms as part of a fitness-for-duty examination.

The suit, *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Cummins Power Generation Inc.*, alleges Cummins, which designs and produces power-generation equipment, told employee Grant

Habighorst that he was required to undergo a fitness-for-duty examination in 2012.

As part of the exam, Cummins required that Habighorst sign a release for all his medical records, the EEOC claims in the suit. Those releases required that he agree to the disclosure of all information concerning "medical care, advice, treatment or supplies and all information related to or forming the basis of any medical, mental-health and/or substance-abuse evaluations and recommendations and/or determinations."

The real issue here, says John Hendrickson, regional attorney for the EEOC's Chicago district, is not that the company asked for the information, but *why*.

"GINA relates to seeking hereditary and genetic information, and that's prohibited by GINA unless you can show that the inquiry is job-related and consistent with

business necessity," he says. "The same is true with these inquiries that violate the ADA."

Habighorst also was given a diagnostic-assessment form that requested information regarding his family's medical history, involving psychiatric, chemical dependency, suicide and major medical issues, the suit alleges.

Habighorst, the EEOC claims, was fired as a direct result of his refusal to sign the medical-release forms.

In the *Cummins* case, the company's required releases were problematic in scope, says Michael Newman, a partner at the Los Angeles office of Chicago-based law firm Hinshaw & Culbertson. "I can see the arguments for why [an employer may] want it," he says, "but that doesn't mean it's an argument that justifies having it." ■

Source: Human Resource Executive Online.

E-Cigarettes: Where do they stand in Smoking Bans?

Many states and workplaces have banned smoking in public and/or indoor locations. Until now the debate about smoking included *what is considered smoking* for purposes of the law. The recent development of electronic cigarettes (or e-cigarettes) is changing the smoking landscape and is creating a new issue for employers to consider.

E-cigarettes are battery-powered and tobacco-free, vaporizing a liquid nicotine solution that users inhale and then puff out. This produces an odorless water vapor that appears similar to the smoke exhaled by "traditional" smokers. The vapor is, in many ways, the crux of the e-cigarette debate. Advocates say that the

vapor (and the chemicals in the liquid vaporized to produce it) is harmless, while opponents argue it is too soon to know the long-term effects.

To date, three states — New Jersey, North Dakota, and Utah — have expanded their workplace smoking bans to include e-cigarettes, and numerous municipalities (including Seattle, Boston, and New York City) have followed suit. Employers who are not subject to these expanded smoking bans should decide whether to expand their own smoking policies to include e-cigarettes.

While there aren't any studies correlating second-hand vapor and health problems, some of the nation's largest employers are expanding their no-smoking

policies to include e-cigarettes. Their reasoning is that e-cigarettes in the workplace are disruptive and may cause anxiety to co-workers about the impact of second-hand vapors on their health.

An extension of the e-cigarettes debate involves using e-cigarettes to smoke marijuana. When "smoked" using an e-cigarette, the vapor does not have the identifiable odor typically associated with marijuana use. Even in states which have recently legalized the use of marijuana for recreational purposes, employers may prohibit use at work, which is yet another reason to address the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace. ■

Sources: Jay Starkman, founder and CEO of Engage PEO, and HR.BLR.com.

Resources

The One Week Marketing Plan, by Mark Satterfield, BenBella Books, www.gentlerainmarketing.com. The author zeroes in on six questions that readers should consider when using pay-per-click ads to improve their Web traffic.

Leaders Open Doors, Second Edition, by Bill Treasurer, www.amazon.com. This book introduces six opportunity "doors" that leaders at any level — be it public or private sector — must open. ■

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In the News

EAPs Affirmed as 'Limited Excepted Benefits'

Late last year, the U.S. Departments of Labor, Treasury and HHS jointly published proposed regulations that would define conditions under which EAPs would qualify as excepted benefits for purposes of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Affordable Care Act.

The departments invited public comment from interested parties. In response, EAPA submitted a letter supporting EAPs as excepted benefits and analyzing the proposed criteria for exception.

On Oct. 1, 2014 a final rule was issued in favor of the Employee Assistance

Professionals Association (EAPA), and "limited excepted benefits," will include EAPs. To learn more about this issue, consult the Public Policy section of the EAPA website. ■

Source: EAPA (www.eapassn.org).