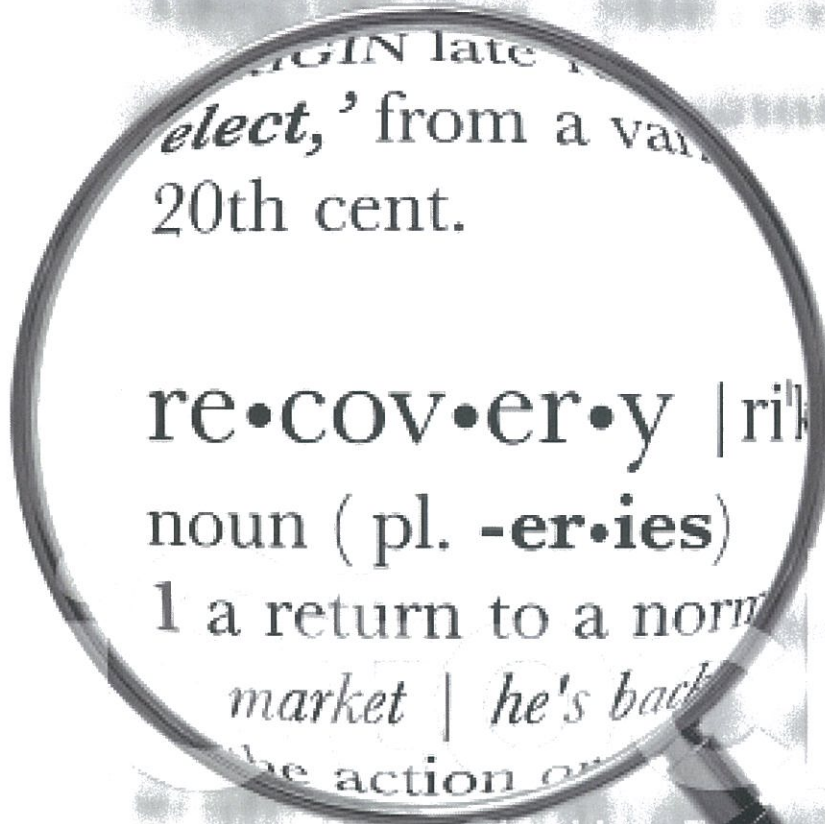


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Interview with John Maynard *EAPA CEO Stepping Down at end of Current Year*

The *Journal of Employee Assistance* recently had the opportunity to interview EAPA CEO Dr. John Maynard. When he retires at the end of 2015, Dr. Maynard will have served as CEO of EAPA for twelve years, a tenure that makes him the longest-serving CEO in EAPA/ALMACA history. His role has given him the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with EA professionals in countries around the world.

JEA: Twelve years is a long time to lead an organization. What do you consider to be some of the most important accomplishments you've seen in EAPA since you took over as CEO?

JM: I would have to say that the biggest single accomplishment is helping EAPA move from a situation where its very survival was at risk to a position where EAPA is thriving, relevant, and positioned for growth. I was surprised when I first took the job to learn that EAPA not only had no financial reserves, but we were actually underwater financially.

From that place in 2004 – and despite going through the deepest worldwide recession since the Great Depression – EAPA now has \$1 million in reserve. At the same time, we have significantly upgraded EAPA's technological

infrastructure, including recently installing a state-of-the-art database fully integrated with our new website, which allows us to serve members and others more efficiently and effectively.

Before going on, it's important to be clear that these are not *my* accomplishments. They are the result of consistent hard work and dedication by EAPA's entire staff. Our staff for most of the years of my tenure has been only about one-third as large as it once was. But, without exception, everyone on the staff cares deeply about EAPA and its mission, they work very hard on behalf of the association, and it shows in the results we've been able to accomplish together.

Beyond putting our financial and administrative house in order, we've been able to enhance the services we provide to members and potential members. Examples include the launching of the weekly online *EAP NewsBrief*, expanding educational opportunities exponentially with the introduction of our online Conference on Demand and other online courses and webinars, and the creation of entirely new courses, such as the Employee Assistance Specialist – Clinical (EAS-C) certificate course for EA affiliate providers.

JEA: According to EAPA's website, EAPA now has members in over 40 countries. Could you comment on the growing

international scope of EAPA and the EA profession?

JM: We are seeing greater demand for EAP services in countries on every continent. Originally, the demand was driven primarily by large multinational companies that wanted to expand EAP services to their expats and eventually to their full workforce outside the USA. Today, many government agencies and indigenous companies in other countries are establishing or considering EAPs. That in turn is leading to a huge demand for qualified local EA professionals.

This is one of the most significant trends in the EAP field today, and it opens up huge opportunities for EAPA. As the only global EAP membership association, we are well positioned to offer both professional education and internationally recognized credentialing to these new EA professionals, as well as opportunities for networking through our growing number of international branches and, of course, EAPA's Annual World EAP Conference.

JEA: You mentioned internationally recognized credentialing. To what are you referring?

JM: The oldest credential is the CEAP®, which remains the world's only credential denoting expertise in all three domains of the EAP body of knowledge. The

international version of the CEAP® exam has been available worldwide for many years now in English. In recent years, it's been adapted and translated into both Japanese and Chinese to meet the growing demand in those countries. Hopefully, the demand will continue to grow in other non-English speaking countries, and we'll be able to add additional translations in the future.

But, as most people know, the CEAP® was never meant to be an entry-level credential; even to sit for the exam requires significant EAP experience. So in countries where the EAP concept is just getting started, we needed something to indicate that people have the entry-level knowledge they need to begin working in the field. To meet this need, EAPA, together with our branch in China, developed the China EAP Diploma, which is a certificate program based on an intensive 4-day EAP training curriculum. Other countries, especially in Asia, have also expressed interest in developing the EAP Diploma concept in their countries.

The other credential that's beginning to take off is the EAS-C certificate that I mentioned earlier. This, too, was developed in response to a need in the field, this time in the United States. Most EAP client services today are delivered through affiliate networks of private practitioners whose EAP clients make up only a part of their practice. For the most part, their focus is on only one part of the spectrum of EAP services, and they don't really need the level of expertise represented by the CEAP®.

The EAS-C certificate was developed to offer them a relatively inexpensive and time-efficient way to demonstrate that they have the

information they need to function effectively in an EAP affiliate network. Several other countries are now asking for the EAS-C course to be adapted to their particular healthcare and insurance systems.

JEA: In your view, what are some of the major challenges that EAPA is facing?

JM: There are a number of them. I just alluded to one when I mentioned the EAS-C. Over the years, the EAP field has shifted from a staff model to a network model of delivering services to individual clients and their families. At one time, if you worked in the EAP field, you were probably on an EAP staff. So most people were either full-time EA professionals, or they weren't in the field at all. EAPA (then called ALMACA) was founded in that environment, as was the CEAP® credential.

Today, most EAP client services are delivered through networks of private practitioners, whose EAP clients make up only a part of their practice. For every full-time EA professional, there are hundreds of these practitioners, who don't necessarily identify themselves primarily as EA professionals.

So the challenge is to develop a compelling value proposition for them that leads them to make EAPA their professional association of choice or at least the place they come to for professional development, support, and career growth opportunity. The EAS-C certificate is one way we're meeting their needs while improving the quality of EA services delivered, but there is much more to do along these lines.

Another challenge is to re-engage with EA practitioners

working in labor settings. Labor-based professionals were a huge part of ALMACA/EAPA's early growth, and the benefits of re-engagement would be tremendous for both EAPA and labor-based programs. In my view, the underlying problem in the 1990s and early 2000s, when many labor members left the association, was that disagreements had devolved to political and power issues, instead of remaining focused on the educational, recognition, and networking opportunities that EAPA could and should provide to EA professionals in labor settings. If EAPA can continue to focus on how to help our labor-based EAP colleagues be more successful in their jobs – just like we need to do for every other constituency – I see no reason why we shouldn't be able to put past disagreements behind us and move forward.

Finally, I'll just mention a couple of the challenges created by technology. Of course, technology offers us unlimited new opportunities, but it also challenges some of the fundamental reasons associations, including EAPA, were created and exist. Membership associations were once one of the best and only ways to learn new professional skills, share information, and network with colleagues. Today, the Internet offers numerous information and communication options to help people stay abreast of developments. Similarly, social media platforms offer multiple networking and connection options. How do associations today compete with Internet-based alternatives? How do we capitalize on these alternatives

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to offer even better service than we have in the past? As geography becomes less of a barrier, how do local chapters maintain their value and viability? These are questions facing every membership association; not just EAPA.

JEA: Could you share some advice for your colleagues in the EAP field?

JM: Two suggestions come to mind immediately that, in my opinion, are particularly important to the future of EAPA and the EAP field. First is the importance of continuing to understand and develop employee assistance as a *profession*, not just as a *work setting* for other professions.

As was first articulated by Paul Roman and Terry Blum in the EAP core technology, the core of EAP is a unique set of skills and knowledge that, when applied correctly, make a positive difference for both employees (and their families) and for the workplace. EAP is not simply the application of psychology or organization development to workplace issues.

If we think only about the EAP “industry” instead of maintaining and developing the EA profession, we are doomed to continued commoditization and eventual obsolescence. Focusing on EAP as a profession means focusing on EAP ethics, credentialing, and research to validate the body of knowledge.

Secondly, the future of employee assistance depends on the future growth and viability of EAPA as an international umbrella organization for the profession. I recognize the value of the many regional and specialty EAP associations. They



EAPA CEO Dr. John Maynard addresses the audience at EAPA's 2014 World EAP Conference in Orlando, Florida.

provide important services to their particular constituencies. But when governments need to hear the voice of the profession as they contemplate laws and regulations, and when public media need to understand the voice of the profession as they help establish and clarify public expectations, when we have too many voices we really have no voice.

Employee Assistance, like any profession, needs a strong professional association if the profession is to survive in today's world. Without EAPA to develop, maintain, and promote EAP standards, ethics, and principles, the profession has no real definition or voice. So I hope EA professionals who find value in joining and engaging with their particular specialty association will also see the value – even the necessity – of *also* joining and engaging with EAPA.

JEA: What's next for you, personally, after your retirement at the end of the year?

JM: The truth is, I don't really know. I've decided to wait until I get there, then see how I feel. On one hand, the thought of relaxing without a schedule seems mighty appealing – as does having the opportunity to focus on all those projects I've put on hold for “someday,” like going through and organizing thousands of old photographs. On the other hand, I'm used to being busy, and I still have a strong passion for the possibilities of the EAP field. I'm certainly not interested in another “job,” but I imagine there may be particular projects that grab me for some reason.

What I *am* sure I want to do after I retire is to maintain, as much as possible, the many friendships I've made over the years during my career. This field is filled with truly wonderful people, and the best aspect of my job with EAPA has been the opportunity to meet so many of them. I'm very grateful for that. ❖