

Title: Employee Assistance Program  
Policy Number: 405  
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Authorized by: Board of Supervisors

Policy:

Pottawattamie County recognizes that problems of a personal or emotional nature can have an adverse effect on an employee as well as on the employee's job performance. Pottawattamie County is vitally interested in helping employees resolve these problems before they become so advanced as to impact their employment.

The Alegent Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been established to help deal with these problems. This program is designed to provide early identification, motivation, and referral to appropriate care.

Definitions of Problems within the Scope of this Program:

Behavioral problems that are the result of physical, psychological, marital, financial, or similar nature involving either the employee or a dependent of the employee which observably and repeatedly interferes with the employee's job performance are included within the scope of this program.

This includes illnesses in which the consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or other drugs by an employee or dependent of an employee interferes with the employee's job performance.

Pottawattamie County recognizes that if such problems are diagnosed and properly treated a high percentage of the cases can recover. Early diagnosis facilitates and expedites this recovery.

Comments:

- (1) It is the purpose of this policy, and of the control measures used to implement it, to provide a basis for in-house action regarding personal problems in a manner, which will:
  - (a) Encourage the earliest possible identification and referral in all situations where employee health and work performances have been affected.
  - (b) Coordinate in-house and community resources so those employees seeking help can benefit from the best combination of appropriate educational, advisory, helping and therapeutic services.

(2) Who is Eligible?

All employees and their household members. Household member, as used herein, shall mean the spouse or minor dependent children of the covered employee or any person who resides permanently in the "employee" residence.

(3) Voluntary Self-Referral by Employee

Through the EAP, Pottawattamie County employees and their families have the opportunity to seek consultation, diagnosis, and in some instances, short-term treatment for any mental illness or personal problems. In the event that employees or household members of employees recognize that they have personal problems and feel that they might benefit from the EAP, Pottawattamie County encourages them to seek such assistance. With voluntary self-referral, the employee or family member may contact their local EAP directly at the phone number provided to them in the literature. Literature may be obtained from Human Resources or the Auditor's Office/Payroll Division.

- (a) Pottawattamie County will provide short-term/problem resolution sessions free of charge to the employee or family member during the contract year.
- (b) The employee or dependent may contact the EAP to discuss various resources available for personal assistance.
- (c) The employee or dependent may contact the local EAP directly, identify himself/herself as an employee or dependent and obtain services at the EAP office.
- (d) All information regarding the employee's or dependent's request for assistance will be held in strict confidence.
- (e) If the request for assistance is made by the employee, Pottawattamie County will not receive any information unless the employee requests and provides a written release of information. EAP does not notify Pottawattamie County of those employees who self-referral.
- (f) No EAP case records shall be maintained by Pottawattamie County. Case records shall be maintained by Alegent Health EAP.

(4) Management Referrals

An employee evidencing personal problems resulting in substandard job performance may be referred to the EAP to seek to remedy the situation and bring the employee's performance up to standard. Department Head referrals for diagnosis and/or treatment should be based strictly on unsatisfactory job performance or behavior and is considered an

additional resource to standard supervisory tools. This program is not designed to offset the authority or responsibility of the Department Head.

When a Department Head observes a general decline in an employee's work performance or particular on-the-job incident (s) which may indicate an employee's personal problem, such as temper flaring, argumentativeness, increased absenteeism, and similar incidents, the Department Head require the employee to visit EAP (mandatory EAP referral).

- (a) The Department Head should notify Human Resources if an EAP referral is warranted. The Department Head may call the EAP at any time to discuss specific cases with an EAP counselor or discuss the appropriateness of a referral to the EAP.
  - (b) If a referral is deemed appropriate, the Department Head or Human Resources Director shall call EAP and ask to speak with a counselor. The situation shall be explained to the counselor and the employee's name will be provided. The Department Head or Human Resources Director may arrange the first appointment or let the employee schedule his/her own.
  - (c) The Department Head shall meet with the employee and make the EAP referral. The EAP will request that the employee complete a "Release of Information" form so that EAP can communicate with the Department Head to inform them as to whether or not the employee scheduled and/or kept an appointment with the EAP counselor.
  - (d) The EAP counselor will call the Department Head within the next working day after the employee's first appointment with attendance and cooperation level information only.
  - (e) The EAP counselor will continue to contact the Department Head for a period of time to be jointly determined by the Department Head and the counselor.
- (5) *Financial Costs*  
Assessment and short-term/problem resolution sessions are paid for by Pottawattamie County. Thereafter the employee or dependent will assume financial responsibility for expenses incurred during the treatment process. The employee will be informed during the initial meeting with EAP that he or she should consult with his or her medical insurance group for information on the coverage of such service.

(6) Confidentiality

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will not be effective unless confidentiality is safeguarded when employees or their dependents use the services. It is the policy of the Alegent Health EAP, that persons using EAP services shall be protected by strict confidentiality procedures. Pottawattamie County shall adhere to the comments set forth by Alegent Health.

Confidentiality will be protected at several levels and in several ways:

- (a) Ethical/legal standards of the counseling profession forbid disclosure of any information regarding treatment (including even admission of who seeks treatment), unless the client signs a written release of information.
- (b) All communications between the employee or dependent (user) and the EAP Coordinator or treatment provider shall be confidential.
- (c) No records of conferences; records for referral for treatment; or records of treatment shall become a part of the employee's personnel file from voluntary self-referral. Pottawattamie County will not have access to names of employees for voluntary self-referral.
- (d) Employees who are referred to the EAP and who use EAP treatment services must sign a written release form before any information may be communicated to anyone about the services they use.
- (e) No written releases of information used in the EAP will ever include diagnoses or any other content from assessment and/or treatment sessions for employees or dependents.
- (f) All Department Head referrals to the EAP require the employee to sign the EAP Release of Information form before any information about the referral can be communicated to the referring Department Head. Department Heads shall contact Human Resources prior to making management referrals to the EAP program.
- (g) Department Heads who refer an employee to the EAP will not discuss this referral with anyone other than Human Resources and the EAP Coordinator.
- (h) No matter what type of referral is made, information relating to treatment will be held confidential unless the employee grants appropriate releases.

- (i) Physicians and counselors in the community who are providing EAP services to employees will communicate only with the EAP Internal Coordinator and not with anyone at Pottawattamie County.
- (j) Only statistical totals, never names, are included in reports to Pottawattamie County.
- (k) A mental health provider shall maintain case charts in locked file cabinets except when actively in use.
- (l) Upon termination of treatment, case charts shall be transferred to the EAP for appropriate storage.
- (m) No files may be removed from the EAP offices except upon termination or for clinical supervision at another EAP facility.
- (n) All EAP charts and files shall be maintained separately from personnel records of Pottawattamie County.