

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

**Subject**

Employee Assistance and Wellness Program Policy Statement

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Number**

C-14

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**Purpose**

1. To reduce on-the-job problems created by alcohol/drug and other health/social problems.
2. To create, for troubled employees, a confidential system of early identification and referral to treatment.
3. To provide training, education and information to management, supervisors, employees, employee representatives and dependents about alcohol/drugs and other health/social problems.
4. To create a nonpunitive environment allowing early intervention in troubled employee development.
5. To establish a system of follow-up and evaluation of both the program and those employees who are identified and referred.

**Background**

Emotional (Stress) and substance abuse are two of the largest internal problems in the public and private work sector today. Conservatively, one of every 12 employees is in some way affected. Early intervention is essential while the person is still functional. The best potential for making positive change is through early intervention done in the work setting. It is estimated that 8% or more of the County workforce is affected by alcohol/drugs and personal problems. These problems cause an increase in absenteeism, accidents, sick leave, poor work performance and poor judgment. Experience has demonstrated that troubled employees are most amenable to assistance in relation to their jobs. The Broadbrush or Troubled Employee concept uses the work situation as an environment for early identification of the troubled employee and as motivation for assistance. Since most workers are members of households, the job setting represents a logical place for intervention. The supervisor in his/her role of work evaluator can offer help to all employees whose work performance is impaired. The Employee Assistance and Wellness Program assists in aiding the worker and his/her family in a confidential setting.

The EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE AND WELLNESS PROGRAM is a system within the County where an employee and/or supervisor can solve or rectify a job performance problem which may be related to alcohol, marital, financial, physical, psychological, legal, social, vocational and drug abuse problems. When behavior negatively affects job performance, it is a justifiable concern to the County. All contact with the Employee Assistance and Wellness Program is confidential. Confidentiality is insured through a limited record system which is numerically coded, and through the professional commitment of the program staff.

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The Employee Assistance and Wellness Program is designed for the purpose of offering professional assistance to County employees and their families when personal problems result in impaired job performance. The Program does not TREAT problems but rather offers help and referral to the appropriate community resource.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. The County of San Diego recognizes alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and other health and behavioral problems as treatable conditions.
2. For the purposes of this policy, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and other health and behavioral problems are defined as treatable conditions which repeatedly interfere with an employee's ability to perform his/her job.
3. A County employee having these conditions will be given the same consideration and offer of assistance presently extended to employees having any other illness.
4. It is expected that a Countywide awareness will encourage employees to take advantage of the diagnostic, counseling and treatment services offered through this program.
5. The County is concerned with an employee's use of alcohol and drugs only as it affects his/her job performance and safety.
6. It will be the responsibility of all County line supervisors to implement this policy, and to follow procedures assuring that no request for assistance will jeopardize an employee's job security or promotional opportunities.
7. Supervisors' responsibilities are limited to assessing job performance and initiating corrective action according to County policy.
8. Employee Assistance and Wellness Program records will be kept strictly confidential.
9. County employees who suspect that they have a problem, are encouraged to seek confidential assistance by contacting Employee Assistance and Wellness Program personnel or any appropriate public or private service provider.
10. Implementation of this policy will not require, or result in, any special regulations, privileges or exemptions from standard job performance requirements.

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11. Performance problems will be handled in accordance with established County and Civil Service procedures. Alcoholism, drug or other personal problems will not be an acceptable reason for lowering these standards.

12. The County of San Diego believes the personal lives of its employees are their own affair. However, should the job performance of an employee be seriously affected by a problem, the County can assist in a solution through the Employee Assistance and Wellness Program.

13. Assistance is provided for alcohol, drug and other health or behavioral problems which interfere with job performance, be they legal, financial, marital, medical, psychological, family, or vocational.

14. The program is designed to assist employees who are having job performance problems, no matter what the cause of these problems. It is available to employees referred by their supervisor, or employee representatives, or on a self-referral basis to both employees and their families.

15. Any contact with the Employee Assistance and Wellness Program is treated confidentially, and is not part of the employee's personnel record. Employees can self-refer through appointment or crisis intervention.

16. Anyone contacting the Employee Assistance and Wellness Program can arrange for an interview. The interview provides an opportunity to discuss the nature of the problem and outline an approach to its solution.

17. Behavioral, social and substance abuse training will be implemented for management, supervisors, new employees, and labor organizations.

**Sunset Date**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-01.

**Previous Board Action**

10-21-75 (14)

11-6-84 (25)

4-4-89 (51)

4-4-95 (28)

3-14-06 (11) DELETED

**CAO Reference**

1. Department of Human Resources