EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE This Directive outlines policies and procedures for assisting employees having personal problems that affect on-the-job performance and/or conduct.

II. REPLACEMENT This Directive replaces AMS Directive 348.1, dated 10/13/89. Changes are marked with asterisks.

HIGHLIGHTS

III. A. EAP provides assistance to employees and their family members who are experiencing emotional, financial, alcohol, drug, or other personal problems that affect job performance and/or conduct.

B. Employees needing assistance in dealing with personal problems are encouraged to voluntarily seek help through EAP.

IV. A. The Agency is committed to the goal of restoring troubled employees to optimal job performance by offering assistance through EAP.

B. The Agency is committed to eliminating illegal drug use and, therefore, does not condone employee use of drugs or other activity contrary to law. The Agency is only concerned with an employee's off-duty use of alcohol or other legal substances if it affects job performance, conduct, or the mission or credibility of the Agency.

C. Employees may participate in EAP with freedom from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal.

D. Employee job security, promotional opportunities, within-grade increases, awards, etc., will not be jeopardized by participation in EAP.
V.  A. Requests for assistance and personal GUIDELINES information given to an EAP counselor are confidential. Participation in the program is **not** documented in an employee's Official Personnel Folder or Employee Performance File, and information regarding participation will not be released without the employee's consent or unless it is court ordered.

B. EAP services are available to family members of employees having performance and/or conduct problems or to those family members whose behavior is adversely affecting the employee's job performance and/or conduct.

C. Supervisors are encouraged to contact the EAP counselors or the Employee Relations Branch (ERB), Personnel Division (PED), to discuss concerns about employee problems that affect performance and/or conduct. Additional information on EAP is contained in the Manager's Guide to Handling Employee Performance and Conduct.

D. Participation in the program will not automatically shield an employee from conduct- or performance-based action. Proposed action against employees may be forestalled or canceled upon demonstration of participation and satisfactory progress in an approved program when the deficient performance or conduct is proven to be caused by the personal problem.

VI.  A. **AMS employees in Washington, DC, and Beltsville, Maryland**, are covered by *- Employee OBTAIN SERVICES Montgomery General Hospital under a contractual agreement. Counselors with advanced degrees in social work or psychology are available to provide short-term counseling, referral, and supervisory consultation in the South Building; Beltsville, Maryland; and Hyattsville, Maryland. Employees or supervisors may telephone 800-222-0364 (TTY 882-262-7848) for an appointment with a counselor.

B. **All other AMS employees** may request EAP counseling and referral services by contacting 800-222-0364 (TTY 882-262-7848). Services will normally include referral to an appropriate community resource for counseling and/or treatment and followup.
VII. A. Employees will be permitted a reasonable amount of official time for visits with Agency-sponsored EAP counselors and to participate in EAP-sponsored activities. Employees may be granted sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay, as appropriate, to seek or participate in a community-based counseling and/or treatment program. Supervisors may permit the use of flexitime for participation in counseling programs.

B. An employee does not have the absolute right to use leave as he/she pleases. Approval of leave for participation in the program is subject to the requirements contained in AMS Directive 305.2, Leave, and other applicable regulations. Although employees may use leave to obtain counseling and/or treatment, the supervisor retains the right to determine when leave may be used and to require adequate documentation to justify the leave request.

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