

**Cornell College  
Employee Assistance Program**

**January 1, 2003**

This document provides a description of the Institution's  
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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## **Part I: What is an Employee Assistance Program?**

The contractor selected to provide this service for the faculty/staff of Cornell College is Mercy EAP Services, L.L.C. This EAP company is associated with Mercy Medical Center and Overture Health Group (formerly known as Iowa Managed Health Care), both located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

An Employee Assistance Program is designed to assist employees and their families with problems that are affecting their job performance and/or their personal lives. This goal is achieved by offering assessment, short-term counseling and/or referral and follow-up services.

## **Part II: Mission, History, Objectives of the Program**

### **Our Mission**

Recognizing that personal problems can interfere with the achievement of professional and personal goals, we at Mercy EAP Services, L.L.C. seek to provide a confidential employee assistance program (EAP) that encourages employees and their family members to seek assistance early, before problems affect work performance. Counseling services are provided with the genuine interest in, and sincere concern for, the preservation and enhancement of the dignity, integrity and individuality of people.

Mercy EAP Services recognizes that the workplace is adversely affected by employees' personal problems. Our mission is to enhance individual employee well-being and the overall productivity of client companies. Education, training and consultation is available to each of our client companies.

### **Our History**

Mercy EAP Services, L.L.C. was formed in October 1996 by Mercy Care Management, Inc. and Overture Health Group, Inc. Both companies are based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and were providing "full-service" EAP programs in the area. Mercy Care Management, Inc. offered EAP services for the past 10 years. Overture Health Group had been an EAP provider for 3 years. The partnership agreement provided an avenue for both companies to continue and expand its services to client companies. Both companies are actively involved in managing the program with 2 representatives from each company serving as the management board.

Currently, Mercy EAP Services, L.L.C. contracts directly with 42 companies and subcontracts with 12 providers of EAP services. Both companies lease licensed, experienced mental health professionals to the L.L.C. to provide counseling services and clinical direction. Laura Griffin M.S. LMFT, is the sole employee who manages the program.

### **Our Objectives**

Mercy EAP Services hold the following objectives for itself and its affiliates:

- To enhance the personal health and well-being of employees and their family members by using a broad brush approach to EAP.
- To encourage employees through educational sessions to seek assistance early, before problems affect work performance.
- To provide clients appropriate assistance in a timely, confidential manner.
- To maintain a network of licensed mental health professionals who are available for those clients living outside the Cedar Rapids area.
- To assist managers, supervisors and labor representatives through consultation and training.
- To provide quality care and/or referral and follow-up to clients while containing costs for employers.

## **Part III: Common Questions about the Program**

### **What issues are included in the Scope of EAP Coverage?**

Family Conflict	Marital Discord
Psychological Problems	Financial Difficulties
Stress-Related Problems	Legal Concerns
Substance Abuse	Loss/Grief
Work-Related Problems	Mild Depression/Anxiety

### **What are the Goals of the EAP Program?**

- \* To identify a problem at the earliest possible time.
- \* To motivate the employee to seek help.
- \* To provide counseling for the employee and/or family members and direct them, if necessary, to the best assistance possible.
- \* To return the employee's work performance and attendance to responsible and acceptable levels.
- \* To insure confidentiality re: reputation, job security or promotional opportunities jeopardized by a request for assistance or treatment.
- \* To provide a means by which the employee can prevent the development of serious and lasting behavioral/medical problems.
- \* To improve productivity with quality employees.

### **Who is eligible to use the EAP?**

All full-time employees and their immediate family members.

### **How much do I have to pay for this service?**

There is NO COST to the employee accessing EAP services.  
(There are problems that may be identified in an EAP session that require referral to other providers. The cost of those services is NOT covered by EAP. The employee would be responsible for these fees.)

**How many times can I go to EAP?**

Cornell College EAP provides 5 sessions per family per year.

**How do I schedule an appointment?**

A simple phone call is all it takes. Call Mercy EAP at 319-398-6694 or 1-800-383-6694. The person who answers the phone will take some basic demographic information from you. The purpose of this is to help identify the best site for you and to arrange an appointment.

**Who are the Providers?**

We have a staff of 8 counselors locally. All are experienced Master's prepared mental health professionals. Counselors are all licensed in the State of Iowa.

We also have affiliate providers in other locations in order to serve any out of region employees.

**Where are you located?**

Current Location:

Mercy Health Plaza  
5264 Council St. NE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

We also have services available at Mercy Care Clinics:

Marion, Vernon Village, Johnson Avenue and Blairs Ferry.

Affiliate Sites throughout the region.

### **Will my employer know that I am using the program?**

Absolutely not. It is essential to the success of the EAP program that employees trust that their confidentiality will be respected. State and federal regulations as well as professional ethics govern EAP guidelines regarding confidentiality.

In the case of a SUPERVISORY REFERRAL, made because of concern regarding work performance issues, EAP is able to notify the referring party that an initial appointment has been kept. No further information can be given without written informed consent. Any employee who is referred by a supervisor will be requested to sign a release of information to the referring party. The rules of confidentiality are for the protection of all parties involved. By assuring employees about the confidential nature of the program, supervisors help the EAP to truly be viewed as a benefit to the employee.

### **How does implementing an EAP benefit an employer?**

#### **COST EFFECTIVENESS**

- \* Improve productivity via:
  - Increased work performance.
  - Decreased absenteeism/tardiness.
  - Increased managerial time available for achieving business objectives.
- \* Reduce costs of medical benefits.
  - Decrease on and off the job accidents.
  - Decrease alcohol/drug/emotional related illnesses.
- \* Reduction in replacement costs.
- \* Reduction in discipline and grievance costs.

### **What can the program provide besides counseling services?**

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| * Needs assessment of each corporation | * Educational seminars                         |
| * Policy Statement                     | * Promotional strategies                       |
| * Insurance and benefits review        | * Assessment, counseling and referral services |
| * Disciplinary procedures review       | * Evaluation of community resources            |
| * Management, supervisory training     | * Determination of program operations          |
| * Employee orientation                 |  |

## **What are the overall RESPONSIBILITIES of the EAP?**

Provide training to all supervisors and stewards directed toward identification, approach and referral of an employee experiencing poor work performance.

Help referring supervisors prepare to conduct an employee interview.

Assist supervisors/union representatives in motivating employees whose work performance indicates the need for confidential help to receive it.

Conduct confidential counseling with employee and/or family members seeking help.

Maintain a confidential set of records separate from the medical records.

Coordinate referrals to appropriate and qualified outside community resources.

Follow-up to insure that employees and/or family members needs are being met.

Provide referral help if relapses occur or change in treatment program becomes necessary.

Remain familiar with community resources and the extent of their services.

### **Another Note re: the Importance of Confidentiality-the Policy.**

#### **Purpose**

To protect the client's legal rights and right to privacy in regard to the recording and dissemination of client information by maintaining high ethical, professional, and legal standards with the EAP.

#### **Policy**

Client information obtained by the counselor will be held in strictest confidence and will be released only when complying with ethical and legal codes.

#### **Procedure**

- A. Information will be released if demanded by law and a legal representative presents the EAP Director with a subpoena for the records.
- B. In all other circumstance, the client must explicitly give the clinician permission to release information by signing the Consent to Release Information form.
- C. Information received in confidence is revealed only after most careful deliberation and when there is clear and imminent danger to an individual or to society, and then only to appropriate professional or public authorities.
- D. Information obtained in counseling relationships is discussed only for professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with the case. Written and oral reports should present only data germane to the purposes of the evaluations; every effort should be made to avoid undue invasion of privacy.
- E. A client and his or her condition are to be discussed only in a professional manner and only in appropriate setting that won't threaten the integrity of the communication.

## **Part III: ERISA Rights and Information**

### **STATEMENT OF ERISA RIGHTS**

As a participant in this plan, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ERISA provides that all plan participants shall be entitled to:

#### **Receive Information About Your Plan and Benefits**

Examine, without charge, at the plan administrator's office and at other specified locations, such as worksites and union halls, all documents governing the plan, including insurance contracts and collective bargaining agreements, and a copy of the latest annual report (Form 5500 Series) filed by the plan with the U.S. Department of Labor and available at the Public Disclosure Room of the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

Obtain, upon written request to the plan administrator, copies of documents governing the operation of the plan, including insurance contracts and collective bargaining agreements, and copies of the latest annual report (Form 5500 Series) and updated summary plan description. The administrator may make a reasonable charge for the copies.

Receive a summary of the plan's annual financial report. The plan administrator is required by law to furnish each participant with a copy of this summary annual report.

#### **COBRA Information**

As a participant of the Cornell College Employee Assistance Plan, you will continue to be covered under the Plan (at no cost to you) as described below if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct on your part).

Cornell College has the responsibility to notify the Plan Administrator of your death, termination, reduction in hours of employment or Medicare entitlement. Similar rights may apply to certain retirees if Cornell College commences a bankruptcy proceeding and you lose coverage.

When the Plan Administrator is notified that one of these events has happened, the Plan Administrator will in turn notify you that you will receive continuation coverage.

Your continuation coverage will give you coverage which, as of the time coverage is being provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the Plan to similarly situated employees. Continuation coverage will be provided to you for 18 months. This 18 months may be extended for affected individuals to 36 months from termination of employment if other events (such as death or Medicare entitlement) occur during that 18 month period.

The 18 months may be extended to 29 months if you are determined by the Social Security Administration to be disabled ( for Social Security disability purposes) at any time during the first 60 days of COBRA coverage. To benefit from this extension, you must notify the Plan

Administrator of that determination within 60 days and before the end of the original 18-month period. You must also notify the Plan Administrator within 30 days of any final determination that you are no longer disabled.

Your continuation coverage under the Plan may be cut short for *any* of the following four reasons:

- (a) Cornell College no longer provides an employee assistance program for any of its employees;
- (b) You become covered – after the date you elect COBRA coverage – under another employee assistance plan providing similar coverage that does not contain any exclusion or limitation with respect to any pre-existing condition you may have;
- (c) You become entitled to Medicare after the date he or she elects COBRA coverage;
- (d) You extend coverage for up to 29 months due to disability and there has been a final determination that you are no longer disabled.

You do not have to show that you are insurable to choose continuation coverage. However, continuation coverage under COBRA is provided subject to your eligibility for coverage; the Cornell College Employee Assistance Plan Administrator reserves the right to terminate your COBRA coverage retroactively if you are determined to be ineligible.

If you are eligible to receive COBRA coverage, it will be provided automatically to you at no cost for the length of period required by the law. If you have questions about COBRA, or if you have changed your address, contact the Plan Administrator.

### **Prudent Actions by Plan Fiduciaries**

In addition to creating rights for plan participants ERISA imposes duties upon the people who are responsible for the operation of the employee benefit plan. The people who operate your plan, called “fiduciaries” of the plan, have a duty to do so prudently and in the interest of you and other plan participants and beneficiaries. No one, including your employer, your union, or any other person, may fire you or otherwise discriminate against you in any way to prevent you from obtaining a welfare benefit or exercising your rights under ERISA.

### **Enforce Your Rights**

If your claim for a welfare benefit is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you have a right to know why this was done, to obtain copies of documents relating to the decision without charge, and to appeal any denial, all within certain time schedules.

Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce the above rights. For instance, if you request a copy of plan documents or the latest annual report from the plan and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in a Federal court. In such a case, the court may require the plan administrator to provide the materials and pay you up to \$110 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond the control of the administrator. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or Federal court. If it should happen that plan fiduciaries misuse the plan’s money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or you may file suit in a Federal court. The court will decide who should pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim is frivolous.

**Assistance with Your Questions**

If you have any questions about your plan, you should contact the plan administrator. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, or if you need assistance in obtaining documents from the plan administrator, you should contact the nearest office of the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, listed in your telephone directory or the Division of Technical Assistance and Inquires, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You may also obtain certain publications about your rights and responsibilities under ERISA by calling the publications hotline of the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

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## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS OF ERISA

Plan Sponsor: Cornell College

Employer Identification #: 42-0680335

Plan Name: Cornell College Employee Health Care Plan

Plan Number: 501

Plan Year Ends: December 31

Participating Employers: Cornell College

Participants: All full-time employees of Cornell College

Plan Administrator and Agent for Legal Process of Plan: Vice President of Business Affairs/Treasurer  
Cornell College  
600 First Street West  
Mt. Vernon, Iowa 52314  
319-895-4243

Plan Costs: The health care program is funded through payments by Cornell College

Type of Plan: Employee Assistance Plan

Type of Administration: Contract Administration

Benefits Administered by: Mercy EAP Services, L.L.C.  
701 10<sup>th</sup> Street S.E.  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403