



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM *National Joint Committee*

Committee Members

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Ad Hoc Member

Dr. Deborah J. Atkins, USPS
EAP Administrator

The meeting of the EAP National Joint Committee (NJC) was held on May 13, 2015 at NALC Headquarters.

Attendees included Manny Peralta (NALC), Sue Carney (APWU), Allen Mohl (USPS), Deborah Atkins (USPS EAP Administrator), and Bob McCullough (National EAP Consultant, MH).

- Future meetings will begin at 12:00 p.m. and be regularly scheduled until 2 p.m. When it is determined that additional time is needed, the NJC will coordinate their schedules.
- Outstanding meeting minutes were discussed. The NJC anticipates the March 25, 2015 meeting minutes will be finalized and posted shortly. It was agreed that the April 8, 2015 meeting minutes would be posted as written with the understanding that an addendum may be presented for NJC approval and subsequently added to the posting. Today's meeting minutes will be a priority to get out to the NJC and get posted, and not fall into this backlog again. A timely turnaround is an expectation of the DACs and one the NJC is committed to uphold as well.
- The MH National Consultant updated the NJC on recent critical incidents they have been watchful of or responsive to in providing services. These critical incidents include hurricanes, tornadoes – including Moore, OK again, severe storms, and flooding in the Midwest, Baltimore protests, and districts that were affected by the Amtrak train derailment (DC, Philly, Trenton and NYC). No postal employees or their families were reported to be impacted by the events.

The April monthly report was discussed:

- Calls to the Call Center have increased over the past few months: 7.25% from SPLY, and 13% within the last 2 months - notably while the employee population has decreased by 3.69%. ASA was 10 seconds.
- There were 3 suicides reported in April; however we were unable to verify whether 1 of the employees was still on postal rolls when the suicide was committed. The NJC agreed to recognize this suicide as an employee suicide based on the known circumstances. The number is down from SPLY, and is below the usually higher rate for April. April is one of the highest months for suicide - it is not uncommon to see 4 or 5 deaths by suicide in this month. Events that were directed at suicide prevention efforts, education, and awareness were: Information on domestic violence / suicide was distributed in January; MH directing EAP professionals and assisting advisory committees to remain focused on suicide prevention; and working to get more advisory committees meeting.

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- “Mindfulness” was discussed in more detail. It is a new term in the personal wellness industry. An individual who is mindful of their feelings and can observe them rather than being caught up in them. As a result, their effect on the individual is minimized and the anxiety associated with them is reduced. The stimulating title was credited for being this month’s #1 library topic category, leading everyone to agree that it is important to work on new, creative ways to make topics more appealing in order to keep employees engaged rather than dully labeling issues. For example, entitling a stress and anxiety article “Mindfulness” gets much more attention than entitling the piece, “Stress and Anxiety”. This approach is expected to be a helpful way to peak interests in a variety of topics.
- The persistent inactivity of a few remaining DACs was discussed. The EAP Administrator is continuing efforts to work with the remaining districts who are not meeting. It was agreed that the NJC representatives would be notified when inactive districts are being addressed by the EAP Administrator. Each can assist by reaching out to their NBAs, HRMs or their respective committee appointees to assess what they can do to help the committee or learn why the committee has not been meeting as required, and then share the information with the NJC as a whole to determine the next course of action. While efforts to get these committees to meet are the current primary goal, the NJC discussed the importance of tracking all committees to ensure the quarterly mandates are being adhered to.
- The EAP Administrator and the EAP Coordinator are cross-referencing the attendees listed on all submitted meeting minutes against those listed on the master list. Discrepancies will be noted and given to the applicable NJC representative to resolve.
- The EAP screensaver is running. During the 3 week period that the screensaver is in place, MH will watch for utilization spikes in web and call center activity and other specific EAP services that might be attributable to the screensaver. The EAP Administrator is going to check with communications and advise the NJC on whether an electronic version of the screensaver could be emailed and utilized by the unions as a website posting and /or used as a promotional piece on Postal Vision. Despite previous attempts, the NJC was advised that scanners could not be used for EAP messaging.
- The NJC discussed whether coaching should be included in the utilization rate. The NJC was split. In order to reach a consensus it was agreed that the utilization formula would be limited to the number of opened counseling cases divided by the total eligible employee population. None of the EAP providers (internal, external or the national vendor) will include coaching in their utilization calculations. It was agreed that a separate line item for coaching would be added to the quarterly reports. MH is working to make this a line item, but can identify counseling from coaching cases without being on the report; and the JCEAP’s will be apprised to that until quarterly reports separate them out, that they need to calculate their utilization based only on confirmed counseling cases.

- The concept of the “Silent No More” initiative was outlined and is anticipated to rollout in the coming weeks. The predominant goal of the initiative is to let individuals who are dealing with mental health issues or know people who are understand that they are not alone. Sharing personal stories of sobriety achieved, overcoming depression, or even a loss suffered at the hands of a mental health condition will touch and inspire us all to drop the curtain on the stigma that is so common to seeking mental health treatment. MH was asked to explore whether or not it would be feasible to add a memoriam / share feature to the webpage.
- Impending JCEAP audits were discussed. Mid-year case record review audits are being scheduled, and will be performed by the National Consultant. Concerns were raised, questioning whether enough time lapsed to assess EAP professionals who recently completed a training course on coaching. The NJC was advised that the particular segment of the audit would be used to assess new coaching skills / improvement, to ensure coaching principles were being adhered to, and as a quality control tool. The focus for the year end audits was also discussed. The committees will be advised in a timely fashion to prepare. Efforts will be made to space the audits out between the conclusion of the fiscal and the end of the calendar year.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the APWU.