



POLICY TITLE: **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

POLICY NO.: **EB-14**

I. PURPOSE

The Board of County Commissioners is committed to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees and their dependents. The County recognizes that a variety of dynamic challenges, such as financial concerns, legal issues, substance use, marital and family problems, illness, and stress, can affect employees' welfare and work performance. The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for an assistance program that supports the Board's commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees and their dependents.

II. GENERAL POLICY

The County makes available an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help full-time employees and their eligible dependents that need professional assistance. The EAP provides free and confidential assessment and short-term counseling, together with prevention, education, and referral services, for employees and their eligible dependents. Information on the EAP may be found on the County's Department of Health and Human Services intranet page at <http://intranet.washco-md.net>, the County's Department of Health and Human Services home page on the worldwide web at <http://www.washco-md.net>, or by contacting the Department of Health and Human Services.

III. EAP REFERRALS

- A. Self-Referrals – Employees and their eligible dependents may refer themselves to the EAP. A trained counselor is available on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, seven (7) days per week.

- B. Employer Referrals – When an employee's job performance or attendance is marginal or unsatisfactory or there appears to be an indicator or indicators of other concern during working hours or in the workplace, the employee's supervisor should counsel the employee, in consultation with the Director of Health and Human Services or designee, with an end goal of resolving the concern to the mutual satisfaction of all interested parties. Unless the employee's continued employment is contingent upon the employee receiving assistance through the EAP, the employee may accept or refuse to participate in the EAP. If the employee's continued employment is contingent upon the employee receiving assistance through the EAP, the employee's refusal to participate in the EAP will subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including recommendation for termination.

IV. EAP PARTICIPATION

- A. Participation in the EAP does not jeopardize job security or promotional opportunities unless there are special circumstances requiring employee participation.¹ Participation in the EAP does not excuse the employee from following all applicable County policies and procedures or meeting required standards for satisfactory job performance except where specific accommodations are required by law.
- B. Employees who visit a service offered through the EAP during the course of their scheduled work hours must use available and appropriate leave in accordance with the County's applicable leave policy.²
- C. All contact between an employee and the EAP is strictly confidential. In cases where an employee's continued employment is contingent upon participation in the EAP, the EAP representative will verify only whether the employee has contacted the EAP and whether the employee is following through on the treatment if ongoing treatment is necessary.

¹ See paragraph III.B. of this Policy and paragraph IV.B. of Policy No. PR-5A Alcohol-Free and Drug-Free Workplace.

² See Policy No. PR-34 Leave.

