



## ***Work-Life Services Advisory Board Meeting***

***January 31, 2013***

***Department of Agriculture & Markets***

***10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY***

**Board Attendees:** Connie Batts, Gina Blume, Chris Eatz, Elizabeth Hough, Mia Jorgensen, Rick Keefer, Julie Miller, and Mike Smiles.

**Staff Attendees:** Annemarie Adams, Mary Caldwell, Linda Carignan, Karen Dunn, Susan MacLennan, Kimlee Marquise, Deborah Miller, and Don Terry (recorder).

**Absent:** Michelle Chapman, Jamie Dangler, Guy Dugas, Karen Galarneau, Christina Gavin, Gail Kilmartin, Michele O’Gorman, and Linda Sornberger.

The meeting convened at 10:30 a.m. Introductions were made which included new Board members Connie Batts (PEF) and Gina Blume (SUNY).

**Minutes from the September 28, 2012 Board meeting were approved.**

### **Staffing Updates**

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Karen Dunn reported that EAP is still pursuing a rotational assignment for the vacant Rochester regional representative position. If the rotation is not approved, EAP will post for the position. Victoria Smith, the part-time, temporary secretary in Rochester, left EAP in September. The position will be refilled after a new regional representative is in place to allow the new regional representative to participate in the selection process. In October, Michael Wilmot, training assistant and secretary in the main office, left EAP to take a position in the non-profit sector.

**Family Benefits Program (FBP):** Deb Miller reported that two pre-tax program staff positions have been filled, one by Barbara Feeney, and another by new staff member, Thomas Georgia, whom the FBP has just been given verbal approval to hire. All FBP positions are now filled.

### **Fiscal Reports**

**EAP:** Karen reviewed the EAP fiscal report, highlighting anticipated revenues, allocations, and expenses, and noted a balance of \$157,500 is expected at the end of the fiscal year, assuming funding is received from all bargaining units. In response to a question from the Board, Karen said funding for all vacant positions is included in Personal Services.

**FBP:** Deb reviewed the FBP fiscal projections. Revenue is projected from all bargaining units and from DCAA forfeitures, STIP account balances, and paybacks from OCA and the legislature. The allocation for the NYS-Balance resource and referral service was increased based on the proposed contract extension. Deb noted the *NYS-Ride* program is funded separately through the M/C pay bill, and not included in this fiscal report. Funding for the DIRECTIONS seminars is also separate from the funding specifically negotiated for FBP. Deb also reported FBP has one Attachment A outstanding (for seminar travel) and that two Attachment A requests, one for center grants in 2013-14 and one for a fall 2013 center conference, will be submitted shortly.

## **Outreach Report**

**EAP:** Karen reviewed EAP's outreach statistics, which include events such as health and wellness events, "meet and greets," orientations, union conventions, and EAP training for supervisors. EAP staff and coordinators reported more than 79,000 outreach contacts to promote EAP services.

**FBP:** Deb reviewed FBP's outreach report, noting FBP outreach included benefit fairs and conventions, meetings with EAP coordinators to explain FBP's programs, and retirement planning workshops. Deb asked Board members to promote WLS and said staff is available for presentations on any of the programs. Deb said the WLS overview PowerPoint is currently being updated and will be recorded as a webinar, then posted on the WLS website. FBP will be asking WPO to update the WLS brochure and posters. FBP is also moving ahead with updates to the *NYS-Ride* website and plans to mail out new *NYS-Ride* posters this spring. Deb reviewed the email usage from the WLS general mailbox and asked Board members to help link their agency sites to the WLS website.

## **FBP Pre-Tax Program Updates**

**Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA):** Mary Caldwell reviewed the DCAA report, highlighting the extension of the open enrollment period to November 30<sup>th</sup> because of the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, and noted that more than 4,391 employees enrolled in the program during the extension period. Currently, there are 8,367 employees enrolled in the DCAA account for the 2013 plan year with 2,952 employees enrolled for the employer contribution only. Mary said the new contract with the selected third party administrator was finalized and began January 1, 2013.

***NYS-Ride*:** Mary reported a slight increase in January's *NYS-Ride* participation numbers. She noted the American Taxpayer Relief Act increased the amount employees may set aside in pre-tax salary each month for both 2012 and 2013. OSC will correct the 2012 W-2's for affected state employees. Mary reviewed *NYS-Ride* use by bargaining unit, noting that PEF-represented employees continue to be the greatest users. Updated materials will be available in the spring of 2013.

## **Work-Life Services (WLS) Website Presentation**

Annemarie Adams and Susan MacLennan provided an overview of the Work-Life Services website which includes links to each of the six programs and the WLS homepage sections which are updated monthly. Susan reviewed how to navigate through the different FBP programs and Annemarie explained how to use the EAP site. The Board suggested connecting the new *NYS-Ride* materials on the website to "Earth Day" in April. The Board discussed the possibility of using social media, such as text alerts, push alerts, and RSS feeds, to disseminate information to State employees and also discussed how coordinators can help get information out. Chris suggested having a work group explore how to use some of these new technologies.

## **EAP Updates**

Karen reported 6,249 first contacts for this period, slightly more than last year at this time. Requests for assistance with housing and transportation increased during this period due to the impact of Hurricane Sandy. Contacts due to workplace performance issues, financial and mental health issues, and stress continue to be high. In 2012, EAP coordinators provided assistance to a total of 24,317 employees and their families. Coordinators responded to 45 critical incidents this quarter for a total of 113 incidents in 2012. In 2012, EAP had 276 first contacts in which domestic violence was the primary issue. Another 149 individuals reported it as a secondary issue. In October, EAP promoted Domestic Violence Awareness Month by participating in OPDV's "Light up the Darkness" initiative.

Karen highlighted EAP's efforts to help agencies and facilities in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. EAP staff and coordinators distributed information about the anticipated disaster and kept in close touch with one another during and after the storm. Within days of the storm, dozens of resources were made available for employees and families that were affected by Sandy. EAP continues to get calls from employees who are now dealing with the emotional impact of the storm. In addition, Karen noted that EAP is working with OCFS' HR department, as well as Career Mobility, to assist OCFS employees in the NYC region who are facing layoffs.

Reporting on the EAP grants program, Karen noted that since May 1, 2012, EAP has processed 136 grant applications totaling \$125,000, EAP's total allocation for grant funding. She distributed a copy of the Frontline Employee newsletter as an example of an item that can be purchased with an EAP grant. In addition to the successful grants program, Karen noted that participation in the CEAP program is high this year. There are eighteen coordinators and three regional representatives in the CEAP program. There is the potential for EAP to have forty-one Certified Employee Assistance Professionals in EAP by the end of March 2013.

### **Wellness**

Linda Carignan reported that she has assisted with the implementation of several weight loss programs statewide. Linda reported on the successful "Weigh In on Wednesdays" program just completed by DOL in Albany. In addition, she reported that CSEA's "Biggest Loser" initiative has been completed and was also a huge success. Both of these programs will be offered again in 2013.

In October, 309 state employees enrolled in the American Cancer Society's CPS-3 cancer research study, bringing the total of state employees participating in the study to 529. The study provides employees with an opportunity to contribute to cancer research. Linda is presenting ongoing training, entitled "Wellness as a Way to Promote EAP" to EAP committee members across the state. She has also developed two new seminars, "Maintain your Motivation" and "One Word for 2013" that EAP coordinators can offer to employees as lunchtime programs. Linda announced that the "WellNYS Everyday" logo has been added to the website. The content is still being developed.

### **EAP Training Updates**

Annemarie Adams gave an overview of the training function of EAP for the new Board members and a glimpse into what topics were offered in 2012, what topics are currently being offered, and what will be coming up in 2013. Annemarie distributed materials from the "safeTALK: Suicide Alertness for Everyone" training that is currently being offered and reported that Linda Carignan is presenting training at no cost for all committee members across the state. Annemarie also reported that EAP continues to offer webinars on statistical reporting and the EAP grants program and will be developing more webinars, including one on wellness and another on creating annual reports.

Annemarie reported that EAP will have 50 seminars available for local EAP programs under the renewed NYS-Balance contract, starting in June. This is an increase from 13 seminars offered last fiscal year. Annemarie reviewed the training report and informed the Board that the EAP New Coordinator Institute is scheduled for March 4-7, 2013. The institute is mandatory for all new EAP coordinators and will be held at the Utica State Office Building. Annemarie also reported that EAP and FBP staff are working on the Work-Life Services webinar training for outreach purposes.

### **Worksite Child Care Centers**

Susan MacLennan reviewed the report and noted that Beth Brumaghim is in the Adirondacks at Tendercare Tot to help with them with serious financial issues. Susan highlighted the five centers affected by Hurricane Sandy; Busy Beach Day Care Center on Staten Island was hardest hit with damage estimated to be at least \$50,000. Center staff members, board members, and parents all worked tirelessly to get the center up and running; three weeks after closing, the center reopened on November 19th. Susan reported that SUNY Stony Brook Child Care Services was voted "Best Child Care Services on Long Island for 2013." She also reported on the very low enrollment at Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the ongoing work needed due to the abrupt closing of the Children's Corner at Rome.

Susan reported on the FBP child care center grants program detailed in the Worksite Child Care Centers report. Thirty centers have received grants to date. FBP continues to provide center directors and staff with a quarterly newsletter and has also begun creating and emailing a quarterly newsletter for the centers' boards of directors. If WLS Board members would like a copy of either newsletter, they can let Kimlee or Susan know. Susan also noted the recent personnel changes at some of the centers.

### **Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars**

Deb reviewed the report highlighting the success of the ongoing, full-day DIRECTIONS seminars. More than 31,000 state employees have attended the seminars since fall 2003. Eleven more seminars are planned for spring 2013, starting in March. Deb distributed a flyer for the new one-hour retirement workshop which focuses on the resources available to employees of any age so they can begin their retirement planning. She also shared an informational flyer delineating the 22 short videos in the Planning Your Successful Retirement Video Guide, which is being used as a new handout for benefit fairs. Overall satisfaction from the full-day seminar evaluation forms is 4.48 out of 5.

### **NYS-Balance**

Kimlee reviewed the fourth quarter Workplace Options (WPO) report for October 1-December 31, 2102, noting that usage has been low. Total NYS-Balance usage for this time period was 3,086 including consultation cases, online visits, educational materials orders, and general information requests. Usage was down slightly from the previous quarter, although usage of the Savings Center is up since there have been special promotions of that section of the website. CSEA members continue to use the consultation services the most, and PEF members are the greatest users of the online services. Topics of interest remain fairly consistent. Deb reviewed the details on the NYS-Balance contract renewal process. The contract ended December 31, 2102, and Attachment A approval was granted in January 2013. All the contract documents are now at OSC for review. WPO decided to continue providing NYS-Balance services despite the lack of an executed contract. The proposed contract renewal includes more onsite seminars and outreach materials, but is still at a reduced service level to achieve program savings. The renewed contract is for three years ending 12/31/15.

### **Next Advisory Board Meeting**

The next meeting date will be in May or June, 2013. Possible dates include 5/16, 23, 24 or 6/9, 10. Deb will follow up with the Board to select a date.