

History

of the **U.S. Postal Service**
Employee Assistance Program



By John E. Flynn
EAP Administrator



History of the U. S. Postal Service

Employee Assistance Program

By John E. Flynn, EAP Administrator

The United States Postal Service (USPS) Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is the largest EAP in the world. However, it had humble beginnings. As veterans returned from World War II and the Korean conflict, many were attracted to the advantages of what was viewed as a secure environment and steady advancement within the Post Office. It didn't hurt that veterans got extra points for these sought after jobs as well. The ranks filled and the Post Office Department swayed with the changes of the time. In 1970 the congressional decision to render the Post Office Department a "quasi" governmental agency was a major contributor to a continuous flow of change in the renamed U. S. Postal Service.

As the great trends of the 20th Century, such as economics, diversity and physical growth influenced the U. S. Postal Service; the pressures of ambiguity and constant technological change became a weight on postal employees. One of the responses from some employees was an increase in drinking alcoholic beverages. In this stage of US history, drinking was not frowned upon and sometimes regarded as socially appropriate. What was frowned upon was anyone who could not "hold his or her liquor." The U. S. Postal Service has always reflected the larger US population in so far as social trends and attitudes are concerned. Just as many families and institutions in America were being affected by consumption of alcoholic beverages by its members, so was the Post Office. It wasn't becoming a problem; it was a problem! What causes problems is a problem.

The knowledge of the erratic and disruptive behavior of persons under the influence of alcohol was well known to industry long before industrial alcoholism programs were installed. Even the tremendous cost impact of this problem was well known. Industry had used medical facilities for generations but these facilities had been unable, as had medicine in general to provide the key - the motivation of the alcoholic employee to obtain and maintain his sobriety. It was not until two men, Bill W. and Dr. Bob in 1939 in Akron, Ohio, founded Alcoholics Anonymous that industry (originally in the form of Dupont of Wilmington) found a usable *and* a successful alternative to disciplinary action and dismissal in the handling of the alcoholic employee.¹

The Informal Beginning

In the 1940s and 50s, AA grew with various degrees of success. It came to the Post Office in the form of individual postal workers who stopped drinking with the help of AA and were doing what they could to follow the tenets of this fledgling program, which included reaching out to other sufferers of what was becoming known as a disease. Informally, one postal worker helped another. Many went to great lengths to be of help to other postal employees because their own sobriety, they believed, depended on their willingness to give workers with problematic drinking habits the opportunity to recover. "You can't keep it unless you give it away!" was the paradoxical attitude these workers took to their contact with postal personnel who were about to lose their jobs due to drinking.

"Miracles" began to happen. Individuals who had all but been fired turned their lives around. Moving the mail by day and attending AA meetings by night, scores of Postal employees were finding a new sober life. Testimonials by these recovered "drunks" became widespread in the major facilities and plants. Thereafter, supervisors and union stewards began giving "tips" to these recovered employees about other workers who needed, but not necessarily wanted, help. In AA this is called "Carrying the Message," and the recovering alcoholic postal employees were diligent in approaching and sharing their story. More successes occurred. Through the mid-1960s Postal management because of its success was noticing this informal approach.

From this effective and pioneering start of industrial programs, many splinter efforts began. In spite of the inability of the medical staff to turn the key to continual sobriety, most industrial programs were designed around the medical staff. Identification was usually when the employee was approaching the terminal stage. Much of the procedure was, and is, similar to the approach to solving the smoking addiction problem. Relate the horrors of the effects from smoking and then admonishing the person to quit forever. The approach seldom works for drug, alcohol or nicotine.¹

In the "Big Book" of *Alcoholics Anonymous* there is a chapter entitled "To the Employer." This chapter outlines how an employer who has invested resources in a person could intervene in a positive way into an individual's problematic drinking in order to preserve their investment. Coupled with the successes of the informal approach, this chapter outline was appealing to Postal officials because problem drinking was wide spread in the Department. As other companies were looking at their problem drinkers in a new way, the Postal Service began to institutionalize this informal program. The Program for Alcoholic Recovery (PAR) was born in November 1968.

The 'Radical' Beginning

In his early writings on the history of PAR, Mr. Stan Day, its first Manager writes:

In 1962 I transferred from the Federal Aviation Agency to the U. S. Postal Service and was charged with the responsibility of establishing Management Information Centers and a Review and Analysis capability. This included the briefing of the Postmaster General and his staff on the operation and financial performance of the Service every accounting period. These briefings also included in-depth studies into such areas as LWOP, Sick Leave, AWOL and many other performance factors. Extensive field trips to large installations soon made evident to me the size and impact of alcoholism in the Postal Service. My means of obtaining this evidence was simple — I am a recovered alcoholic and I met with other recovered alcoholics in other cities.



Stan Day

By 1965 I had begun work on an alcoholism program for the Postal Service. I visited AA National Headquarters, GSA, industrial programs such as Dupont and Eastman Kodak. Their application and success rate led me to design a different, and at that time, a radical approach for dealing with the alcoholic employee. I designed the program around the use of recovered alcoholics as full time counselors. Why not — after all, Alcoholics Anonymous used the principle of a recovering alcoholic working with the still practicing alcoholic to assist in motivating him² to gain and hold his sobriety. AA had the only successful procedure or technique that could be statistically identified in a program that stretched over all these United States and beyond.

With this in mind, we then started the design of a system involving the Program for Alcoholic Recovery. We called it Recovery rather than rehabilitation as we were to be working mostly with the Alcoholic who was still employed and employable with only an occasional "terminal" case. We used the word "Alcoholic" in the title for we felt and wanted no moral stigma associated with the word Alcoholic. It is a disease, so identified by the American Medical Association and certainly accepted by me as a fatal disease. If we were ever to make this disease an acceptable disease, then we must call it what it is, Alcoholism, and those afflicted with it, Alcoholics.

The system was designed as an entity - an industrial package. This was done for many reasons but the foremost was:

1. To prevent any local manager from influencing or changing the operational concept of the program and,
2. To assure that the alcoholic employee seeking help would receive the same chance for recovery no matter where he was serving.

The system had to be installed in its entirety - no piecemeal approach - with all the resource requirements fulfilled. To put in less than the system requirements was to



Portrait for a PAR Poster

derogate the effectiveness of PAR and would also serve to invalidate the reporting and cost-benefit sub-system.

The request for installation of the PAR system had to generate from the field. Without management support, much of the impact would be negated.

The system was a management-sponsored system, not a management-union system. Coordination was effected with all national unions and their suggestions and help gladly accepted. To retain the support of management throughout the Service, strict guidelines and procedures for dealing with the alcoholic were laid down. The objective of the PAR system is to save the life of the alcoholic, not his² job, and certainly not to serve as an excuse for poor work performance or attitude. If the employee does not avail himself of the services of PAR and he has a drinking problem, the normal disciplinary actions will, and should be taken. In many cases, the threat of loss of job will serve as an entrance into the PAR system. Once in the program, a man must follow rigid, structured, programming if he is a supervisory or disciplinary referral and cannot use PAR as a cover-up for his continued drinking. Once again I reiterate; we are interested in saving the man's life, not his job.

The system's original design consisted of the following basic elements:

1. Education - A continuing educational program designed to emphasize the impact of the disease of Alcoholism:

- To point up the progression of this disease to insanity and death.
- To educate people to the lack of a "cure" but the ability to arrest this harsh, baffling and destructive disease.
- To council (sic) on the impact to the family and the community and to the Postal Service, of this vicious killer.

2. Identification - In this element, we use every means possible to identify the alcoholic at the very earliest in his disease progression. We identify by voluntary means, supervisor referrals, medical referrals, disciplinary action referrals, union referrals, family referrals, clergy referrals, court referrals and any other source of input. The confidentiality of the referred person is protected to the greatest possible extent.

3. Structured Program - Once a referral has been received and the interview results in a person accepting help, the counselor designs a structured program for the new participant. He does this in a mandatory fashion if the person is enrolled by any of the referral avenues with the exception of voluntary. The voluntary program is by suggestion.

4. Follow-up - This element is an essential part of the recovery program. PAR does not end with a limited period of improvement or abstinence. We keep in contact and available to all of our participants for up to four years. The motivation is a continuing, never-ending factor.

These are the four basic elements that comprise the program. Perhaps they are similar to other programs. They are one segment of our system.¹

(Note: The PAR system, as originally conceived in 1965, remained intact until 1985 at which time it was expanded to cover all substance abuse problems).

Other segments or aspects of the PAR system included:

1. Confidentiality - We protect the confidentiality of each participant to the fullest extent possible. Naturally, in disciplinary cases this must be done on a "need to know" basis. No one has access to the files and records of the PAR that concern or would compromise this confidentiality. No one, including the Postal Inspectors or the Postmaster, can inspect these records. When it is necessary for an external audit to be made, only key identification numbers on the case record will be identified.
2. Voluntary Participation - No one can be ordered to participate in this program. An employee can be ordered to report to the counselor for discussion and interview to determine if he has a problem.
3. Reinstatement - Some alcoholics will travel the road to discharge before admitting they have a drinking problem. If he asks for reinstatement, we will make it very plain that we are not in a position to offer reinstatement, but if the person will come in and work the PAR program satisfactorily until the counselor is confident of his recovery (and in no instances under 8 months) he will make a formal recommendation to the Postmaster for the man's reinstatement. In most cases, the persons participating in these circumstances have been successfully reinstated.
4. Family Service - When an employee has no drinking problem but a member of his family is an alcoholic, the PAR counseling facilities are available to work with the family of the Postal Employee under these circumstances.
5. Reporting System - A reporting system was designed to provide a working profile of the participants in PAR, their success or failure measured on a monthly or Accounting Period (28 days) time frame, by Individual Activity.
6. Cost-Benefit Analysis - We designed a simple, believable cost-benefit sub-system. The validity and formula was provided by the data contained in the Comptroller General of the United States' report to Congress on Alcoholism in the Federal Government, dated September 28, 1970. We had actually been using this formula for almost 2 years before the above publication. It merely gave us validity. A further audit was performed by the Controller of the then, Boston Region. This audit revealed a cost—benefit of more than \$4 for every \$1 invested in the program - including start-up costs.

We now had two benefits identified - the human being, and the profit motive. The system design was unfolding and taking shape.

Resource Requirements - These resource requirements comprised the remainder of the system:

1. Recovered Alcoholic Counselors. PAR was designed to furnish one counselor for every 1,500 Postal Employees. Assuming a 9% alcoholic incidence rate (GAO/Comptroller General Report dated September 1970), this meant he had a minimum potential of 120 alcoholics with his group. Each counselor could expect a maximum caseload of 50 persons (and this has been exceeded in some of our installations) with an average caseload of 27. The counselors were selected on the following bases (best qualified):

A. Minimum 3 year's continuous sobriety before appointment.

B. Active in the field of Alcoholism in his community during that period.

These are the “prime” qualifications. The National Director makes selection as this is a critical position and is not normally understood by the layman. An intensive training program is provided. The counselors presently are graded from a PMS-13 to the PAR Regional Coordinator PES-I 9.

2. Counseling Rooms. It was also determined that if we are to treat the alcoholic as a person suffering from a disease, and then we must provide facilities equivalent to medical facilities. As this is not a medical program but an “action” program, the facilities should reflect this.

Sufficient rooms are provided (and renovated as needed) for counseling in private, meeting rooms for PAR meetings and administrative spaces. In smaller installations, only one room is required. After renovation, furniture and furnishings are purchased that will provide a “living room” atmosphere. No identification with “official” type furnishings is provided. The installation team using funds provided by the District or host Post Office purchases these.

When possible, these rooms are located near the workroom spaces (where the bulk of the personnel are employed), in an inconspicuous location with accessibility to and located near toilet facilities. The installation team approves site selection.

3. Cars. Cars are provided to cover outlying stations, postal installations; to hospitalize patients; to call on and work with family and various community agencies; to take patients to meetings and for many emergencies. These cars must be assigned full-time to the counselors and will be unmarked and licensed by the state. Some of the calls for help come from sites in the town that are not sympathetic to Government cars. Where GSA cars are not available, provision must be made for car lease. Each office is usually assigned a minimum of one car, and in some instances where large geographic areas are covered by more than one counselor, additional cars are required.

4. Imprest Fund. An imprest fund for miscellaneous and emergency funding is designed into the system. The size of the imprest fund depends on the number of counselors manning an installation. These funds are used to purchase literature, coffee, emergency supplies, and taxi fare.

5. Phone Service. All PAR installations have phone-recording services with a “call-in” feature to provide continuity when the counselor is in the field and after office hours in smaller installations.

This, then, is the composition of the “System” that is PAR as designed in 1965. Anything less than that System installation is not PAR.¹



PAR Supports ALMACA

In a parallel process in our culture, other companies were interested in salvaging highly trained and prominent employees. Corporate America was becoming aware of how much it cost to train a person for a position, which until recently was filled by a perfectly competent person who happened to be an alcoholic. If they could rehabilitate that person, they could save a lot of money. But standards were questioned and cost analysis was demanded.

Equivalent PAR counselors from many companies needed an organization that could speak to the evolving issues of this newly developed workplace entity. The Association of Labor, Management and Consultants on Alcoholism (ALMACA) was founded to be the spearhead of the movement.



PAR counselors from all over the country joined local chapters of ALMACA. They attended the national meetings and connected with fellow counselors from *GM*, *Ford* and *True Value*. By the time of ALMACA's heyday, union support from the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the American Postal Worker's Union (APWU) was strong. In July 1973, the National Agreement between the Craft Unions and Management contained Article XXXV spelling out the promise of management to continue to expand PAR and also to install a "Pilot" Drug Program. The unions came to see PAR as a way to help their members even when they did not want to be helped. They supported joining ALMACA because of the prominence of labor in that organization. ALMACA was interested in "professionalizing" the field because of pressures from the various companies to understand what the counselors were doing. Thus gave rise to committees on core technologies, required skills and professional credentials.

PAR 'Sold' To Management

Mr. Day goes on to say, the next task was to sell it to management.

As Director of Review and Analysis, I was able to communicate to the top level of management in the Service. It was difficult to find a Cabinet Member who was willing to admit that his government agency had an alcoholism problem. Amazing in view of the fact that Dupont and other industries had installed industrial Alcoholism Programs almost 25 years previous to this. Not amazing when you realize the possibility of repercussions. In the Postal Service, this was wrapped up by the fear that the press and the public would proclaim that now they knew why the mail was delayed - we have a bunch of drunken mailmen! It was not sufficient reassurance to say we had no more, no less a problem than other government agencies or industry.

Finally, in 1968, Postmaster General Marvin Watson and his Executive Assistant, Doctor Taylor, gave me permission to install a pilot test in San Francisco Post Office. This was significant. We were the first federal agency to install and support a formal program to deal with alcoholism. The Cabinet ranks had been penetrated. No policy statement -no resources, and a "must" to keep it out of the papers; but a chance to try it out. An opportunity to determine:

1. Do we have a problem with alcohol?
2. Can we do something positive about it with the PAR system?

San Francisco was selected as it had a fairly good representation of all ethnic groups, was situated in a peninsula which gave us a contained model, and San Francisco had been vying with Washington, D. C. on which one had the highest alcohol consumption rate.

With the cooperation of the then Regional Director, Ken Dyal, and the full support of the Postmaster Lim P. Lee, we prepared to open. For furniture, we "borrowed" some from one of our initial counselors who also managed a large hotel in San Francisco, Mrs. Betty Edwards. As we could locate only one recovered alcoholic counselor in the Post Office, we had to go outside into the community and hired two female counselors; one who served as Chief Counselor, Mrs. Edwards. The Department Installation Team was headed by me, with Ted Gall assisting, and "Scotty" Lawrence on loan from HEW. On November 12, 1968, we officially opened the door and began operation. We had an immediate response. There was no doubt that alcoholics were in the work force, that we could identify this, and that they would and could recover in PAR.

On December 12, 1968, I was called back to brief the 15 unions of the Postal Service. They agreed to support the program and from that initial contact until the present time, our relationship has been close and as a "team".

On January 20, 1969, I received a go-ahead on the installation of PAR throughout the Service, but on January 21, the Administration changed and we had a new Republican Postmaster General, Mr. Blount.

As I was still heading up Review and Analysis, I kept a low profile while waiting for the new administration to become receptive. At this time, much credit should be given to Lim P. Lee and his assistant, Taylor White for supporting the Pilot Model out of their resources on faith alone.

Finally in June 1970, I was transferred to the Bureau of Personnel headed by APMG Ken Houseman and was given the go-ahead to install Chicago and Boston PAR. The Chicago PAR became operational in April 1970 and was headed by Fulton Caldwell. The Boston Post Office PAR was installed approximately two months later and was headed by Jim Yost. Both of these installations were immediately successful. At this time, we were installing the system post office by post office, as we had not yet become a corporation divided into Districts. At this time, everyone served on "detail" as no permanent positions had been classified. Some counselors served on detail for more than three years!!

Then we went into another lull. The Post Office Department was converting to a corporate structure and no expansion took place during this transition period. Everything was marginal and on a day-to-day basis. Meanwhile, the operational offices were still going about the business of recovering alcoholics.

In January 1972, we received a go ahead on expanding the San Francisco PAR to encompass the entire District. From here on in, we were to install PAR only on a District-wide basis.

Soon we followed with Cleveland at the request of Mr. William Sullivan and then the Detroit District at the request of the Postmaster, Mr. Baker, and the District Manager, Mr. Emmett Cooper.

The next breakthrough occurred when, in early 1972, we were called to the New York Region to talk with the RPMG Larson and the ARPMG for Employee and Labor Relations, Cliff Rowland. After discussing all elements of the program, they asked us to install PAR throughout the New York Region! The installation team consisted of Mrs. Katy Bailey and me. Tumultuous and confusing months ensued. The New York Manhattan/Bronx District contained 38,000 employees. It was necessary to identify and renovate 10 different sites within the city and interview and employ 21 full-time counselors.

We progressed through 1972 installing PAR in the Districts, but not without incidents. We were partially installing in Northern New Jersey District when we ran into some opposition by top managers and we withdrew. We could have forced the issue but far better to wait and gain their confidence, which eventually happened.

1973 became hectic, but fruitful. Mr. Bolger, while RPMG of Eastern Region, asked us to come into the Eastern with PAR; Western, under Mr. Sullivan, gave us the go-ahead in various Districts and we were busily engaged.

In July 1973, the National Agreement between the Craft Unions and Management contained Article XXXV spelling out the promise of management to continue to expand PAR and also to install a "Pilot" Drug Program.

invitation of the International Council on Alcoholism (established in 1909 in Sweden) to Yugoslavia to present a paper on PAR to 39 Nations and 900 participants. This was repeated in November 1973 when I presented a paper at the ICAA meeting in San Juan, PR. This symposium was designed around the Latin American countries.

1973 did not see the publication of our Handbook but did further delineate our positions in detox, hospitalizations, and rehabilitation facilities. It is hoped we will be successful in having the Handbook published in the near future.



OPM Award



PAR Counselors ³

A Chief Counselors meeting originally scheduled for November 1973 had to be postponed to early 1974 due to operational commitments.

JEP grades were finally assigned to our positions but they are not properly aligned yet and we are appealing.

A list of the Offices/Districts now operational and their dates are attached. A list of the number of counselors by Region and the projected number will be included.

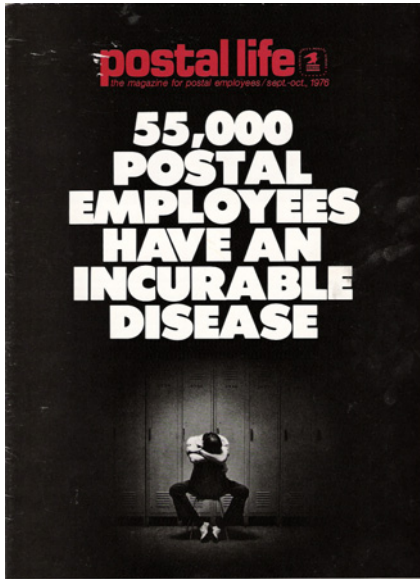
September/October 1972 issue of the NCA Newsletter contained a very good account of our system and how it works.

We were very fortunate to have a great article "Return from Despair" authored by a wonderful supporter in communications, Mrs. Jeanne O'Neil, appear in the October 1973 issue of Postal Life.

o We received good press and TV coverage throughout the year.

Some of the plans for the future (circa 1974; editor's note):

- Regional PAR Coordinator attached to each Regional staff.
- Chief Counselors attached to each District staff.
- Accelerated installation using some of the counselors now on board as the "installation" team.
- Revision of the JEP (pay) scale.
- Scheduled training and education on alcoholism and PAR at PSMLs, PEDCs, OPTO, Safety and Training Sessions.
- The start of a Pilot Drug Program in the Service.
- The establishment of a procedure to assure every new employee the knowledge and availability of PAR. This is already being done in kit form by some PAR offices.
- Installation of a Pilot Model of Problem, Advice and Referral System.



We have more than 2,000 recovering alcoholics in the PAR system with a potential cost savings of \$6,000,000 annually. Our goal for the end of 1974 calendar year is 4,000 recovering alcoholics. Think of the families' wives, children and relatives this will affect!

We have much to do and the success or failure of components of the system depends on you in the field. The System itself will not fail.

This has been an attempt to put down on paper some of the early History of PAR as well as an update. This can be a guide or an information document.

At the end of 1974 I hope to update this document. I hope most of you are still on the 'team' and for those of you who move on to other pastures, I hope you will take loving care of the 'tools' you've picked up and worked with so devotedly in PAR.¹

PAR was a very successful operation. The efforts of PAR counselors saved the jobs and lives of thousands of Postal employees. The dedication of these counselors was legendary. Counselors would be awakened from sleep in the middle of the night by a supervisor or shop steward to help an employee about to be fired who showed up for work intoxicated. The PAR counselor would immediately go to the facility whatever the weather and talk to the employee about addressing their alcohol problem. They would also travel long distances to talk to an employee who was having trouble staying sober. They would take an employee to the hospital for detoxification. AA type meetings were held in PAR offices. Although mostly men were targeted for help, there was outreach to women as well. Some women became PAR counselors. These then were the dedicated pioneers of the Employee Assistance Program.

Change of Name and Focus

As PAR counselors returned from state and national ALMACA meetings and heard from Postal employees about other problems they were facing, there was a movement to address these problems. Alcohol was not involved in every marital dispute; how and where to obtain specialty health care was important to family members. Adolescent family members had their own concerns. As the multitude of various human issues were brought to foreground in PAR, there was a realization that further training, skill development and education were required to provide a high level of service to Postal employees.

In 1985 the name of the program was changed to "Employee Assistance Program" (EAP); it became known as the U. S. Postal Service Employee Assistance Program. This was national in scope, but remained local, or district, by influence.

Discussions were held regarding the location of the EAP function within the organization structure at Headquarters and the field. After much discussion and concurrence by upper management, it was determined that the best and most effective fit to protect the confidentiality, autonomy, neutrality and the programs ability to be non-partisan would be under Employee Relations function.

From the beginning, the concept was that the EAP (PAR) should have no affiliation or connection with the Inspection Service, Labor Relations, the Law Department, Personnel, etc. It was agreed that the Program needed to be disassociated from any perception of a connection or association with law enforcement, investigative, legal, disciplinary action or grievance processes. It would severely hinder the effectiveness of the Program should it be placed in a position where even the remotest possibility existed that it could or would be used as a bargaining tool in labor negotiations. Anything less than this would give the perception that the EAP was not confidential and would have a severe detrimental effect of the overall concept of the EAP.

The districts would continue to be financially responsible for the program. With the change in name, however, came a change in focus. No longer would the program focus solely on the alcohol-impaired worker. The program now provided assistance for other drug dependencies in addition to alcohol. While it would still be about 4 years before the Postal EAP officially became a “broad brush” program, no one was ever turned away. Family members would not be considered an after-thought for services. A new era was dawning in the mental health world. The new buzz phrase in the EAP field was “broad brush” employment services. This meant that the newly emerged EAP field would concentrate on a wide area of services to include spouses, children and older family members.

End of an Era

All human involvement has limitations. The PAR and its descendant EAP programs were, if anything, human. Some of the limitations were irritants to Postal workers. While the unions negotiated the EAP as a benefit, their members in the field were suspicious of the EAP because of suspected breakdowns in communication. Some members believed that PAR counselors were informing others, notably management operatives, of the contents of counseling sessions. While most PAR counselors worked well with alcoholics, some were challenged when it came to helping employees with other problems. The confidentiality standards prescribed in 4 CFR, Federal Regulations concerning Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records were adhered to in most all instances. However, the notion of counselors talking about personal concerns of employees persisted in the field.

In the fall of 1992 a major change occurred. PAR/EAP counselors nationwide went home on Friday afternoon for a normal weekend. On Monday when they returned to work, as a result of major reorganizations in the U. S. Postal Service, they found out

that the program had changed and their positions would be eliminated and would eventually be replaced by external resources. The unions immediately filed a national grievance based on that decision, which took almost two years to resolve. This bought the pioneering efforts of PAR and the early EAP to an end.

The National Program

In 1990, after discussions with Federal Occupational Health (FOH), a division of the Public Health Service, a limited contract was signed with the U. S. Postal Service to provide EAP services to PCES executives. In late 1992, FOH was asked to submit a proposal along with a number of other nationwide EAP providers to provide EAP services to the U. S. Postal Service nationally. The cost of the program would be funded out of the national budget. The proposal would include the provision of EAP counselors who would be professionally trained with a Master's degree in the social sciences, three years counseling experience and a license in the state where they practiced. The counseling staff would not be employees of the U. S. Postal Service, but would be provided by an external vendor to be contracted for by FOH.

The process of establishing a professional counseling program nationwide would be phased in over one and a half years, moving from East to West. An EAP professional would have to be available within 50 miles or 1-hour drive time of every postal facility in the United States and territories. In short, where ever there is an U.S. Post Office. Each district would provide office space and equipment for the counselors. The population of the district and the utilization of the program would determine the number of counselors. An elaborate and complicated 800 telephone routing system would route calls to the local district counselor's office.

In 1994 and in addition to the counselor position, the U. S. Postal Service felt that value could be added by creating a position in each district that would act as liaison for the EAP. This position was identified as the *EAP Coordinator*, and s/he would be a Postal employee. The job position included the notion of "organizational development." The idea was that this individual would help the district by doing climate assessments in postal facilities, be a member of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) and be a liaison for the HR Manager. In several cases the former PAR/EAP counselor was hired in this position. Often, the EAP Coordinator was the "face" of the EAP in the district because they participated in the new employee orientation, did supervisor training and coordinated the travel of the EAP counselor. This position has since undergone two name changes. In 1999 the title was changed to *Employee & Workplace Intervention Analyst (EWIA)* because of the confusion of the EAP Coordinator being the EAP counselor in the internal program. The idea was that the EWIA would focus on the district workplace issues more closely. In 2001 the name changed again to *Workplace Improvement Analyst (WIA)*. In this case the job duties changed with the job title. The connection for the WIA would be a "dotted" line to the Manager of EAP/Workplace

Environment Improvement. Duties would be devoted to organizational development, and ties to the EAP would officially cease to exist.

Thus were the beginnings of the National EAP program in 1993. As the phase-in occurred, an important element of professional EAP core technology was added to the mix of services. The contemporary meaning of the phrase, “Going Postal”, stunned the U. S. Postal Service. After two hundred years of devoted service to the country, the U. S. Postal Service was shocked that they were placed in a category, which included violence. The Service resolved to be a model of safety. Conferences were attended and a model discussed. The “Zero Tolerance” concept and the Threat Assessment Team were formulated.

The National EAP presented a system of rapid response to Critical Incidents such as natural disasters and human-caused ones. An EAP counselor would respond to each employee death when requested by Postal management in the districts. Grief groups were proposed for workers whose colleague died in auto accidents, homicides or suicides. Special Incidents were more common, and they included natural deaths, accidents and injuries. The U. S. Postal Service became the institution to which other American companies came to learn about containment of violence in the workplace, and how EAP services provides a barometer of workplace tension. The EAP was demonstrating its value to the U. S. Postal Service.

Grievance Resolved: The Joint Committee ---

In the meantime, the grievance over the elimination of the internal EAP was settled. The U. S. Postal Service, the American Postal Workers Union and the National Association of Letter Carriers agreed that there would be ten (10) sites that would be run by a local committee composed of management and the two unions. These initially were known as “Pilot” sites, and they would be evaluated after two years of continuous operation.

Each had their own option for a model they thought would work best for their district. Four sites could not come to an agreement on the type of program they would provide and requested they be dropped from the project. One was incorporated into the national system. There are now five (5) sites that remain in operation today. Two have chosen the national model while retaining overseeing rights. Two have developed their own models, and EAP services are provided by internal Postal counselors who meet the qualifications of the National Program. The fifth has contracted with a local vendor to provide services. These sites are now known as *Joint Committee Employee Assistance Program (JCEAP)* sites.

They were initially funded at the national level and upon the expiration of the pilot project were asked if they wished to continue their program and provide their own funding. All agreed. The importance of the JCEAP sites is their connection to the founding principles of ALMACA. They are served by both union and management representatives for the common purpose of providing a psychologically healthy

workplace. Usually they convene once per month to discuss the deployment of EAP resources.

The New Model of EAP

In 1999 the USPS/FOH held a national conference for all EAP counselors. One of the workshops was the advancement of an Advisory Committees concept to guide the EAP in the districts through grass roots involvement. The presenters suggested that working with a local Advisory Committee had the advantages of focusing attention on promoting the EAP, developing innovative ways to reach the families of Postal employees and a sure method of resolving complaints. This then set the stage for the development of a new model of cooperation between the U. S. Postal Service, the APWU and NALC.

At the beginning of 2001 the USPS began to review options in terms of the management of the EAP. The possibility existed that another entity could provide management services. The National Committee had been regularly meeting since 1993, and the frequency of meetings had picked up in late 2000. The topics were many and varied, and slowly the Committee formed a consensus of what they viewed as important in a national EAP. They involved a nationally known consultant who guided the Committee with information about the EAP field, what was considered innovative and what was reality-based. The Committee settled on the general tenets of what they wanted, and a new model of EAP service delivery was born.

The first order of business was the establishment of District EAP Advisory Committees (who have come to be know as “DACs”), in each of the districts throughout the U. S. Postal Service. The value of such committees was enormous and important for the success of the overall program. Without the support of local union representation in promoting the program, the EAP would be shadowed by disfavor among local representatives of the national unions. The National Committee developed a model based on the JCEAP’s promotional activity. This would allow an opportunity to break through the wall of suspicion and animosity directed toward the EAP.

The next consideration was accessing the EAP. The current system of routing the 800 number to the local counselor was faulty for many reasons. Namely that it often got a counselor’s voicemail rather than a live person. Due to confidentiality concerns, it was difficult to return calls to clients because the counselor could not leave her/his name and numbers and exchanges changed frequently. New area codes also became a problem. The Committee decided on a centrally located National Service Center where an employee would always get a live person to speak with. Many simple questions could be answered immediately through a Service Center with highly trained



Quality Award from 1998

staff. Distribution of calls from a National Service Center to EAP counselors was already a routine matter for many companies in the USA. General questions could be answered without returning voicemail calls, and specialized information could get directly to the people who needed it without any interference.

Another issue the Committee worked with was the role of the counselor. They came to the realization that several of the core EAP technologies were not being met. Most notably were consultations to both management and union representatives. The Committee wanted a person who was freed up from focusing on individual clients. They wanted a person who was available to provide a timely consultation when the consultation was needed. What they wanted was a consultant to the district. At this time there is one EAP Consultant for each Postal District.

This then sparked the notion of affiliate counselor coverage while the newly formed role of District EAP Consultant could perform training and consultation while keeping the pulse of the district. The consultant would be further freed up by having the National Service Center case manage the affiliate counselors in the field. Currently, there are in excess of 60,000 affiliate counselors available, in over 17,000 locations to see postal employees and their family members across the nation.

The National Committee agreed that training of District Advisory Committee members would be their prerogative after selection of local representatives. A series of PSTN broadcasts were scheduled with opportunity to ask questions. Training manuals were provided.

The new model of EAP service delivery began on November 1, 2001. The surprise was that there were so few glitches in the transition. FOH and the vendor geared up for the transition by meeting frequently by teleconference and traveling around the country. In January of 2002 the EAP web site was added to the mix of services. *EAP4YOU.com* was introduced with a service for employees that they have long wanted. Child and elder care providers were made available from the 800 number or over the web site. Shortly thereafter FOH developed the *DAC Information Site* so that promotional materials, Best Practices, EAP related articles, graphics and core documents for the EAP became available for the Advisory Committees and more are envisioned for the future.

The U. S. Postal Service EAP started as a helping hand from one alcoholic to another. It developed into the pioneering efforts of a group of dedicated, if human, postal employees who were regarded with reverence in the EAP field, in ALMACA and its successor, the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA).

With the advent of the "broad brush" EAP, the PAR/EAP moved forward to be positioned to provide a wider range of multiple services. In 1993, EAP became professionalized and offered a full range of EAP service, which the Postal Service has come to value highly. The new model continued providing services through the Interagency Agreement with Federal Occupational Health (FOH), contracting with an

external vendor to provide EAP counselors. EAP counselors would be professionally trained with a Master's degree in the social sciences, three years counseling experience and a license in the state where they practiced. Changes came fast, and human nature historically does not like the swiftness of modern life. The PAR/EAP has come a long way since 1968, from providing assistance to an average of 4,000 individuals in the early years, to now where at any given time there are 15,000 to 20,000 employees and family members utilizing the services of the EAP.

But the U. S. Postal Service EAP will continue to be successful because “We Care” about people.



Calendar of Historical USPS EAP Dates

Date	Event
1968	Program for Alcoholic Recovery (PAR) founded
1985	Name Change to Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
1992-93	"Black Monday" PAR/EAP Counselors took Other Jobs, Transferred or Retired.
1993	NALC & APWU File Grievance
1993	Interagency Agreement with Federal Occupational Health (FOH) for National EAP Services
1994	National Advisory Committee Formed
1996	Second Interagency Agreement with FOH
2001	National Committee Formulates a New Model of EAP Service Delivery
2001	District EAP Advisory Committees Formed
2001	New Model Begins in November
2002	EAP4YOU.com and the DAC Information Site are Launched

EAP Program Managers	Term
Stan Day	1968 - 1974
Katy Bailey	1974 - 1977
Arley Henderson	1977 - 1980
John McPhee	1980 - 1987
John Kurutz	1987 - 2000
Nancy James	2000 - 2005
EAP Administrator	Term
John Flynn	1987 -

Footnotes

¹ Day, Stanley K.; Director of Program for Alcoholic Recovery (PAR) and Health Service Officer; internal USPS unpublished manuscript, circa 1974.

² The references to “his,” “him,” “he,” “man,” at the time of Stan Day’s writing were used in general terms and meant to cover both genders.

³ PAR Counselors

PAR COUNSELOR	LOCATION
Fernando Correa	Amarillo, TX
Myrtle Hill	Los Angeles, CA
Katie Bailey	Washington, DC
Arley Henderson	Memphis, TN
Lucille Bradford	Los Angeles, CA
Simmy McNeeley	Memphis, TN
Joe LaCosta	San Jose, CA
Russ Davenport	Van Nuys, CA
Ivan Vigil	Denver, CO
Bobby Twiggs	Richmond, VA
Jeanne Koepivick	Long Beach, CA
Marge Carroll	Orange, CA
Gene Corrico	Reno, NV
Merle Nelson	Bakersfield, CA
James Bailey	Los Angeles, CA
Adine Johns	Englewood, CA
Benjamin Sharkey	Corpus Christi, TX
Joe Head	El Paso, TX
Dwight Trotter	Alambra, CA
Larry Wortman	Eugene, OR
James Clemmons	Englewood, CA
Dale Anderson	San Diego, CA
Larry Brouse	Denver, CO
Robert Crain	Alaska

My sincere thanks to the following individuals for assistance with this booklet:

Helen Geld, Designer
Brian Sugden, Reviewer
Meg Ausman, Research Historian
Daniel Afzal, Photographer
Ken Eichenold, Editor



History by Brochure: 1970 to 2004



John E. Flynn