

		<b>Policy # 815</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Substance Abuse		
<b>Responsible Department:</b> Personnel Services		
<b>Effective Date:</b> 09/1974		<b>Revision Date:</b> 12/1987
<b>David Devine</b> <b>Director of Personnel Services</b>		<b>Navdeep S. Gill</b> <b>County Executive</b>

### **1. Purpose**

To assure that any County employee affected by substance abuse will be encouraged to take advantage of the diagnostic, counseling, and treatment services available through the County's Employee Assistance Program.

### **2. Authority**

2.78.030 of the Personnel Ordinance –Drug Free Workplace and Pre-Employment Drug Test

### **3. Scope**

The scope of the County's concern with substance abuse is limited to job related factors.

### **4. Policy**

The County recognizes substance abuse as a problem that is treatable. Employees who suspect that they may have a substance abuse problem are encouraged to voluntarily seek counseling and information through the County Employee Assistance Program.

The decision to accept treatment for any illness, including substance abuse, is the personal decision of the employee. Although the intent of this policy is to assist all parties (employee, management, and labor organizations) in an effort to keep the employee working, the employee's rights to confidentiality and to refuse service take priority.

The County's concern with substance abuse is strictly limited to its effects on the employee's job performance. Referrals for diagnosis and treatment will be based strictly on unsatisfactory job performance. Implementation of this policy will neither require nor result in any special regulations,

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privileges, or exemptions from the standard administrative practices applicable to job performance requirements, except as may be outlined in a negotiated labor agreement.

An employee's request for diagnosis and treatment of substance abuse problems will not jeopardize his/her job security or promotional opportunities.

Methods of referring employees for treatment and maintaining clinical records conform to state and federal regulations for confidentiality.

Immediate supervisors in operating departments are responsible for implementing these policies and procedures.

**DEFINITIONS:** Several definitions that further serve to place substance abuse in perspective are the following:

**Alcoholism:** A chronic disease, characterized by repeated excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages which interferes with health, interpersonal relations, or economic functioning. If untreated, alcoholism becomes more severe and may be fatal. It may take years to reach the last stage.

**Alcoholic:** An individual who has alcoholism. The term "recovering alcoholic" describes the person who is abstinent.

**Drug abuse:** Drug use that is out of control and has an adverse effect on the user's life. The drug may be "legal" (prescription) or "illegal" (street drug).

**Poly drug user:** A person who uses more than one drug with or without alcohol.

**Problem drinker:** Any employee whose use of alcohol frequently affects his/her work adversely.

**Substance abuse:** Alcoholism and/or drug abuse.

### STANDARDS OF APPLICATION

The County's concern with any substance abuse is limited strictly to its effects on an employee's job performance. An employee will be referred for diagnosis and treatment only because of unsatisfactory job

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performance, when unsatisfactory performance appears to be caused by a medical or behavioral problem.

Implementation of this policy will neither require nor result in any special regulations, privileges, or exemptions from the standard administrative practices applicable to job performance requirements, except as may be outlined in a negotiated labor agreement.

### Employee's Rights and Responsibilities

An employee's request for diagnosis and treatment of substance abuse problems will not jeopardize his/her job security or promotional opportunities.

The employee has the right to decide whether or not to accept treatment for any illness, including substance abuse.

The employee has the right to request leave time based on accrued leave balances or Leave of Absence (LOA) for the purpose of treatment or rehabilitation. Leave time will be granted under the same conditions as apply to any illness.

- Leave time can include vacation, sick leave, compensating time off (CTO), holiday in lieu hours (HIL), or leave of absence without pay.

Employees who suspect that they may have a substance abuse problem, even in the early stages, should consider voluntarily contacting an appropriate counselor for confidential counseling and information.

Employees may contact the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator, Department of Health for counseling and referrals.

### Supervisor's Responsibilities

All supervisors are responsible for implementing these policies and procedures. Before proceeding, refer to Attachment 1: Section 11 of Supervisor's Guide on Employee Counseling to Improve Unsatisfactory Performance.

Most supervisors are not expected to have the professional qualifications to diagnose substance abuse or any other disease.

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Supervisors may refer employees to the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator, Department of Health for counseling and referrals.

Maintenance of Confidentiality: County policy and practice, in accordance with state and federal regulations, is to maintain confidentiality of employees' clinical records. All employee records related to substance abuse are maintained separately from any other County records, in locked files. No such records will be released without the employee's written permission.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Program Direction: The Health Department, Division of Alcoholism and Drug Programs is responsible for overall program coordination.

Consultation Service: Implementing Substance Abuse Policy. The Employee Assistance Coordinator, Division of Alcohol and Drug Programs, is responsible for assisting supervisors, employees, and labor organizations to implement this policy. Employees and supervisors may contact the Employee Assistance Coordinator (440-6233) at any time for consultation.

Consultation Service: Evaluation and Referral. Employees may use the evaluation and referral services of the Employee Assistance Coordinator in matters other than substance abuse, such as family, health, and financial problems. Sometimes it may not be clear whether the employee is a substance abuser. Sometimes another family member is the substance abuser. In both cases, services will be offered.

### Treatment Services

County employees may receive free outpatient counseling services for themselves and their families at the Sacramento Alcoholism Center and Alternatives Program, 1708 Q Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, phone 440-6233.

Treatment records are strictly confidential and treatment information can be divulged only with the employee's written permission.

All prepaid County group health insurance plans cover medically necessary, inpatient detoxification. Most County health plans do not cover treatment

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beyond detoxification. (Exceptions: Kaiser's outpatient Alcoholism Clinic and Sacramento County Health Plan, Employee Counseling Service.)

Some employees may receive counseling through special employee assistance programs. (Example: deputy sheriffs)

Some employees also may be eligible for treatment paid for by a spouse's insurance, or the Veteran's Administration or other publicly funded programs.

### PROCEDURES:

Operating Department Responsibilities: Immediate supervisors in operating departments are responsible for implementing these policies and procedures.

Identify possible alcohol or drug problems. It is important to bear in mind that the presence of one or more indicators does not in itself prove the existence of a substance abuse problem. Some of the indicators listed below can be caused by injury or illness not associated with substance abuse. Some symptoms are:

- Absenteeism: 1) repeated Friday, Monday or part-day absences; 2) frequent reporting of absences by persons other than the employee; 3) unusual excuses.
- Morning substance use before going to work, or signs of withdrawal on the job. (Hangovers and other symptoms vary with the substance.)
- Substance abuse during working hours. (Some supervisors permit moderate alcohol use during lunch breaks.)
- Lying about inconsequential matters.
- Increasing lack of responsibility.
- Mood changes in a previously stable employee.
- Frequent loud talking, irritability, or nervousness.
- Avoiding the supervisor.

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- Long lunch or other break periods.
- Use of breath purifiers.
- Hand tremors, flushed face, dilated or constricted pupils, etc.

Initiate disciplinary actions. Although this policy does not replace the usual disciplinary process, it is recognized that a special situation may exist. For specific instructions on how to deal with performance problems related to substance abuse, see the Sacramento County booklet, Supervisor's Guide on Employee Counseling to Improve Unsatisfactory Performance. (See Attachment 1: Section 11 of Supervisor's Guide on Employee Counseling to Improve Unsatisfactory Performance)

### **5. Review**

To be reviewed every 5 years or as needed to reflect changes in the law.