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Department:  
Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

# **POLICY ON WELLNESS MANAGEMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

1.(a) Human Resources are the heartbeat of an organisation and their wellbeing should be central to the strategic goals of an organisation, as internal and external stressors impact negatively on an individuals work performance and this naturally affects the service delivery targets of the organisation.

(b) Numerous studies have shown that the health and wellbeing of employees contribute positively to the work environment with positive outcomes on performance and productivity, and it therefore makes economic sense to have a healthy and vibrant workforce who are better able to manage their health through sustainable health programmes than to have a workforce that is prone to illnesses and inevitably, contributes to a high absenteeism and presenteeism rate, low productivity levels and a low performance rate.

(c) There is a strong proposition that by helping employees resolve their personal problems, they feel better and when they feel better, they work better, which is why the Wellness Management programme takes on a preventative or proactive approach rather than a curative or reactive approach.

(d) It promotes self-efficacy whereby employees are able to make and sustain healthier choices for themselves and their families, and the Worklife balance programme promotes flexibility in the workplace to accommodate work, personal and family needs which can result in benefits to organisations due to higher levels of employee satisfaction and motivation.

## DEFINITIONS

2. For the purpose of this policy, unless the context indicates otherwise–

“**COGTA**” means the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

“**Counseling**” means therapeutic intervention by a trained professional such as a social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist;

“**Designated Senior Manager**” means a member of the Senior Management Service who is tasked with championing the Wellness Management programme within COGTA

“**Employee**” means an employee as defined in the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994);

“**EAP**” means the Employee Assistance Programme, which is a worksite based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity

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problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, but not limited to, health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may adversely affect an employee's job performance;

**"Employee Wellness Committee"** means a committee that is established by the HOD to initiate, develop, promote, maintain and review measures to ensure the wellness of employees at the workplace. This is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of relevant representatives as indicated by different Chief Directorates;

**"EHWP"** means Employee Health and Wellness Programme;

**"Head of Department or HOD"** means the incumbent of a post mentioned in column 2 of Schedule 1, 2 or 3 of the Public Service Act, 1994 and includes any employee acting in such post;

**"Intellectual Wellness"** means the utilisation of human resources and learning resources to expand knowledge and improve skills;

**"Intervention"** means therapeutic and professional guidance to any employee in order to overcome his or her problem/s;

**"Immediate family"** means an employee's spouse or life partner, parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, children, adopted children, grandchildren or siblings;

**"Peer Educator"** means an employee who is trained in working with his/her peers, sharing information and guiding a discussion using his/her peer experience and knowledge;

**"Physical Wellness"** means the promotion of the wellbeing of one's body to ensure optimal health and functioning;

**"Social Wellness"** means the positive and interdependent relationship with others and nature;

**"Wellness"** means an active process through which organisations become aware of, and make choices towards a more successful existence. For both the individual and the organisation, the concept of wellness is one where active steps can be taken that

reduce chronic disease, and mitigate its debilitating impact on personal lives and organisational productivity;

**“Wellness Coordinator”** means an employee tasked with the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of wellness programmes. The Wellness Coordinator can be professionally trained and registered with a relevant statutory body to perform therapeutic interventions, if not, such cases should be referred; and

**“Workplace programme”** means an intervention to address a specific issue within the workplace.

### **PURPOSE**

3. The purpose of this policy is to provide comprehensive guidelines for effective implementation of Wellness Management workplace programmes within COGTA as part of the overall employee health and wellness initiative as prescribed by the KwaZulu Natal Office of the Premier.

### **ENABLING PROVISIONS**

4. This policy is governed by the following legislation and policy documents –
- (a) Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997);
  - (b) Compensation for Occupational Diseases and Injuries Act, 1993 (Act No.130 of 1993);
  - (c) EAPA Standards and Professional Guidelines for Employee Assistance Program, 2010 Edition;
  - (d) Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service, 2008;
  - (e) Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No.55 of 1998);
  - (f) Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995);
  - (g) Mental Health Care Act, 2002 (Act No.17 of 2002);
  - (h) National Sports and Recreation Act, 1998 (Act No. 110 of 1998);
  - (i) Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993);
  - (j) Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act No. 4 of 2000);
  - (k) Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994) and Public Service Regulations, 2001; and
  - (l) Tobacco Products Control, 1993 (Act No. 83 of 1993).

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## **OBJECTIVES**

5. The objectives of this policy are to–

- (a) improve the individual wellness of employees which includes the promotion of physical, social, emotional, occupational, spiritual, financial and intellectual wellness of individuals in the world of work;
- (b) create an organisational culture conducive to wellness and comprehensive identification of psycho-social health risk;
- (c) support Work-Life Balance through flexible policies in the workplace to accommodate work, personal and family needs; and
- (d) address the wellness needs of employees through preventative and curative measures.

## **APPLICATION**

6. This policy applies to all employees of COGTA.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **7.(1) Confidentiality**

- (a) Employees utilizing the Wellness Management programme are assured of confidentiality, except in cases of risk to self and others or in terms of legislation.
- (b) Breach of confidentiality will warrant disciplinary procedures to be implemented against the responsible person.

### **(2) Professionalism and Autonomy**

- (a) Only registered professionals must be allowed to provide therapeutic interventions.
- (b) As far as possible the generic principles of respect for autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and distributive justice must guide the actions of all professionals working in the field of Wellness Management.

### **(3) Accessibility**

Wellness services must be easily accessible to all employees at all levels of employment and their immediate family members either as referrals from supervisors and other colleagues or on a voluntary self-referral basis.

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**(4) Coherence and cohesiveness**

- (a) The application of this Policy must be compatible with all human resource management and development processes.
- (b) Policy measures must not contradict the measures of other related policies applicable in the Public Service.
- (c) The service delivery models must offer the same package to employees regardless of whether they are offered in-house, outsourced or in collaboration with other departments.
- (d) The programmes/protocols that are offered must not contradict each other in various departments.

**(5) Performance focus**

- (a) Employee participation in the EHWP is voluntary.
- (b) Utilisation of the programme must not jeopardise an employee's promotional opportunities or affect job security.
- (c) Employees participating in the EHWP must not be deprived of any benefits provided under current agreements or departmental policies.
- (d) Employees have a right to refuse the recommendations regarding counselling or treatment but, in such circumstances, the employee will not be guaranteed assistance should further related instances of unacceptable behaviour or job performance arise.
- (e) If employees accept treatment or counselling programmes but then subsequently default on or discontinue them, then further related job performance or behaviour problems must be dealt with according to departmental policies.
- (f) This Policy does not alter or supplement existing procedures for correcting unsatisfactory performance and will not be a basis, in itself, for discipline.
- (g) Participation in the EHWP does not replace standard disciplinary or incapacity procedures.

**(6) Flexibility and adaptability**

Wellness Management establishes and maintains a holistic approach to remedy personal, social and emotional problems.

**WELLNESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES**

8. The following Wellness Management Programmes and activities are applicable to COGTA—

**(1) PREVENTION PROGRAMMES**

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- (a) COGTA will conduct needs assessments to ensure an appropriate and effective programme.
- (b) Programme design will be based on an assessment and identification of the department's and employees' needs as they relate to the EHWP utilisation.
- (c) COGTA will ensure the implementation of outreach, advocacy and educational programmes to employees and their immediate family members about the availability of Employee Wellness services.
- (d) COGTA will provide confidential, appropriate and timely problem identification or assessment services for employees' personal concerns that may affect job performance.
- (e) COGTA will encourage physical exercise, recreation and relaxation of employees.
- (f) COGTA will encourage employees to manage lifestyle diseases and health risks.
- (g) COGTA will encourage employees to undergo medical check ups and to manage their health conditions.
- (h) COGTA will promote good nutrition, healthy diet and weight control.

## **(2) TREATMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAMMES**

COGTA will–

- (a) ensure appropriate referrals of employees for diagnosis, treatment, assistance, case monitoring and follow-up services;
- (b) ensure the formation of linkages between the workplace EHWP, community resources and service providers who provide such services;
- (c) encourage employees to access health care options;
- (d) follow up services for employees who have utilised the EHWP;
- (e) ensure appropriate marketing and promotion of the programme which must be ongoing, realistic, honest, specific and consistent; and
- (f) determine the following:
  - (i) excused absence when employees are referred to consult with the EHWP;
  - (ii) the time duration of each counselling session. (One (1) hour excluding travelling time is considered appropriate for each session.); and
  - (iii) a maximum number of sessions per incident in a given period, with a maximum of six (6) sessions per incident, provided that upon further assessment of the employee, a further six (6) sessions may be allocated to

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reach a maximum of twelve (12) sessions per incident within 3 months of the initial assessment, with no limitation to the number of incidents.

(g) COGTA may provide employees with treatment benefits subject to approval by the Head of Department or delegate and the availability of financial resources.

### **(3) REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

(a) Employees can access the EHWP either through self referral, informal referral or formal referral, such as -

(i) a self-referral occurs when an employee voluntarily contacts EHWP to seek assistance;

(ii) an informal referral occurs when a supervisor, friend or co-employee recommends the EHWP to an employee; and

(iii) a formal referral is based on job performance results and a recommendation from an employee's supervisor.

(b) Employees may be assessed for referral to a service provider participating in the programme at any time.

(c) Employees who voluntarily seek assistance from the EHWP but do not want their supervisors to know of their participation, can arrange appointments outside of working hours, during lunch periods or during periods of approved leave.

(d) The nature of an employee's problem must not be disclosed, however, the supervisor must be kept informed of in-house consultations and external referrals, which may affect the employee's attendance at work.

(e) No information regarding the precise nature of the employee's personal problem(s) may be revealed to supervisors without the employee's informed written consent.

### **(4) TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

(a) Training on Employee Wellness Management must be offered to empower managers, supervisors, Wellness Practitioners and union representatives.

(b) Specific supervisory training enables the supervisor, among others, to-

(i) recognise and identify various problem signs and symptoms in his/her workforce;

(ii) ensure objectivity and consistency in managing the employees who require EHWP services;

(iii) establish a sufficient knowledge base for referral procedures, documentation, referral data base and the contact numbers of the Employee Wellness Practitioners to refer employees accordingly; and

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- (iv) reintegrate employees after treatment or rehabilitation into the workplace

**(5) DOCUMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**

- (a) Proper safekeeping, and up-to-date and ongoing maintenance of records are required to assist in the recognition and identification of problem signs, symptoms and monitoring of the interventions.
- (b) Employee records must only contain information that is directly related to and necessary for the provision of the service.
- (c) A separate filing system for the clinical information of the employee utilising the EHWP services must be kept. Therefore, information pertaining to the precise nature of an employee's problem(s) must be treated confidentially.
- (d) The supervisor must receive feedback on a referred case, but without any breach of confidentiality.
- (e) Follow-up services must be monitored and recorded accordingly.
- (f) All records of closed cases or of those employees who have exited the service are to be retained and disposed of in terms of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).
- (g) EHWP records must not be part of employee personnel records. EHWP records are the property of the Employee Health and Wellness Component and no unauthorised person may have access to them.
- (h) There are limits to the confidentiality of records, including but not limited to—
  - (i) when required by law and professional obligation, such as reporting a case of abuse or neglect;
  - (ii) *bona fide* professional assistance;
  - (iii) when the employee signs a consent for release of information form;
  - (iv) situations deemed potentially "life threatening" (when there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about the physical well-being and safety of the employee, or about others who may be threatened by the employee, steps shall be taken as are judged necessary); and
  - (v) compliance with a court order or a subpoena.

**(6) SICK LEAVE**

The normal sick leave provisions contained in the Determination on Leave of Absence in the Public Service issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration, are applicable to an employee utilising the EHWP, provided that—

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- (a) The Department of COGTA's procedures regarding incapacity are instituted in the event that an employee is too ill to perform his or her current work; and
- (b) the Manager or Supervisor concerned examines opportunities to reasonably accommodate such an employee in an endeavor to keep such employee economically active for as long as he or she is medically fit.

**(7) DEFAULTING IN TREATMENT**

- (a) In the event of an employee defaulting in the treatment programme, voluntarily or due to poor participation and motivation, then any payments paid by the COGTA on behalf of the employee will be recovered from the employee.
- (b) Should an employee who has successfully completed treatment suffer a relapse, then the full report must be submitted to the Head of Department or his or her delegate by the EHWP recommending any further action to be taken.
- (c) Employees must be informed accordingly of the provisions of sub-item (a) and (b) at the commencement of the treatment programme.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

9. This policy identifies the following role players, their functions and responsibilities:

(1) The Head of Department must–

- (a) ensure the implementation of the Wellness Management Policy in his or her Department;
- (b) appoint a designated senior manager to champion the Wellness Management programmes in the workplace;
- (c) ensure the necessary funds, infrastructure and resources are in place to establish and maintain the EHWP within COGTA;
- (d) establish an Employee Wellness Committee or similar structure that must serve to oversee the implementation of Wellness Management programmes in the workplace; and
- (e) consult with the committee with a view to initiating, developing, promoting, maintaining and reviewing measures to ensure the wellbeing of employees at work.

(2) The Designated Senior Manager must–

- (a) structure, strategise, plan and develop holistic employee wellness programmes;
- (b) manage employee wellness strategies and policies;
- (c) align and interface the organisational wellness policy with other relevant policies

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and procedures;

- (d) ensure that financial and human resources are allocated for the management and implementation of the Policy and programmes;
- (e) liaise with, manage and monitor external employee wellness service providers;
- (f) monitor and evaluate implementation of wellness interventions; and
- (g) plan interventions based on risks and needs analysis.

(3) All Managers and Supervisors must–

- (a) ensure adherence to the provisions of this Policy;
- (b) provide an enabling environment with open communication channels concerning employee wellness;
- (c) attend training sessions on the management of employees in the workplace, as well as all other activities relating to EHWP;
- (d) serve as a referral agent for employees who may require assistance from the EHWP;
- (e) manage employees who are presenting with performance related problems in accordance with the policies and prescripts;
- (f) assist with the aftercare of employees after re-entry into the workplace, by monitoring job performance and attendance; and
- (g) assist the employee with reintegration into the workplace following intervention.

(4) The Wellness coordinator must–

- (a) co-ordinate the implementation of EHWP's, projects and interventions;
- (b) plan, monitor and manage EHWP's in accordance with the strategies, policies and budgetary guidelines;
- (c) analyse and evaluate data, and communicate information, and statistics to management;
- (d) co-ordinate activities of the Peer Educators;
- (e) promote work-life balance for employees;
- (f) establish and manage a service provider database;
- (g) make provision for counselling to individual employees and to their immediate family members; and
- (h) oversee the functioning of physical and other recreational activities at the workplace, if available.

(5) The Employee Wellness Committee must–

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- (a) oversee the implementation of the wellness management policy and programmes in the workplace;
- (b) meet on a quarterly basis;
- (c) have adequate representation and support from all relevant stakeholders and must take account of the different levels of employees, different interests, as well as the diversity within departments and the key stakeholders within departments;
- (d) make recommendations to the Head of Department regarding any policy matter and implementation procedures including any matters affecting the wellness of employees;
- (e) discuss any incident or condition at the workplace which might have a negative impact on the wellbeing of employees;
- (f) serve as a vehicle of communication to promote wellness initiatives within the workplace; and
- (g) assist with the conducting of surveys on attitudes and perceptions, in order to identify particular needs of employees.

(6) The Peer Educator must–

- (a) act as a focal point for the distribution of evidence-based and generic health and wellness promotional material at the workplace (all functions must be performed as far as possible during normal working hours and shall be included in their performance agreement);
- (b) take the initiative to implement awareness activities, or to communicate health and wellness information at the workplace;
- (c) act as a referral agent of employees to relevant internal or external wellness support programmes;
- (d) be involved with the identification of employees needs and health risks at the workplace;
- (e) initiate and arrange staff training with regard to employee health and wellness; and
- (f) submit regular reports of activities to the Wellness coordinator.

(7) All employees of COGTA must–

- (a) familiarise themselves with, and comply with the provisions of this policy;
- (b) respect the rights of other employees at all times, and not manifest prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes or behaviour towards people who are experiencing problems;
- (c) work with the parties to raise awareness and increase skills; and
- (d) manage and prevent harmful myths and misconceptions.



## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. The Head of Department for COGTA must ensure that funds are available to implement this policy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

11.(1) The implementation of this policy will require COGTA to develop implementation plans outlining the Wellness Management Programme, its objectives, activities, outputs, indicators, time frames as well as entities responsible.

(2) The implementation plans must comprise all sub-objectives of Wellness Management, namely–

- (a) physical wellness;
- (b) psycho-social wellness;
- (c) organisational wellness; and
- (d) work-life balance.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

12.(A) Monitoring, evaluation and review are crucial elements of this Policy and must be done on an ongoing basis.

(b) COGTA must develop an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation system to monitor and review progress and the impact of the implementation.

(c) COGTA and Organised Labour represented will be requested to submit any inputs necessary to assist in the review process of this policy.

(d) The Wellness Committee will review the policy as and when necessary as per mandates set out by DPSA.

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**IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

13. This Policy comes into effect on the date of signature hereof by the Head of Department.



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**MS DN QHOBOSHEANE**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**  
**CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE**  
**AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

DATE: 20/1/14