PRESS RELEASE (For immediate release)

For more information, contact Jim Harting, 618-632-3145

CyberGroup 2019 presented two sessions on Cybersecurity at the International Conference of the Employee Assistance Programs Association (EAPA), held at the Historic Union Station Hilton Hotel in St. Louis on September 27, 2019.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide a range of services to help employees maintain work-life balance. Unaddressed personal and work issues can create work performance issues. The EAP provides on-target services to help the employee achieve work-life balance. Businesses see their return on investment through reduced absenteeism, financial loss and legal liability, and increased productivity.

Due to the private issues discussed, confidentiality is a primary principle of EAPs going back 50 years. If the confidentiality of an EAP’s records is compromised by a hacker, the affected EAP can suffer irreparable harm to their reputation, leading to financial loss. Given the rapid proliferation of hacking activities, EAPs need to focus their attention on learning how to improve their cybersecurity.

Harting EAP has ten years of experience and knowledge of national standards and security audits that are required to maintain cybersecurity preparedness. Jim Harting, LCSW, CEAP, Harting EAP’s founder, explains that their “company’s experience in this area has earned them a reputation for maintaining the highest standards in providing EAP software services and secure hosting.” This knowledge and experience was shared in two sessions that addressed cybersecurity as he moderated the expert panel. The first session addressed the seriousness of the issue and the second provided best practices for EAPs to establish cybersecurity in their organization.

Other presenters are national leaders in EAP and Cybersecurity. Maria Lund (President and COO of First Sun EAP Alliance, Inc. in Columbia, SC) provided her perspective on what one large regional EAP has in place to maintain their cybersecurity protections. She has been a VP, EVP and since 2005 the President/COO of First Sun EAP. She was the EAPA Member of the Year in 2014. She is a Commissioner of the Employee Assistance Certification Commission (EACC). In her current role, she is responsible for cybersecurity for a large regional EAP with over 500 companies and 86,000 client records to protect. Maria gave her perspective on what her organization has in place to fight hackers and provide cybersecurity protection.

Brian Moran is the founding partner of BriMor Labs in Baltimore, MD where he has worked for the last five years performing incident response and digital forensics for many firms including an EAP. His forensic analysis skills have been used in federal convictions. Brian has executed numerous digital forensics and incident response work for business clients affected by criminal activity or Advanced Persistent Threats (APT). He has conducted digital forensics and incident response training for several Fortune 500 companies.

In the second session (titled Cybersecurity Best Practices for an EAP) the panel discussed that can be explored and implemented in an EAP. So, if you feel comfortable with your EAP’s cybersecurity setup and processes, you can compare your setup to the ideas expressed here and feel even more comfortable that you are doing what you need to do. If you want to know how to improve, perhaps you will find one or two ideas on how to improve your cybersecurity protections.

Diana Wicker has a master’s degree in social work and is the director of compliance and reporting for First Sun EAP Alliance in Columbia, SC and has worked there since 2002. She coordinates First Sun’s compliance with HIPAA, HITECH, 42CFR Part 2 and the Federal Privacy Act. She ensures First Sun is compliant with the varied regulations. Diana is the person we all want to ask, “Do we really have to do that?” She will share her knowledge and how to implement policies and procedures to comply with the federal, state and professional standards that require knowledge of cybersecurity technologies. Diana is the “go to” person for compliance details.

More information on the conference can be obtained at the EAPA website – <https://www.eapassn.org>. Specifics about the speakers can be requested at Harting EAP at jim@hartingeap.com.

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