

Fall 2009

Dear students, parents and guardians:

Many children and teens struggle with problems at school or home but the concerned adults in their lives don't know where to turn for help. The Southeast Polk school district wants all students and family members to have access to help when and where they need it, so they provide the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for that purpose.

We at Iowa Health Des Moines (IHDM) are proud to partner with the district to provide SAP behavioral health services **at no cost to all Southeast Polk students and immediate household family members**. Our independently licensed providers will see clients at the Penn Medical Building office (directly east of Iowa Lutheran Hospital) or at Central Place (one afternoon per week), located at 6540 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pleasant Hill.

**Why do people seek SAP services?** Any issue that creates distress for students or family members can be brought to one of our providers. Some examples include:

- Problems at school work – focus, motivation etc.
- Family problems
- Peer relationship problems
- Parenting concerns
- Depression or anxiety
- Life/family transitions, e.g. divorce, death of family member
- Alcohol or drug problems, or suspected problems
- Tobacco cessation
- Aggressive behavior at home, school or community
- Feeling bullied

**How do I schedule an appointment?** If the appointment is for a student, the parent/guardian must make the call. Students may be referred, either formally or causally, by a teacher, school administrator or other school staff member.

**What happens at the first appointment?** You will fill out a small amount of paperwork to complete our registration process, and the legal guardian/parent must accompany any student/minor to the initial appointment. Once registered, you will meet with an experienced counselor, who will ask questions and together you will determine the next step. Our recommendation may be for limited or short-term counseling with our SAP provider, or you may decide to accept a referral to other community providers (not covered by SAP), depending on your unique needs.

**Who will know that my child is using the SAP?** No one - services are strictly confidential, unless:

- If a student is referred to SAP for problems in the school setting, teachers or administrators may need to receive limited information to facilitate a behavioral plan, possibly allowing a student to return to school.
- There are times when it may be in a student's best interest to give information to school personnel in order to assist with making the best possible educational plan for that student. If such circumstances exist, the provider will ask parents/guardians to sign a release of information allowing appropriate communication between the SAP counselor and the school.
- If an SAP provider hears information leading them to suspect that abuse, suicidal or homicidal problems may be relevant then our providers are mandated by law to report such circumstances to appropriate authorities.

**How do I pay for services and how many sessions do I get?** SAP services are at no cost to district students and immediate household family members. There is no cap on the number of sessions provided. Rather, our providers will work with each individual situation to determine as rapidly as possible the best resource to fit your needs.

**Now what?** If you or your son or daughter are in need of behavioral health services, call us and begin receiving the help you deserve today.

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**Toll Free – 1-800-732-4490**