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What's *Our* Story – Part III One Member's Story – Ann Clarkson of CISP

This year, we've been celebrating the 60th Anniversary of The Employers' Association (EA) through a series of articles titled "What's *Our* Story?" Ann Clarkson, of member company CISP, was gracious enough to let me take a few minutes of her valuable time and find out a little more about her experiences as a long-time member. Ann is currently the HR Manager of CISP, an IT Solutions company which has been an active EA member since 2004; however, Ann has been involved with the EA for over 25 years with companies such as Sinclair Manufacturing and TL Industries.

Jack: Why do you believe the EA has been able to serve the companies of Northwest Ohio and Southwest Michigan successfully for 60 years?

Ann: The Employers' Association is such a valuable resource from my standpoint. We (CISP) save money by utilizing the many services available to us.

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If we were not members, we would have to subscribe to a large number of other organizations to get the same information. Everything is at your fingertips through the EA. It really is one-stop shopping with a friendly face.

Jack: What service of the EA has been your personal favorite over the years?

Ann: I really love reading the Bulletin newsletter because I find so many different and relative topics/articles all in one place. If I need more detail, it's all available to me through the web site or a quick call to the staff.

Jack: What changes in The Employers' Association have you seen over the years?

Ann: It seems like there is so much more interaction with members now than say, 15 years ago. I seem to know a lot more of the staff and they make a great effort to know me and my company. It has become a much more friendly organization.

Jack: Do you have a memorable experience with the EA you could share?

Ann: If you consider seminars and speakers, I think Tom Dixon of Eastman and Smith is one of your best. I remember when so many of us were very, very concerned about the potential Ohio legislation called "The Ohio Healthy Families Act". Tom did such a great job at the session, held at Brandywine, of answering our questions and helping us overcome our concerns. Thankfully, the law has yet to pass.

Jack: What do you think is the most important thing the EA can do to be successful for 60 more years?

Ann: It seems like the EA does many things very well. Like any organization, the EA will have to change with the times. The new Webinar and On-line Training offerings are great, and it seems to me those are the kinds of thing the EA will need to keep on doing in order to be successful.

Hotline Hits

Q: Do we have to provide FMLA leave for medical appointments?

A: It depends. It depends upon the severity of the condition as certified by the employee's physician.

"As needed" is not enough of an explanation. It must be specific. In all cases, it is acceptable for a company to work with an employee's physician so the employee misses as little time away from work as possible.

If the employee is a breast cancer survivor she (or he) is eligible to use FMLA to take time off for a mammogram. Cancer is a serious health condition which may recur and mammograms are part of the ongoing evaluation process.

Check ups for diabetes may or may not be covered. It is a "sensitive" issue. If the diabetes is under control, standard care may be all that is necessary and the employee is not eligible to use FMLA for testing. However, if the employee's blood sugar spikes, he or she may need more standard care and would be eligible for FMLA.

Asthma is another condition where "severity" is the issue. An asthma sufferer may grow out of it for a time, but would still be considered prone to the disease. If the sufferer has no symptoms and goes for routine evaluation, he or she is not eligible for FMLA.

However, if the asthma flares up and the sufferer needs specific testing or care, he or she is eligible for FMLA. Again, the physician's certification must be specific, such as "Ms. Doe needs three appointments in the next thirty days to monitor her asthma flare-ups."

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