



# THE HISTORY OF THE FIELD OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Executive Vice Dean Paul Maiden

# HISTORY

- Late 1800's - overlaps with history of social work in industrial concerns
- Then came social welfare secretaries, serving as bridge between employers and employees
- All aspects of human needs – washing and bathing facilities to savings plan to citizenship training
- Mother Dunn of H.J. Heinz is one example, hired in 1875
- Gained distrust in this role as arm of employer over time
- Social work field questioned values



# HISTORY

- WWII – Bertha Capen Reynolds provided services to the Union and United Seaman's Service
- Claims for death, injuries or losses, assisting bereaved families, procuring ration books, locating sailors stranded in foreign countries
- Strongly believed placement within the system was beneficial; greater acceptance



# HISTORY

- Occupational Alcoholism Programs (OAPS) emerged in 1940s
- Peer counselor in recovery from alcoholism reached out to others
- Outreached to those in late stage alcoholism
- Not skilled in other areas or mental health



# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- Emerged from OAPs
- Address any problem that affects employees ability to perform at work
- Focuses on early intervention and prevention
- Includes
  - Assessment, referral and short-term counseling
  - Supervisor training and management consultation
  - Employee education
- MAPs – Member Assistance Programs – union programs for members
  - AFSCME's Personal Support Program
  - Peer counselors also used



# OTHER RELEVANT FUNCTIONS OR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER SYSTEMS

- Managed care and EAPs
- Managed behavioral health care (MBHC) – 80's
  - Rise of HMOs
  - Containing costs of behavioral health due to lack of DRGs (diagnostic related group)
  - Combined MBHC and EAP role
- Health promotion programs in 90's
- Occupational health and safety
- Corporate social responsibility



# DISCUSSION

- What are the issues facing occupational social work going forward?
- What needs can be met? What positive roles may be played within today's emerging needs?
- What are the risks?
- What are your thoughts about your role inside a workplace? Or as a consultant to a workplace?

