Introduction:

Correctional employees face a critical issue in their workforce; creating and maintaining an environment that promotes total well-being. Correctional staff have one of the toughest jobs and face unique stressors such as threats to personal safety, sudden physical exertion, shift work, and hypervigilance, while continuing to carry out their primary responsibilities of custody, control and rehabilitation of those under their supervision. These stressors are compounded when considering that correctional staff are often times dealing with the most serious, violent, and oftentimes mentally ill individuals. As a result, correctional employees struggle to successfully mitigate the stressors affecting their health.

Policy Statement:

The American Correctional Association (ACA) recognizes that employee wellness is becoming more of an issue and has moved to the forefront of conversations and research nationwide. The ACA is committed to raising awareness and educating employees regarding employee well-being, and addressing the need to equip correctional staff with the tools needed to address employment-related stress.

Therefore correctional agencies should:

A. Ensure that all work practices, the work environment and culture will value, enhance and protect the health and wellbeing of all employees;

B. Support workplace wellness by creating and supporting a wellness initiative that offers programs for the personal and professional wellbeing of its employees;

C. Educate, raise awareness about how to mitigate the stressors related to working in a correctional environment; and

D. Share practices and evidence-based research with correctional partners.

This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the 2018 Winter Conference in Orlando, FL. on Jan. 9, 2018.