



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE  
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*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*  
CELINA LEVY  
*Executive Director*

## **MINUTES**

### **Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**

**February 18, 2020**

#### **Call to Order**

The three hundred and thirty ninth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess.

#### **Open Public Meetings Act Statement**

Mr. Van Ess announced that notice of this meeting was provided in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21).

#### **Roll Call**

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record. Mr. Van Ess informed the Council that this meeting would be for informational purposes only due to the lack of quorum.

#### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He also welcomed back GCADA State Alliance Coordinator Kim Rodriguez and stated that GCADA staff was now at full capacity.

#### **Presentation: "Drug Court, Implementing Best Practice Research to New Jersey"**

Donna Westhoven, Chief of the Adult Drug Court Program, of the Administrative Office of the Courts in New Jersey gave an overview of the Drug Court Program to the Council members.

Drug Court is a program within the court system that helps nonviolent offenders overcome alcohol and other drug dependencies while resolving related criminal charges. The drug court team consists of the judge, court staff, attorneys, probation officers, substance abuse evaluators and treatment professionals. The program involves intensive supervision which is based on drug testing and court appearances, but also maintains a balance of authority and supervision as well as support and encouragement.

As of January 2020, more than 26,926 defendants have entered New Jersey's adult drug court program since the statewide program began on April 1<sup>st</sup> of 2002 with a statewide retention rate after one year of 82.4%. There have been 731 babies born drug free from previously addicted mothers and 209 participant parents who have regained custody of their children due to successful completion of the drug court program.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Celina Levy stated that we were unable to achieve quorum and that Katelyn has reached out to all of the department designees to begin the process of establishing a second designee. This process has not been completed, but is hoped to be in place by the March meeting.

Ms. Levy shared that the Department of Human Services will work in partnership with the National Council of Behavioral Health to conduct statewide Mental Health First Aid trainings for school personnel from K-12 and higher education institutions. Ms. Levy said that she hopes once the Department of Education designee seat is filled on the GCADA, they can share more information.

Rebecca Alfaro shared that the evidence based Alliance webinar trainings to receive funding had a 100% participation rate with over 6,700 views. County Plans are due to GCADA on February 28<sup>th</sup> and the County Plan Review teams will begin meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The New Jersey Prevention Network Conference will be held on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Atlantic City Convention Center. GCADA will once again be awarding scholarships and GCADA members are encouraged to let GCADA staff know if they are interested in attending and receiving a scholarship.

Ms. Levy thanked the volunteers and County Alliance coordinators for their dedication to the Alliance Program and Council members for their support in all of GCADA's efforts, and also acknowledged GCADA staff.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:36.