



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman
CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

October 20, 2020

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), BettyAnn Cowling-Carson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Donna Westhoven (AOC), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Herbert Kaldany (DOC), Luiz Pereira (DOE), Annette Riordan (DHS), Holly Low (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Liz Schofield (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

Call to Order

The three hundred and forty first 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

Chairman 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). In addition, Mr. Van Ess stated that public comments were to be provided electronically, through the GCADA website contact portal between the hours of 10am and 1pm on the day of the meeting.

Roll Call

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record.

Approval of Minutes

After a brief discussion, the September minutes were approved. (Y-15; N-0; ABS-0)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Council members for their dedication, and in achieving quorum last month to catch up on unfinished business due to the pandemic and furloughs.

Mr. Van Ess asked Executive Director Celina Levy to read two proclamations from Governor Murphy for last month for Suicide Prevention Month and one for Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Presentation: “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day 2020”

Angela Conover, Director of Opioid Response and Prevention Outreach of the Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) gave an overview of Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day in New Jersey which is currently in its 5th year.

October 6th has been designated Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day (KOOAD) in New Jersey and was signed into legislation by Governor Murphy last year. This is a collaborative effort between the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, GCADA, the prevention and treatment communities as well as concerned citizens to raise awareness of the potential for dependency on prescribed pain medicine and its link to heroin abuse rates in New Jersey.

In the past, all outreach was done through face-to-face interactions and door-to-door delivery of KOOAD materials to community members and physicians. Due to the pandemic, outreach has been strictly virtual. This year, PDFNJ has had to rely on social media campaigns, webinars, and email and web communication which has shown to increase outreach.

All information and resources are available digitally at www.KnockOutDay.DrugFreeNJ.org.

Departmental Updates

Dr. Herbert Kaldany, Director of Psychiatry and Addictions at the Department of Corrections shared that prior to COVID, the Department was able to offer medication assisted treatment to those with opioid abuse disorders to over 1,000 offenders. At the height of COVID, the number of patients dropped to under 1,000 due to the intake process at the prisons being stopped, however in August, this process resumed. Currently there are 1,082 back on medications. There have been no new changes, however the Department continues to work hard to preserve the successes they've had despite the pandemic and limited staff.

Luiz Pereira, Acting Assistant Director, Office of Student Support Services of the Department of Education gave an overview of the initiatives the Department has been working on during the months of the pandemic: *School climate improvement strategies* which include the School Climate Transformation Project, Restorative Practices Pilot Project, and NJ School Climate Survey updates; *Supporting more inclusive schools* which includes NJ Interagency Task Force to Combat Youth Bias and the Mental Health Working Group; *Protecting Students* which includes Child Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Guidelines and Revised NJ Student Learning Standards. Mr. Pereira also shared additional information about *COVID-19* which included The Road Back as well as Conditions for Learning to make recommendations for supporting student and staff well-being. The Department through the Attorney General's Office is also conducting

“Handle with Care” training for students who have suffered a traumatic event, whereby both police and school staff are notified that the student may be in need of additional support.

Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Levy shared with the Council that she sat in on a Zoom forum from Rutgers about the impact of COVID-19 on substance use disorder treatment and services, and that once the Zoom forum has been posted, we will provide the link to GCADA members. The panel included Suzanne Borys, DMHAS Assistant Division Director, Office of Planning, Research, Evaluation, and Prevention, and Ms. Levy will be reaching out to see if Ms. Borys can provide a presentation to the GCADA at a future meeting.

She asked Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro to share additional information with the Council. Ms. Alfaro shared that she recently facilitated the quarterly meeting with the County Alliance Coordinators and provided information on the Volunteer of the Year process, annual county site visits, and updates to the FY21 reporting process. She also reviewed the FY22 County Alliance funding amounts with the Council, which will be provided to the counties through a Letter of Intent. Ms. Alfaro introduced Sara Thode, GCADA's Director of Prevention and Planning, who provided information on honoring the Municipal Alliance volunteers at the December 15th Council meeting. She asked for three volunteers to help score the volunteer nominations for the W. Cary Edwards State Volunteer of the Year award winner.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their support, the County Alliance Coordinators and Alliances for their efforts in the ongoing improvement process, GCADA staff for their hard work and, Chairman Van Ess for his support in all GCADA efforts.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:55.

