



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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Governor

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Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

February 15, 2022

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Herb Kaldany (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Annette Riordan (DOH), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

Call to Order

The three hundred and fifty sixth 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). 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 minutes for January were approved. (Y-13; N-0; ABS-2)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Council for attaining quorum last month. He also shared that that Sara Thode, Director of Prevention and Planning, would be managing the technical aspects of the meeting due to Deputy Director, Rebecca Alfaro

attending a 3-day Culturally Humble Leadership in Prevention Intensive, hosted by the Prevention Technology Transfer Center.

Presentation: “Updates from the NJDOE”

Lu Pereira, Director of the Office of Student Support Services of the NJ Department of Education shared some of the initiatives that the department has been working on.

The Office of Student Support Services oversees activities that are related to supporting the well-being of students and intervening as student needs are identified.

NJDOE supports Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools which helps students develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, as well as relationship skills. SEL has been incorporated into New Jersey’s Learning standards, especially in the areas of Health and Physical Education.

The NJDOE released a Quick Reference Mental Health Guide which provides school districts easy to access links to many of the State’s community mental health resources. Earlier in February, NJDOE released a Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Guide which is an extensive resource to help school districts provide or build upon school based mental health services.

Developing Resiliency with Engaging Approaches to Maximize Success (DREAMS) is a year-long program developed to provide trauma-informed and healing centered training to 50 districts in New Jersey.

The School Emergency Relief Funding provides school districts with emergency relief funds through a tiered system to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the social, emotional, mental health and academic needs of students.

Presentation: “Promoting Public Health Through Harm Reduction”

Kaylee McGuire, Health and Human Services Policy Advisor; John Butler, Criminal Justice Policy Advisor; Madina P. Ouedraogo, Criminal Justice Policy Coordinator; Jack Teters, Health and Human Services Policy Coordinator; Chelsea Betlow, Director, Division of HIV, STD and TB Services, and Adam Bucon, NJ State Opioid Treatment Authority, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services gave an overview on the Murphy administration’s Harm Reduction initiative.

Harm reduction incorporates numerous evidence-based practices strategies that meet people “where they are” and on their own terms. It can serve as a pathway to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services without judgement or the requirement of stopping drug use to receive support. Harm reduction also minimizes the negative personal, public health, social and legal impacts of drug use.

Harm reduction provides services that pertain to illegal and legal drug use such as drug consumption rooms, needle and syringe programs, non-abstinence-based housing and employment initiatives, drug checking, overdose prevention and reversal, psychosocial support, and the provision of information on safer drug use.

New Jersey's harm reduction efforts focus on expanding syringe access services through Harm Reduction Centers (HRCs), increasing medication assisted treatment services (MAT), providing doctors and other medical professionals with access to and training on the use of Naloxone and developing non-punitive approaches to drug related crimes.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Celina Levy shared that she was excited that GCADA was working as a collaborative partner on the administration's harm reduction effort and she will continue to keep the Council informed as these efforts move forward.

Ms. Levy also stated that she and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro are in ongoing conversations to look at options that will provide long-term sustainability to the Alliance program.

Ms. Levy shared with the Council that she continues to represent GCADA on the DMHAS Suicide Prevention Planning Committee and shared that "988" has been designated as the new three-digit number that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This will go into effect nationwide on July 16th of this year.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode, informed the Council the FY23 County Plans are due to GCADA staff at the end of this month and will be reviewed by the GCADA Review Team in the spring. They will be presented to the Council for a vote in May and June.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their input and support, the County Coordinators and Alliances for their good work despite the continued challenges and GCADA staff for their strong work ethic, and to Neil Van Ess for his ongoing leadership.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 12:06.