



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

September 20, 2022

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), BettyAnn Cowling-Carson (Public Member), Moira Nelson (Public Member), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Adam Cortes (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Stephen Firsing (DOH), Annette Riordan (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

Call to Order

The three hundred and sixty third 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, Ms. DeStefano 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 July were approved. (Y-13; N-0; ABS-1)

Observance Day Proclamations and Resolutions

Executive Director Celina Levy read proclamations from Governor Murphy recognizing Suicide Prevention Week and Overdose Awareness Day. She also read resolutions recognizing Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, Recovery Month and Overdose Awareness Day. The Council members agreed to bundle the resolutions and after a vote, they were approved. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-0)

Presentation: “New Jersey Emergency Medical Services and the Opioid Crisis”

Tim Seplaki, Chief of EMS Data and Intelligence, Office of Emergency Medicine of the NJ Department of Health gave an overview of the education and services offered by first responders in an effort to combat the opioid crisis in New Jersey.

There are 23,940 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) in New Jersey that provide community-based basic life support and 1,752 Mobile Intensive Care Paramedics that provide hospital-based regional advanced life support. New Jersey’s first responders treat 35 overdoses per day and have been taught to treat the physical symptoms, however efforts are being made to teach EMS to think differently and break the stigma of substance use disorder.

In July of 2021, legislation was passed for New Jersey paramedics to administer buprenorphine and for First Responders to leave behind a naloxone behind after an overdose encounter. In addition, a Standing Order was established for first responders and pharmacies to a patient who is at risk of an overdose.

The Office of Emergency Medical Services has launched a pilot program called “Five Minutes to Help” to help better prepare EMS for treating post-overdose patients. EMS are trained to understand addictions through motivational interviewing, providing treatment resources such as Naloxone kits and other medication assisted treatment.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Celina Levy reminded the Council members that the State is providing a public comment period for how the opioid settlement funds should be spent until October 31st.

Ms. Levy also shared the S190 legislation overview which would require federal funding to be made available to GCADA to support the Alliance Program if needed to offset unanticipated decreases in dedicated revenues.

The 2022 Suicide Prevention Conference will be taking place on October 12th and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Opioid Summit will be taking place on September 21st.

Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro shared that Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day will be held on October 6th which is a statewide event that Governor Murphy dedicated in 2019. This is a collaborative effort hosted by the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ with their partners, GCADA,

the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and 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.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode informed the Council that the Municipal Alliance Grant System (MAGS) is expected to go live in the fall of this year for the FY24 grant year.

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

Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:37.

Public Comment

**** FROM ****

Brandon Russell
County: Middlesex

**** MESSAGE ****

SUBJECT: South Amboy Municipal Alliance

I have been attempting to join the Municipal Alliance for over a year but I've been told that membership is full and that my personality isn't likable enough to join. I submitted a citizen leadership form in January 2022 and it has not been responded to.

I've read the By-Laws and have found that there is no limit on the number of people allowed to join.

I've tried talking to the Mayor and every member of the Council, but the Council seems to be afraid of nominating me against the Mayor's wishes.

I have also reached out to the Middlesex County coordinators, who have informed me they are unable to help.

I've reached out to both the local coordinator (who has ignored ALL requests for a phone call) and the head of the Local MA who has told me she has no problem with me joining.

I am someone who has struggled with addictive tendencies since I was 9 years old and I am deeply disappointed with how my request to join has been handled.

I am requesting a call back from someone within GCADA's leadership so they can help me understand why my requests have been handled in these ways.

Thank you for your time and hope to hear from someone soon!