



# State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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PHILIP D. MURPHY

*Governor*

TAHESHA L. WAY

*Lt. Governor*

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*

CELINA LEVY  
*Executive Director*

## MINUTES

### **Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder**

**March 19, 2024**

**Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Eileen Fishman (Public Member), Sweta Kansagra (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Cornell Williamson (AOC), Herbert Kaldany (DOC), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Valerie Mielke (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Noelle Lee-Turner (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)**

### **Call to Order**

The three hundred and eightieth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder 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 GCSUD 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.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Gregg Benson for stepping in for him at the February meeting. He also shared that today was Law and Public Safety designee,

Craig Sashihara's last meeting as he would be retiring at the end of the month. He thanked Craig for his dedication and commitment to the Council over the years.

### **Approval of Minutes**

After a brief discussion, the minutes for January and February were approved.

- January (Y-13; N-0; ABS-1)
- February (Y-13; N-0; ABS-1)

### **Problem Gambling Awareness Month Resolution**

Executive Director Celina Levy read a resolution recognizing March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in New Jersey. After a vote, the resolution was approved. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-0)

### **Presentation: "Youth Gaming and Gambling"**

Felicia Grondin, Executive Director and Luis Del Orbe, Prevention and Treatment Administrator of the Council on Compulsive Gambling (CCGNJ) gave an overview of the organization and the effects of youth gaming and gambling.

CCGNJ is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services to those affected by problem gambling. The Council also offers 24/7 support via the NJ Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER. Brochures, educational links and fact sheets can also be found at their website: [www.800GAMBLER.org](http://www.800GAMBLER.org).

The total revenue in gambling totals for 2023 was 5.8 billion. This included lottery, casino, internet and sports betting. This is a 2,276% increase from 2013 to 2023.

Adolescents are more likely to develop a gambling problem than adults and is often associated with other risky behaviors such as substance abuse. Risk factors may include trauma, peer pressure and/or lack of family involvement.

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

Executive Director Celina Levy informed the Council that we are continuing to work on incorporating our GCSUD name change into all processes and platforms.

Ms. Levy and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro met with the Governor's office to discuss the Master plan and will be reaching out to the subcommittee members in April to schedule the next meeting.

The Block Grant funds from DMHAS which were sent to expire on March 14<sup>th</sup> have received a no-cost extension until March 14<sup>th</sup> of 2025. This will provide GCSUD with the opportunity to move forward with more trainings that were not possible due to the previous timeline.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode shared with the Council that the FY25 County Plans will be reviewed in MAGS. The GCSUD review team will meet in May and the plans will be voted by the full Council in June. She also informed the Council that Phase 2 in MAGS is currently underway. This phase includes quarterly reports, site visits and budget modifications.

### **Adjournment**

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