

MINUTES
Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
May 19, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The two hundred thirty seventh 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

Acting 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).

ROLL CALL

Susan Massaro called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record (see attached record).

Approval of Minutes

Acting Chairman Van Ess asked for a motion to approve the March minutes as presented to the Council.

Harry Morey motioned to approve the March minutes; seconded by Mary Ann Barkus. A roll call vote was taken (see attached vote sheet) and the motion carried.

Acting Chairman Van Ess asked for a motion to approve the April minutes as presented to the Council.

Harry Morey motioned to approve the April minutes; seconded by Mary Ann Barkus. A roll call vote was taken (see attached vote sheet) and the motion carried.

Presentation on the Crime Prevention Initiative

Lisa Macaluso, Deputy Director of Crime Prevention, within the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, presented on behalf of Director Creighton Drury, who was unable to attend the Council meeting.

Ms. Macaluso discussed the Governor's Public Safety Plan. She emphasized the critical importance of the DEDR funds in helping move forward the prevention aspects of the Governor's agenda. The partnership with GCADA is integral to the success of the initiative.

The Governor's Public Safety Plan was announced in 2007 and consists of three domains: enforcement, prevention and offender re-entry. The guiding principle of the prevention element of the program concerns addressing risk and protective factors as a framework for reducing rates of delinquency, as well as alcoholism and drug abuse which contributes to delinquency. Ms. Macaluso gave an overview of the domains and the specific initiatives within each domain. The public safety plan calls for implementing model programs. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention model program guide lists eligible programs that are available to local communities. Model programs offered by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and other sources may also be utilized. One major aspect of the prevention initiative is to reduce truancy and improve the level of engagement of students in school. This will affect many of the risk factors that contribute to delinquency and substance abuse. To this end, \$300,000 in DEDR funding has been leveraged with other funding for a truancy reduction pilot program in six cities (Asbury Park, Camden, Newark, Paterson, Trenton and Vineland). Local policy councils have been created which include representation from the Alliances, and will play an important role in community assessment and program planning.

There is no other State in the country that is currently implementing such a program with this scope and with the cooperation of state agencies, county and the municipal levels. The overall plan will be subject to evaluation to determine if the framework can be implemented on a larger scale in the future.

Ms. Macaluso thanked the Council for participating in this partnership. Acting Chairman Van Ess remarked that this is an innovative effort and the State of New Jersey is truly a model for the rest of the country.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act

Gary Vermeire reported to the Council that once again a sitting President has proposed elimination of the Title IV program under the No Child Left Behind Act. Title IV is the sole source of dedicated funding for substance abuse prevention in New Jersey schools. Every school district in the State has the opportunity to receive these funds. It is the only source of dedicated funds for this purpose going to schools and the NJ Department of Education. Mr. Vermeire stated that as a State employee he is not permitted to lobby; he is simply reporting to the Council on the issue today.

Mr. Vermeire distributed to Council members two handouts and gave a brief background on the program and reported on some key points that are in the handout. He noted that survey data from 2000-present reflects reductions in incidences of violence, vandalism, weapons offenses, and substance abuse in schools. While no sophisticated analysis has been done to determine causation, it was inferred that the trend may be partially attributable to Title IV programs. It is believed that the proposal to eliminate this funding is based on a negative evaluation by the federal Office of Management and Budget in 2006, which emphasizes shortcomings of the federal DOE implementation, not on the states' performance in achieving the purpose of the program.

With the loss of this grant, numerous school based programs would be defunded, as well as several state DOE positions. There is a general agreement that if Title IV funds are removed there will be no incentive for schools to address reducing the risk factors contributing to adolescent drug use and violence, particularly in tough economic times and with state standardized testing taking priority. When Title IV funds are made available to schools they are forced to focus on these issues and to include them in their annual planning.

Acting Chairman Van Ess proposed that staff draft a resolution using some of Mr. Vermeire's points stating that the Council is opposed to the elimination of the funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act. Following discussion by Council members, the Acting Chairman asked Mary Lou if she could contact GCADA counsel to determine if the resolution could be emailed to members and approved via a telephone vote to expedite the process.

Harry Morey motioned to adopt a resolution; seconded by Mary Ann Barkus. A roll call vote was taken (see attached vote sheet) and the motion carried.

Leadership Group – No Report

Alliance Committee

Harry Morey, Chair, reported that the Alliance Committee met on May 12th. Evon Judkins contacted Nick DeMauro from DARE regarding some of the questions the committee had regarding funding. Executive Director Powner requested that a member of DARE sit on the Alliance Committee. An update on Council activities was presented. All county Alliance programs have been approved for 2009.

The Alliance Committee discussed establishing a theme of celebrating volunteer's day at the Summit in the fall. The next three committee meeting dates will be July 14th, September 22nd and November 10th.

Planning Committee

Executive Director Powner reported that there are draft changes to the by-laws that are going to be forwarded to Deputy Attorney General Michael Kennedy for review.

Criminal/Juvenile Justice Subcommittee – No Report

Legislative Subcommittee

Kay McGrath, Chair, reported that the subcommittee met on May 7th. John Hulick, Director of Public Affairs and Policy of NCADD New Jersey made a presentation regarding a program to foster support and promote a generation of leaders in New Jersey committed to confronting the State's most pressing addiction treatment intervention and recovery issues. The program is funded by a grant from the Open Society Institute. Ms. McGrath gave an overview of the program and their priority issues. The members felt that this kind of activity could be supplemented by the Alliances.

Mr. Hulick also discussed the Nickel A Gallon campaign that would be an increase in the tax on beer. A rally was scheduled for the State House on May 13th to help launch the program.

The Subcommittee discussed the medical marijuana legislation and would like to oppose the legislation mainly because of the way it is written. They voted on this issue and will prepare a resolution and submit it to the Council for consideration.

The subcommittee supports the Smoking Exemptions in Casinos legislation. A resolution has been prepared and will be forwarded to the Planning Committee for review and consideration.

The subcommittee also discussed Ricci's Law which requires the installation of interlock devices on automobiles owned or leased by those arrested for driving under the influence. Some members of the subcommittee expressed concern about the cost and whether it would be effective or not. The subcommittee voted to table the resolution until it can receive more information.

It was reported that Senator Vitale contacted Executive Director Powner expressing his interest in pursuing passive consent legislation in response to a resolution on the issue generated by the legislative subcommittee and adopted by the Council.

John Gaspich thanked the subcommittee for supporting him and his colleagues in successfully getting their titles changed to Student Assistant Coordinators from Substance Awareness Coordinators.

Treatment Subcommittee

Treatment Subcommittee will be meeting in June.

Veterans and Military Ad Hoc Committee

Acting Chairman Van Ess reported that on May 14th there was a kickoff event for the distribution of the committee's "Resource Guide for Military, Veterans and Families" at Picatinny Arsenal. Anthony Bucco was master of ceremonies. Today after the Council meeting at 1:00 p.m. there will be a second kickoff event in front of the State House.

Other Business – No Other Business

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Mary Lou Powner reported that the veteran's resource guide has been very well received and the kickoff event at Picatinny Arsenal was a success. Ms. Powner handed out information concerning the Safe and Drug Free Schools funding. Council members are free to follow up as private citizens on the call to action and contact representatives to indicate support for the continuation of funding.

The meetings with legislative leaders that Neil Van Ess, John Gluck, Harry Morey, herself and others have been attending are going very well and they have received some support for amending the draft state budget to move the DEDR funds back under the Department of Treasury.

Adjournment

Acting Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Mary Lou Powner
Executive Director