



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

July 20, 2021

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), Kate Butler (DCA), Adam Cortes (DOC), Annette Riordan (DHS), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Liz Schofield (DMAVA)

Call to Order

The three hundred and fiftieth 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. Mr. Van Ess informed the Council that this meeting would be for informational purposes only due to the lack of quorum.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Council members for helping to attain quorum in June to vote on the FY22 County Plans.

He shared that Executive Director Celina Levy and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro continue to have regular conversations with the Governor's office to address the budget challenges that GCADA faces.

Mr. Van Ess also took a moment to acknowledge Department of Military and Veterans Affairs designee, Liz Schofield who would be retiring at the end of the month. He thanked Ms. Schofield for her years of dedication to the Council and for being instrumental in creating the Veterans Resource Guide.

Presentation: “Actions 4 ACES – A Statewide Campaign to Raise Awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) in New Jersey

Ann Ritter, Program Officer of the Burke Foundation and Angela Medrano-Sanchez, Program Support Specialist/Executive Assistant of the New Jersey Office of Resilience, Department of Children and Families gave an overview of “Actions 4 ACES” Statewide Campaign.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events that occur before the age of 18. Nationally, two out of every 3 children have experienced at least one ACE and 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported experiencing at least one type of ACE. Preventing ACEs can reduce depression in adults by almost 44%.

The NJ ACEs Collaborative identified five areas of opportunity for addressing ACEs through support for parents and caregivers, providing training and professional development in trauma-informed care, promoting community awareness, advancing policies and practices to help children and families succeed and by collecting, analyzing and sharing data from research and practices with other agencies and entities in the state.

In February of this year, the NJ Department of Children and Families released the NJ ACEs Statewide Action Plan to forge a path toward making NJ a trauma-informed state. In addition, the NJ Office of the Attorney General issued “Handle With Care” which is a program that promotes partnerships between schools and law enforcement to help children who are facing trauma.

The “Actions 4 ACEs” campaign aims to increase public awareness of ACEs and to adopt behaviors that lessen the impact that they have on children, families and communities. More information can be found on www.Actions4ACEs.com or by emailing info@Actions4ACEs.com.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Celina Levy again thanked the Council for obtaining quorum at last month's meeting and voting on the County plans.

Ms. Levy stated that she and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro, continue to explore other funding sources to help mitigate the decrease in DEDR funds. These include federal funds and the master settlement monies coming to the state from the pharmaceutical industry. The GCADA statute limits the DEDR funding, but Celina and Rebecca are actively looking at finding ways to create long-term solutions and sustainability for the Alliance program by having conversations with the Governor's office collaborating as well as with partners such as the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Office of the Attorney General.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode shared with the Council that Alliance staff are continuing with the FY22 remediation process for the county plans. All summer programs have been reviewed and approved and are now underway.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their guidance and support, County Coordinators, and all the Alliances for their good work especially in light of the challenges faced, GCADA staff for continuing to meet the unprecedented challenges with strong worth ethic and to Chairman Van Ess for his leadership.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:15.