



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder

April 15, 2025

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Eileen Fishman (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Michelle Graham-Lyons (DCA), Adam Cortes (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Lashunda Omida (DOH), Don Hallcom (DHS), Briana Menjivar (DOL), Liz Rebein (LPS), Noelle Lee-Turner (DMAVA)

The three hundred and ninety second 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 and must state "Public Comment" in the subject line.

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 held for informational purposes only due to the lack of quorum.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed the Council that on March 31st, GCSUD was notified by DMHAS that one of the grants that was set to expire in September was being terminated by the federal government effective immediately and that all spending must cease.

The Alliance Unit is continuing to work with the counties to finalize their plans in MAGS, with a reminder that the Council will be voting on County Plan resolutions at the May meeting and it is imperative that quorum is achieved.

Alcohol Awareness Month Resolution

Executive Director Celina Levy read a resolution recognizing April as Alcohol Awareness Month in New Jersey. This resolution will be voted on at the next meeting.

Presentation: “Prevention Leadership Intensive”

GCSUD Deputy Director, Rebecca Alfaro gave an overview of the Prevention Leadership Intensive to the Council.

This training was made possible by funding from DMHAS and contracted with the Rutgers University School of Social Work’s Center for Prevention Science. The purpose of this training was to enhance leadership across the county and municipal alliance network. Through an application process, attendance consisted of GCSUD staff, County Alliance Coordinators and Municipal Alliance members.

The trainings consisted of four, three-hour virtual sessions that met once a week from February through March. Topics covered were creating space for authentic discussions and setting community agreements, the history of prevention and systemic barriers, mentorship, skills necessary for leading and action planning for change.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Celina Levy informed the Council that public member input for the Master Plan is being finalized before being sent to the Governor’s office and then presented to the Council for approval.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode shared with the Council that the budget modifications have gone live in MAGS and a training will be held for the counties. She also thanked the Council members who volunteered to review the County Plans for next month.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their support and input, County Coordinators and Alliances for their commitment to New Jersey communities, to GCSUD for going above and beyond to ensure the work of the Council moves forward and to Neil for his leadership and commitment to the Council.

Adjournment

Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:35.