



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
PO Box 345
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0345

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

February 21, 2023

Attendance: Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Eileen Fishman (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Adam Cortes (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Annette Riordan (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA)

Call to Order

The three hundred and sixty eighth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by 2nd Vice Chair Gregg Benson.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Mr. Benson 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. Levy 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. Benson informed the Council that this meeting would be for informational purposes due to the lack of quorum.

Chairman's Report

On behalf of Chairman Van Ess, Executive Director Celina Levy shared that Mr. Van Ess was sorry to miss the meeting, but he was thankful for Mr. Benson for stepping in to helm the meeting.

Presentation: “The National Center for Advocacy and Recovery”

Summer Brancoccio, President and CEO, Tonia Ahearn, Advocacy Coordinator and Heather Ogden, Training Coordinator of the National Center for Advocacy and Recovery (NCAAR) gave an overview of their organization to the Council members.

In 2019 NCADD-NJ became NCAAR-BH. It was renamed to more accurately reflect the work of the non-profit organization which is dedicated to public policy, advocacy and care coordinator within behavior health.

NCAAR was awarded a contract for Work First New Jersey-Substance Abuse Initiative and Behavioral Health Initiative (WFNJ SAI/BHI) which assists people receiving GA and TANF benefits from the state. Care coordinators conduct comprehensive assessments, make referrals for treatment as well as coordinate care for substance use disorders and mental health issues.

NCAAR has many grassroots advocates across the state through their Advocacy Leadership Program which began in 2008. Teams meet regularly to discuss events, issues, policies and other topics related to the behavioral health.

NCAAR is also involved in trainings regarding peer services, harm reduction and recovery, advocacy and legislative information and other New Jersey specific trainings.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Celina Levy thanked NCAAR for their presentation and shared that GCADA is excited to engage in this new partnership, as part of efforts to expand strategic partnerships and build upon those already existing

Ms. Levy and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro will provide an update on the Master Plan development at the March GCADA meeting. Ms. Levy and Ms. Alfaro have had productive and promising conversations with the governor’s policy advisors regarding additional funding sources and will continue to keep the Council updated.

Sara Thode, Director of Prevention and Planning shared with the Council that AGATE is in the final development stages and testing of the online grant system is now underway.

Adjournment

Mr. Benson adjourned the meeting at 11:28.