



State of New Jersey

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

September 21, 2021

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Betty Ann Cowling-Carson (Public Member) Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Adam Cortes (DOC), Annette Riordan (DHS), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

Call to Order

The three hundred and fifty first 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 said he hoped everyone had a nice remainder of the summer.

Observance Day Proclamations and Resolutions

Executive Director Celina Levy read proclamations from Governor Murphy for Suicide Prevention Week and Addiction Professionals Day. She also read resolutions for International Overdose Awareness Day, Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The resolutions will be voted on at the next meeting.

Presentation: “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day 2021”

Angela Conover, Director of Opioid Response and Prevention of the Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) gave an overview of Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day in New Jersey which is currently in its 6th year.

October 6th has been designated Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day (KOOAD) in New Jersey and was signed into legislation by Governor Murphy in 2019. This is a collaborative effort between the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, GCADA, the prevention and treatment communities as well as concerned citizens to raise awareness of the potential for dependency on prescribed pain medicine and its link to heroin abuse rates in New Jersey.

In the past, all outreach was done through face-to-face interactions and door-to-door delivery of KOOAD materials to community members and physicians. Last year due to the pandemic, outreach had been strictly virtual. This year, PDFNJ will be doing a mix of in-person and virtual social media campaigns, webinars, and email and web communication which have all shown to increase outreach.

All information and resources can be found digitally at www.KnockOutDay.DrugFreeNJ.org.

Presentation: “DHS/DMHAS Suicide Prevention Initiatives”

Ally Bagarozza, Statewide Suicide Prevention Coordinator of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) of the Department of Human Services (DHS) gave an overview to the Council of some of the initiatives that DMHAS has been working on.

DMHAS partnered with the Education Development Center’s “Zero Suicide Academy for New Jersey” to provide three virtual academies for health and behavioral health organizations to reduce suicide among those in their care. The Division is also working with Rutgers Behavioral Healthcare to provide more of these webinars and trainings.

The Division is also working on engaging and educating the primary care community on suicide prevention in partnership with the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians by creating an educational series of podcasts.

DMHAS has also partnered with the New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center to address suicide by firearm and safe storage by creating webinars for both the public and health care

providers. They are also working on creating a free online map which lists places that will provide legal temporary storage of firearms.

The Adult Suicide Prevention Committee created by DMHAS has published three webinars on Resiliency and Wellbeing, Treatment Resources, and the Mental Health Continuum which are posted on the DMHAS website. They will also be hosting a virtual Suicide Prevention Conference on October 6th with keynote speakers and breakout sessions.

Ms. Bagarozza also informed the Council that by July of 2022 the National Suicide Hotline number will transition to the three digit number “988” that will increase performance standards, expand capacity for calls and also allow for both texting and chat.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Celina Levy again shared with the Council that she would be moderating a panel entitled “The Hidden Trauma Behind Suicide” at the October 6th Suicide Prevention Conference.

Ms. Levy also stated that the GCADA budget remains stable, but she and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro are working closely with the Office of Management and Budget to monitor projections and are continuing to look at long term funding to ensure the sustainability of the program.

Deputy Director, Rebecca Alfaro shared with the Council that funding has been approved for an online grant management system for the Municipal Alliances through Agate Software, Inc. The online system, called MAGS (Municipal Alliance Grant System), will replace the current paper copies that are required for all grant submissions and reporting. All the information will be housed in a secure cloud format, which will allow Municipal Alliance data to be aggregated and shared. The system is in development and is expected to be finalized in the spring of 2022. Once finalized, Agate will conduct trainings to our system users and continue to provide technical assistance for any statewide issues.

Ms. Alfaro also reported that GCADA will be receiving a \$1.05 million dollar allocation from the Department of Human Services, Division of Addiction Services to be devoted to youth leadership. The funding will be distributed by funding formula to each of the 21 counties to subgrant out to the Alliances for new prevention programming. The funding will be available for 4 years beginning in 2021 through 2025.

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 11:41.