



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

June 21, 2022

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Moira Nelson (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Michelle Graham-Lyons (DCA), Herb Kaldany (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 sixtieth 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.

Approval of Minutes

After a brief discussion, the minutes for May were approved. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-1)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Council for attaining quorum consistently since January. He announced that the Council would be voting on the FY23 County Plan resolutions and acknowledged the good work of the County Coordinators and asked Executive Director Celina Levy to read the names of those who were present.

FY23 County Plan Resolutions

Deputy Director, Rebecca Alfaro explained to the Council that the FY23 Plans were reviewed by the Council Review Team and voted to present the County Alliance Plans to the GCADA Council for approval.

The following Council members informed GCADA of the need to recuse themselves from voting on the FY23 County Plan and the FY23 DMHAS Funded Plan Resolutions:

BettyAnn Cowling-Carson – Camden County
Gisele Pemberton – Union County

After a vote, the plans were approved.

FY23 Camden County Plan Resolution (Y-14; N-0; ABS-1)

FY23 Joint County Plan Resolution (Cumberland and Warren) (Y-14; N-0; ABS-1)

FY23 Joint County DMHAS Funded Plan Resolution (Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic, Salem and Warren) (Y-14; N-0; ABS-1)

FY23 Camden County DMHAS Funded Resolution (Y-14; N-0; ABS-1)

FY23 Union County DMHAS Funded Resolution (Y-13; N-0; ABS-1)

Presentation: “Understanding and Addressing Substance Abuse in the LGBTQIA+ Community”

JP Pedoto, Pride+ Program Coordinator and Clinician at Family Connections gave an overview of the Pride+ program and the substance abuse challenges that the LGBTQIA+ community can face.

Pride+ is a program that is free of charge for middle and high school youth and their families and is funded by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey. Services include individual, group and family counseling, middle and high school education and support groups, parent education and support groups, field trips, trainings and presentations.

Approximately 20-30% of the LGBTQIA+ community abuses substances and this may be attributed to the Minority Stress Theory which suggests that members of the community experience a unique and chronic stress due to discrimination or harassment. Mr. Pedoto stressed

that more treatment options are needed that are LGBTQIA+ specific as well as affirming treatments.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Celina Levy thanked the Council members once again for attaining quorum consistently since January. She also expressed her gratitude to the GCADA Review Team, County and Municipal Coordinators and the GCADA Alliance Unit for their hard work.

Ms. Levy shared that two new members, John Armato and Eileen Fishman, had been appointed to the Council and would be attending next month's meeting.

Ms. Levy also shared that she and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro continue to work with the Governor's office on options for alternative funding streams and long-term sustainability for the program and also continue to be engaged in collaborative planning for the state's harm reduction efforts.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode informed the Council that the Alliances had participated in another webinar by the Prevention Technology Transfer Center on June 9th. She also shared that AGATE is expected to be in production for the FY24 grant cycle and that the Alliances would be trained on how to use the new online grant management system.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their input and support, the County Coordinators and Alliances for their good work despite the continued challenges and GCADA staff for their strong work ethic, and to Neil Van Ess for his ongoing leadership.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:31.