

MINUTES
Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
November 17, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The two hundred forty fourth 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

Acting Chairman Neil 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).

PLEDGE OF ALEGENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by the Council member present.

ROLL CALL

Susan Massaro called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record (see attached record).

Approval of Minutes

Acting Chairman Van Ess asked for a motion to approve the October minutes as presented to the Council.

Harry Morey motioned to approve the October minutes; seconded by Kay McGrath. A roll call vote was taken (see attached vote sheet) and the motion carried with changes to Gregg Benson's name.

Presentation on Needle Exchange Program: Laurence Ganges, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health and Senior Service

Kay McGrath reported that the Legislative Subcommittee had a presentation on the Needle Exchange Program and gave a brief overview of the various things the subcommittee did on this issue. Ms. McGrath introduced Laurence Ganges, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of HIV/AIDS Services, who will give a presentation on how the needle exchange program works.

Mr. Ganges began his presentation saying that the evolution of syringe took a long time because people did not want to talk about drugs and HIV and gave an overview of what has been going on in the past twenty five years to get us to this point of needle exchange. Mr. Ganges went through a power point presentation and pointed out the following information:

HIV Epidemic in United States

- Over 1.1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV/AIDS and don't know it.
- Based on new information from the Center of Disease Control and prevention we thought it was 40,000 new infections but it really is 56,300 new infections annually.
- People at risk are African Americans, Latino's, women, men who have sex with men and youth. New Jersey is second highest state of having women living with HIV. Men are getting infected in this state because they are injecting drug users, they are sharing syringes and then they choose to have heterosexual sex with their female partners
- There is no cure and 72% of people infected with HIV die.

Overview of HIV Epidemic in New Jersey

- As of the end of last year about 73,000 HIV cumulative cases in New Jersey
- New Jersey is ranked 5th in the nation of cumulative AIDS cases
- We are 3rd in pediatric AIDS cases, one of the things that have happened we have reduced the children being born with AIDS.

New Jersey ranks second among the fifty states in the number and percentage of cumulative AIDS cases in the Injection Drug Use category. Mr. Ganges briefly overviewed what they have done since 1995 until now to make changes and went over the reported AIDS cases among Adults and Adolescents by Transmission Category.

In December of 2005 Governor Corzine signed the Blood-borne Disease Ham Reduction Act and Mr. Ganges briefly overviewed the major components of this Act:

- Establishes a demonstration program to permit up to six municipalities to operate a sterile syringe access program.
- The DHSS will prescribe requirements for a municipality to establish and operate a program.

- Request an application from municipalities; approval to operate a program will be provided by the DHSS.
- A municipality must have their governing body provide an authorizing ordinance to obtain approval from the DHSS to operate a program.
- Appropriates \$10 million to the Department of Human Services, Division of Addiction Services for inpatient and outpatient drug abuse treatment.
- The DHSS shall contract with the independent entity to prepare an analysis of the sterile syringe access programs, and to report to the Governor, the Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and the legislature regarding:
 - Syringes distributed and returned
 - Number of participants
 - Number of participants referred for drug treatment

Goal & Services of SEPs

- Help reduce the transmission of the HIV virus and other blood-borne infections associated with drug injections (harm reduction)
- Provides clean/sterile needles to active drug users
- Provides safe disposal strategies for used/dirty syringes
- Offers safer using materials
- Provides disease prevention and health education (HIV & HCV testing)
- Offers linked referrals, e.g., drug treatment

Mr. Ganges finished up his presentation with the most recent data through November 7, 2009 which shows that 3,748 individuals have been enrolled in syringe exchange since November 27, 2007. There have been 1829 referrals to drug treatment and 884 have gone to treatment and continue in treatment. He has invited anyone who would be interested in seeing what happens at one of these programs to get in touch with him and he would be happy to set up a time and day to take them.

Mr. Ganges reported that his office had to submit a report to the Governor on the status of this program in May 2009. There are three primary things they are asking for;

- First they are asking that this no longer be a demonstration program
- Seconded they want any municipality that wants to have this program be able to do so
- Third recommendation is to let them use state money to fund these programs

There were questions and comments from the Council members present and Mr. Ganges responded to them.

Executive Committee

Acting Chairman Van Ess reported that the Executive Committee meeting will meet on December 1, 2009.

Alliance Committee

Harry Morey, Chair, reported that the Alliance Committee met on November 10, 2009 and they discussed and approved the committee goals and objectives for the Master Plan.

The 2010 plan updates received to date do not have many new programs or changes. Several counties have no new programs. This is the second year of the three year plan cycle and the reviews should be completed by December.

The feedback from the Summit was very positive and well attended. Also the site visits being conducted by Marge Beattie, Kevin Sullivan and Nick Petrozzino will be completed by the end of the year.

Interdepartmental Advisory Panel

Gary Vermeire, Chair, reported that the November meeting was cancelled and he will be talking with Executive Director Powner on rescheduling the meeting.

Planning Committee

Executive Director Powner gave everyone present Tony Bucco's apology for not being present at the Council meeting, but he had a commitment at the League of Municipalities Convention in Atlantic City. Everyone received a copy of the draft Master Plan today in their folders at their seats. There are some editorial changes to the narrative pages that we're working on and the likelihood that there will be changes to the goals and objectives to the Treatment Subcommittee section after their meeting today. Substantial changes will be forwarded prior to the December meeting. All the Departments sent in their State Government Components and the matrix that is being formed from this information is being worked on and will be forwarded to the members.

Criminal/Juvenile Justice Subcommittee – No Report

Legislative Subcommittee

Kay McGrath, Chair, reported met on November 5, 2009 and introduced two new members, Jim O'Brien, CEO of Merryville and Helen McIntosh, Clinical Director of Anderson House.

The Legislative Subcommittee had a presentation on Drug Courts given by Maurice Hart, Statewide Drug Court Coordinator, Administrative Office of the Courts, Criminal Practice Division. Drug courts function independently from the existing court process, and are a collaborative effort between the criminal justice and treatment systems in the community.

They have been in existence in New Jersey for ten years, and nationally for twenty years. Mr. Hart offered a brief history of drug courts in New Jersey that started as a pilot in Camden, Essex, Mercer, Passaic and Union counties. After five years presiding judges recommended that drug courts be implemented statewide. On September 6, 2001, legislation was signed to appropriate funding to implement the statewide program (P.L. 2001, c.243). As of 2004 New Jersey has a drug court in every county.

Participants are made up of non violent drug offenders who are recommended by the prosecutor, assessed to have a substance abuse dependency and are appropriate for treatment.

Some of the statistics Mr. Hart gave were very impressive. They are as follows:

No. of Current Active Participants:	3,710
Percent of Minority Participants:	51%
No. of Program Graduates:	1,577
No. of Participants in Final Phase:	530
Percent Employed Full-Time while in Drug Court	74%
Percent Employed FT by Graduation:	90%
Percent of Negative Drug Tests	95%

(Over 200,000 tests conducted on active participants in one year)

Mr. Hart stated that prison research has shown that the recidivism rate of 43.5% among incarcerated individuals occurs one year after they are released, and 58.6% within two years. Contrast those figures with those for graduates of drug courts nationally after one year the re-arrest rate is 16.4% and 27.5 % after two years and of the 16.4%, only 7% were convicted of a crime and of the 7% only 4% were sentenced to state prison. Two years ago New Jersey was recognized as being one of the best drug courts in the country. Statistics for participants before and after are as follows:

The percentage of participants employed rose from 30% to 90%.

The percentage of participants with a valid driver's license rose from 12% to 62%.

26% of graduates raised their level of education or vocational skills.

The percentage of participants covered by medical insurance was raised from 18% to 52%.

After the presentation the Legislative Subcommittee adopted the goals and objectives for 2010 with some small changes from the past year.

They had discussed in a previous meeting the Legislation signed by Governor Corzine called the 911 Legislation, by which underage drinkers can call for help for a friend who seems to be in trouble from the over indulgence in alcohol. Assemblywoman Angelini had a press conference in her office on this legislation that she sponsored and several members had gone and reported to the Legislative Subcommittee on what took place at the press conference.

One member brought six bills being introduced by Assemblywoman Coleman Watson that she felt would be of interest to the subcommittee. They will study those at the next meeting.

Treatment Subcommittee

Gregg Benson, Chair, reported that the Treatment Subcommittee will meet immediately after the Council to welcome some new members and look at the goals and objectives for 2010.

Veterans and Military Ad Hoc Committee – No Report

Other Business

Acting Chairman Van Ess mentioned that our next meeting is scheduled for December 15th and that possibly we may have to reschedule the meeting to December 22nd to give staff some additional time to finish the review of the plans. Executive Director Powner told everyone present that she would send them an e-mail and that if they had a conflict to let her know.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Powner recapped the Summit for the Council members present and said responses indicate it was well received. General Dean did a great job and had offered the Alliances a discount to join CADCA.

In everyone's table packet there was a copy of a Senate Resolution by Senator Girgenti presented at the Summit.

The solicitation for the auditing service went out last week and there has been some interest from a few firms under state contract. They been in touch with Executive Director Powner and wanted more information. Proposals are due back to Treasury on November 23, 2009. The plan is to have an independent auditing firm go out to seven counties each year over the next three years and test their procedures and oversight of the municipalities.

Executive Director Powner mentioned again that Marge Beattie, Kevin Sullivan and Nick Petrozzino comprise a monitoring team and are about two thirds through the counties and should be done by the end of the year. This process seems to be going well.

The Alliance County plans are in, there are a few that have asked for extensions and these extensions are due in by December. They will be reviewed the first week of December and brought to Council for a vote at the December meeting.

Pam Fischer has approached GCADA to work with them on joint county forums.

Public Comments

Acting Chairman Van Ess wanted to truly thank the department designees for consistently attending the meetings, because without them we would not have been able to have a quorum.

He wished the Governor elect well and hoped that the vacant chairman slot along with the rest of the public membership positions would be filled soon.

Acting Chairman Van Ess wished everyone a happy, healthy and very warm Thanksgiving.

Adjournment

Acting Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Mary Lou Powner
Executive Director