



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
PO BOX 345

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MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
May 21, 2013

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

JOHN L. HULICK, MS, CPS
Executive Director

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

Call to Order

The two hundred eightieth 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).

Roll Call

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record.

Approval of April Minutes

After a discussion, the April minutes were approved with amendments. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-4)

"Young People in Recovery" Presentation

Devin Fox from the Central New Jersey chapter of Young People in Recovery (YPR), spoke to the Council members about the organization. YPR presently consists of eight chapters in eight different states across the country. The mission of YPR is to provide young people with a voice to advocate for recovery. The organization was established in response to recommendations from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The group maintains the anonymity of its members, but stresses that this does not mean the group remains silent. Mr. Fox also stated that this was not a self-help group, but rather a group that shares their stories in recovery. The members advocate for essential needs for the adolescent recovery community, including collegiate and high school recovery programs, adequate and supportive recovery housing, community centers and peer to peer support. Mr. Fox encouraged the Council members to visit the YPR Facebook page as well as their website at www.youngpeopleinrecovery.org.

Several Council members expressed their admiration for what Mr. Fox and his colleagues have accomplished. YPR will continue to work closely with the Governor's Council as well as provide representation at the Summit in September.

Bob Zlotnick encouraged YPR members to get involved with New Jersey's regional coalitions for substance abuse prevention. Kevin Meara also offered Mr. Fox an opportunity for a radio show on the City of Angels radio station and suggested that a representative of YPR be asked to join the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

Benjamin Chin – Truman Scholarship Recipient

The Council had an opportunity to hear a presentation from Benjamin Chin, the recipient of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation's 2013 Truman Scholarship. Mr. Chin, a student at Rutgers University, shared his recovery story with the Council and his experiences living at the Rutgers Recovery House. He also voiced his concerns that there was no linkage in recovery support services within the state and the need for co-occurring integrated treatment.

The Council adopted a resolution recognizing Benjamin Chin for his selection as a 2013 Truman Scholar. (Y-16; N-0; ABS-2)

Chairman's Report

Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess informed members that he had received resignation letters from public members Barbara Adolphe and Eric Arauz.

Mr. Van Ess acknowledged that at the last Council meeting some members expressed that they did not feel they were engaged in Council business. He also stated that after last month's meeting, he made several phone calls to Council members to assure them that he would be taking a very active role in his position as Acting Chairman. He stressed that the Council will continue to hold monthly meetings because GCADA is accountable to the public. Mr. Van Ess then asked Council members to use this opportunity to express concerns they may have over current GCADA practices and activities.

Bob Zlotnick thanked Chairman Van Ess for reaching out to him by phone and that it made him "feel heard".

Paul Ressler stated that he would like the current bylaws to be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Van Ess said that he would create a bylaws committee and Kevin Meara would chair this committee. Mr. Ressler also said that he was disappointed by the lack of support from GCADA in regards to the Good Samaritan Act. He also expressed that he was unhappy with the way the vice chairman nominations had been handled and felt that the members did not have a voice in the process. Mr. Ressler thanked Mr. Van Ess for reaching out to him after the April meeting.

Giselle Pemberton suggested that Council members go through an orientation so that the Council's needs could be assessed and prioritized. Barbara Sprechman also agreed and said that an assessment tool would be helpful in identifying the Council member's strengths and weaknesses. Kevin Meara suggested that the Council members participate in an offsite team building exercise. Mr. Meara also shared that he was pleased that Mr. Van Ess took the time to call him after the April meeting and discuss his concerns.

Gregg Benson thanked the Council members for their well wishes during his convalescence. He said that the Council has the expertise within its membership to make a meaningful contribution to recovery efforts throughout the state.

Mr. Van Ess invited any Alliance Coordinators in the public to share their comments.

Steve Nebesni, Morris County Alliance Coordinator, shared that his Alliances feel that they are being marginalized and "pushed out" with the amount of paperwork that is required for funding.

Mary Beth Monroe, Gloucester County Alliance Coordinator, stated that upon Executive Director John Hulick's arrival at GCADA, the Alliances have not felt that he is supporting them. She emphasized that the Alliances were a grassroots effort and that the push for environmental change strategies in the upcoming grant cycle was discouraging some Alliances from participating. She expressed discontent that County Coordinator attendance at Council meetings was no longer mandated in the grant Letter of Agreement. She asked that Mr. Van Ess send a letter to the Alliances requesting their attendance at the monthly GCADA meetings.

Nick Loizzi, Sussex County Alliance Coordinator, introduced himself to the Council and agreed with Ms. Monroe that the Alliance program seemed to be losing its grassroots emphasis. He was concerned that since he started in his position as Coordinator, he had not been given any guidance or guidelines in respect to his responsibilities. He asked that there be more open dialogue between GCADA and county Alliance Coordinators. Mr. Loizzi also read an email from Bergen County Alliance Coordinator, Judy Forman. Ms. Forman was troubled that all resolutions establishing every local Alliance in the county must be submitted before any reimbursements are made to the County. She did not feel that this was justified and did not think that Bergen County reimbursement should be withheld due to four out of 62 resolutions not being received.

Gary Abraham, president of the County Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Directors Association, informed the Council that the Association was 100% in support of the Alliances. He said that he believed this was a "ground up" process and that a collaborative effort was needed between the Council and Alliances.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director John Hulick informed the Council members that the current grant cycle would be extended for six months until July 2014, and henceforth the Alliance

grant cycle would coincide with the fiscal rather than calendar year. He asked Rebecca Alfaro, Director of Prevention and Training, to explain this process. Ms. Alfaro stated that this decision was due largely to the unanticipated delay in the publication of a state epidemiological data report which was vital for the Alliances to complete their needs assessments. GCADA staff is still waiting to hear from the Office of Management and Budget as well as the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to determine how funds will be allocated with this change.

Mr. Hulick thanked the Council and staff for the work they continued to do while he was on leave. He was pleased that the Council members are so engaged and said that dialogue would continue at next month's meeting on the opportunities for Council members to play an active role in fulfilling GCADA's mission and on the future direction of the Council.

Executive Director Hulick announced that a guidelines workgroup had been meeting regularly to create the new grant parameters and processes for the upcoming grant cycle.

Mr. Hulick distributed a draft GCADA brochure that highlighted the fundamental responsibilities of the agency. He encouraged members to visit the GCADA website to view information on the upcoming Summit in September. He also asked for suggestions on topics for workshops. A link can be found for workshop proposals on the Council's website.

Mr. Hulick informed the Council that 20 of the 21 County Plans had been approved and that the Atlantic County plan would be scheduled for approval at next month's meeting.

Announcements

Kevin Meara invited Council members to a town hall meeting in Doylestown, Pennsylvania on May 29th at 7 p.m. The topic for discussion at the town hall meeting will be the recent upswing in the incidence of heroin overdoses.

Executive Director Hulick shared with the Council that the Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey would be holding its annual "Shout Down Drugs" concert later in the month. He encouraged Council members to visit the GCADA Facebook page to stay up to date on upcoming events and other news.

Adjournment

Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 1:04 p.m.