



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE  
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PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*

CELINA LEVY  
*Executive Director*

## **MINUTES**

### **Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**

**February 16, 2021**

**Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Donna Westhoven (AOC), Kate Butler (DCA), Herb Kaldany (DOC), Luiz Pereira (DOE), Annette Riordan (DHS), Holly Low (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS)**

#### **Call to Order**

The three hundred and forty fifth 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**

Chairman 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 due to the lack of quorum.

#### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and wanted to say again how much he enjoyed the Volunteer of the Year Awards in December and that it was a perfect way to end a challenging year.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Celina Levy shared that she and Deputy Director, Rebecca Alfaro, continue to work with all parties involved to see how we can address the immediate DEDR fund fluctuations and how to stabilize the program for long term sustainability. Although it is a slower process, conversations are headed in the right direction with all those involved in the discussion recognizing the critical role the Municipal Alliances play in New Jersey's prevention efforts.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode, shared that because of the reduction in DEDR collections, GCADA was unable to offer NJPN Conference scholarships to Alliance members or County staff. Alliances can modify their FY21 plans or use fundraising income to attend the conference if they choose. The FY22 planning process is currently on hold until late February or March when there is more information from OMB about the level of funding that can be distributed to the counties for FY22.

Ms. Levy shared that a benefit of the conversations that she and Ms. Alfaro are having about the Alliance program is that it offers an opportunity to elevate the value of the program. She shared that she and Ms. Alfaro had a conversation with former Council Member, Kelly Levy of the Attorney General's office regarding a collaboration with the AG's Operation Helping Hand program and the Alliances.

Ms. Levy shared that she continues to be in communication with Dave Ellis of the NJ ACEs Collaborative and will continue to provide updates as they are available.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council Members for their guidance and support, the County Coordinators and all of the Alliances for their good work in light of the challenges faced and to GCADA staff for their work ethic and to Neil for his leadership.

## **Adjournment**

Ms. DeStefano adjourned the meeting at 10:32.