



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Acting Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

January 21, 2015

Call to Order

The two hundred ninety fifth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Elected 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).

Roll Call

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

Bylaws Provision

Chairman Van Ess asked for a motion to continue operating under the Emergency Powers of the 2010 Bylaws. Gregg Benson made this motion and it was seconded by BettyAnn Cowling-Carson. After a vote, the motion was approved. (Y-8; N-0; ABS-6)

Approval of November and December Minutes

After a brief discussion, the minutes from November and December were approved.

November (Y-7; N-0; ABS-7)

December (Y-7; N-0; ABS-7)

Election of Officers

Acting Executive Director Celina Levy asked the Council members for a nominee for the position of Vice Chairman. Gregg Benson made a motion to nominate Neil Van Ess and this was seconded by BettyAnn Cowling-Carson. After a vote, Neil Van Ess was reelected as Vice Chair of the Council. (Y-9; N-0; ABS-4)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed the members to the meeting. He thanked both the public members and departmental designees for their confidence and said he remains committed to the Council and that the Alliances continue to have his full support.

Presentation: "Addressing Drug Use Within the Adolescent Population"

Dr. Ramon Solhkhah from the Jersey Shore University Medical Center presented to the Council on the topic of drug use in the adolescent population. Dr. Solhkhah practices pediatric and adolescent psychiatry and shared that drug use among adolescents is very common.

Although adolescent drug use rates have remained stable since 1996, Dr. Solhkhah said that there has been a large increase in prescription drug abuse, as well as marijuana use due to the recent trend of legalization. He also explained that the media contributes to drug use among younger people.

Dr. Solhkhah shared that few adolescents who experiment with drugs or alcohol will abuse these substances nor do they become dependent. Three to nine percent progress to abusing or becoming dependent on drugs while five to eight percent progress to alcohol abuse or dependence. He explained that risk factors for abuse or dependence can be genetic, constitutional, psychological or sociocultural.

Dr. Solhkhah explained the different criteria and tools used for assessing drug abuse. Once abuse is established, he said there is no consensus on when the appropriate time to initiate treatment in adolescents is, or whether treatment should involve therapy, a 12 step facilitation, cold turkey or medication. He also stated that the use of medication for treatment of adolescent substance abuse is still an emerging field.

Council member Elizabeth Manley from the NJ Department of Children and Families commented that there should be a single point of access for adolescents who seek treatment. She also stressed that teenagers often see treatment as punitive and that parents do not always acknowledge that their child has an issue.

Council member Gregg Benson commented that training for professionals was an issue and that unique and centralized training was needed as most treatment is based on an adult model of care.

Presentation: "Community in Crisis Movement"

Andi Williams and Jody D'Agostini from the Somerset Hills YMCA presented on their heroin and opiate initiative to the Council. This initiative was inspired by the Council's Opiate Task Force Report. It was started over a year ago after the town lost two children to heroin overdoses two days apart.

The Somerset Hills group has established seven work groups with over 100 volunteers to combat this issue. These working groups involve representatives from the fields of mental health and addiction services, law enforcement/EMT, and parents and schools. The work groups actively pursue public policy support and community education, physician outreach, community engagement and fund raising. Efforts of the working groups include creating an informational website, setting up prescription pill drop boxes, educating physicians and medical staff on the use of Narcan and educating the community that drug abuse is a disease..

Ms. Williams thanked Council member Gregg Benson for his participation on the work group and said that every community should have this initiative and that the Somerset Hills movement can be used as a model.

Gregg Benson stated that this was an amazing community effort and that this group has expanded on every recommendation that was included in the Opiate Task Force Report.

Acting Executive Director Celina Gray thanked Ms. Williams and Ms. D'Agostini for their presentation and invited them to present on this initiative to the county Alliance coordinators.

Acting Executive Director's Report

Acting Executive Director Levy stated that she was pleased to have Neil Van Ess reelected as Vice Chairman. She also shared that she continues to work with the Adult Suicide Prevention workgroup as well as the Stakeholder's Communications group through the NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and will have an update on these groups at the February meeting.

Ms. Levy asked Rebecca Alfaro to share an Alliance update with the Council members. Ms. Alfaro will be conducting focus groups in six counties to gather feedback regarding the application process and the reporting forms. These focus groups will consist of municipal alliance coordinators and feedback will be used to help streamline the application process for the next grant cycle.

Adjournment

Elected Chairman Neil Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.