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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**

**May 16, 2018**

#### **Call to Order**

The three hundred and twenty sixth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess.

#### **Open Public Meetings Act Statement**

Ms. 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 Minutes**

After a brief discussion, the minutes for April 2018 were approved. **(Y-11; N-0; ABS-3)**

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

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting. Before he began the meeting, he asked for a moment of silence with Memorial Day approaching to recognize those who sacrificed their lives to serve our nation.

He also shared that he that May was Mental Health Awareness Month and that it was very important to him knowing that so many Veterans suffer from PTSD and other mental health disorders.

#### **FY19 Atlantic County Plan Resolution**

Rebecca Alfaro, Deputy Director informed the Council that the FY19 Atlantic County Plan would be up for a vote. Atlantic County has met the approval threshold to be brought to the

Council for consideration. The following Council members who had previously informed the GCADA ethics officer of the need to recuse themselves from voting on the FY19 County Plans were:

**Gisele Pemberton – Union County**  
**BettyAnn Cowling-Carson – Camden County**  
**Gregg Benson – Morris and Somerset County**  
**Robert Zlotnick – All counties**

After a vote, the Atlantic County Plan was approved. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-0)

### **Mental Health Awareness Month Resolution**

Acting Executive Director Celina Levy read a proclamation from the Governor and a resolution designating the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month. After a vote, the resolution was passed. (Y-14; N-0; ABS-0)

### **Presentation: “Overview of Problem Gambling”**

Neva Pryor, Executive Director and Dan Trolaro, Assistant Executive Director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey (CCGNJ) gave an overview to the Council on the work they have been doing.

CCGNJ is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services for people affected by a gambling problem.

Ms. Pryor stated that problem gambling can be a silent killer and often mimics the same issues related to substance abuse such as tolerance and withdrawal. Those who suffer from problem gambling are also more likely to struggle with other addiction issues as well.

Mr. Trolaro talked about the heightened risk for youth, due to easy Internet access for betting and gaming. He shared that youth are particularly vulnerable to what is called “the Scarcity Principle” or FOMO: Fear of Missing Out. That youth who feel marginalized and isolated in real life, derive a sense of accomplishment and belonging when they participate in, and excel, on gaming sites.

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey operates a free, 24/7 helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER that provides help and resources to those who struggle with problem gambling as well as their family and friends. This service is also available through text and email. The goal of this hotline is to provide a single point of contact for those who are struggling with this addiction.

The Council in partnership with the Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) offers a voluntary self-exclusion option which allows an individual to be removed from casino marketing lists as well as banning play either online or in person. More information regarding this treatment option is available on the DGE website.

The Council will hold its annual statewide conference on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Acting Executive Director's Report**

Acting Executive Director Celina Levy shared that GCADA and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs have partnered together to update and reissue the Veterans Resource Guide. Ms. Levy will keep the Council updated on timelines for completion and reissue.

The Master Plan draft outline is almost complete, however there is still more content to be collected, and due to the new administration and changes in department leadership, departmental surveys will have to be resubmitted, pushing back the timeline. GCADA is now also critically short-staffed, which could further impact projected timelines.

Ms. Levy continues to represent GCADA on the DMHAS Adult Suicide Prevention Advisory Council which reconvened on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The committee is working on strategies for suicide prevention in the state as well as the 2018 Suicide Prevention Conference on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

The NJPN Conference will be held on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their support, the County Alliance coordinators and the Alliance members for their prevention effort.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.