



**State of New Jersey**

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE  
PO Box 345  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0345

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*

CELINA LEVY  
*Executive Director*

**MINUTES**

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

**October 19, 2021**

**Attendance:** Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Betty Ann Cowling-Carson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Donna Westhoven (AOC), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Annette Riordan (DHS), Holly Low (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

**Call to Order**

The three hundred and fifty second 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). 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 only due to the lack of quorum.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a happy Fall. He said that he was pleased to have a presentation last month from PDFNJ on Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day and from DMHAS about Suicide Prevention and information on the Suicide Prevention Conference, both of which took place on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Presentation: “2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline”**

Patricia Behrens, Program Coordinator of the 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline gave an overview of the helpline to the Council.

2NDFLOOR was founded in 2003 and it was based off the Childline that was created in the United Kingdom. It originally served just Monmouth County and opened statewide in 2008.

The Helpline is funded by the Department of Children and Families and offers confidential and anonymous services for youth and young adults, 24/7 365 days a year, by phone, text, website, phone app and social media. Topics such as homework, peer relationships, family and mental health can be discussed.

2NDFLOOR is staffed by trained support counselors with experience in the mental health field. They also undergo 40 hours of training prior to working on the helpline and also attend quarterly meetings.

More information can be found at [www.2NDFLOOR.org](http://www.2NDFLOOR.org).

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Executive Director Celina Levy again shared with the Council that three significant virtual events took place since the last Council meeting, the 2021 Opioid Summit on September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> and the 2021 Suicide Prevention Conference and Knockout Opioid Abuse Day, which both took place on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Levy moderated a panel at the Suicide Prevention Conference, whose theme was “Trauma: The Hidden Face of Suicide”. The title of the panel was “Unmasking the Trauma Behind Suicide”. The conference also included speakers and breakout sessions, one of which was presented by Dave Ellis who presented to GCADA about the ACEs Collaborative at a past meeting.

Ms. Levy also stated that she and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro are working closely with the Office of Management and Budget and Treasury to explore and identify additional funding options for the program.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode shared with the Council that the first fall edition of the GCADA Alliance newsletter has been published. This newsletter will highlight different alliances in the state as well as the programs they offer. Ms. Thode also shared that the Volunteer of the Year submissions are in the process of being scored by the Council members who volunteered to judge and that the VOY virtual ceremony would be held at the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their guidance and support, County Coordinators, and all the Alliances for their good work especially in light of the challenges faced, GCADA

staff for continuing to meet the unprecedented challenges with strong worth ethic and to Chairman Van Ess for his leadership.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 10:59.