



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder

November 19, 2024

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Sweta Kansagra (Public Member), Gisele Pemberton (Public Member), Cornell Williamson (AOC), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Michelle Graham-Lyons (DCA), Adam Cortes (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Lashunda Omida (DOH), Don Hallcom (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Tiffany Wilson (LPS), Noelle-Lee Turner (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)

Call to Order

The three hundred and eighty-seventh regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder 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 GCSUD website contact portal between the hours of 10am and 1pm on the day of the meeting and must state "Public Comment" in the subject line.

Roll Call

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

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Gregg Benson for stepping in for him during the meetings he was unable to attend.

Approval of Minutes

After a brief discussion, the minutes for September and October were approved.

September (Y-13; N-0; ABS-2)

October (Y-13; N-0; ABS-2)

Veterans Day Resolution

Executive Director Celina Levy read a resolution recognizing November 11th as Veterans Day. After a vote, the resolution was approved. (Y-15; N-0; ABS-0)

Presentation: “NJDMAVA Update”

Vincent Solemeno, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, Administrator of Veterans Affairs of the NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs gave an update to the Council members of some of the work and programs being offered by the DMAVA.

A resource guide for NJ military, veterans and their families was updated this year. This was a joint effort between NJDMAVA and GCSUD. The handbook provides information on access to veteran benefits as well as other available resources and services in the state.

“The Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families” is an interagency team of military and civilian leaders tasked with developing a plan to prevent suicide among veterans by implementing evidence-based practices and enhancing local and statewide prevention efforts. The three main priority areas are identifying service members, promoting connectedness, and lethal means safety and safety planning.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Celina Levy expressed her gratitude for those who had served in the military and their families and to Chairman Van Ess.

She shared that the departments had provided their submissions for the Master Plan and that public members will be asked for their input as well.

Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro continues to work with Treasury and DMHAS staff to oversee the funding process. More information will be shared once the process is complete.

Ms. Levy also reminded the Council that the Volunteer of the Year Awards would be held at the December 10th meeting.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode shared with the Council that the quarterly reports are now live in the Municipal Alliance Grant System (MAGS) and that planning for FY26 will get is currently underway later this year. She also thanked the Council judges who scored the Volunteer of the Year submissions and said the winner would be shared at the December 10th event.

Adjournment

Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:05.