



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder

June 17, 2025

Attendance: 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), Herb Kaldany (DOC), Lashunda Omida (DOH), Don Hallcom (DHS), Briana Menjivar (DOL), Tiffany Wilson (LPS), Noelle Lee-Turner (DMAVA)

The three hundred and ninety fourth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by 2nd Vice Chair Gregg Benson.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Mr. Benson 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. Benson 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. Mr. Benson informed the Council that this meeting would be for informational purposes only due to the lack of quorum.

Presentation: "Pathways 2 Recovery"

Briana Menjivar, Contract Administrator of the NJ Department of Labor and Trish Dooley Budsock, Program Manager of the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at Rutgers University gave an overview of the Pathways 2 Recovery program.

Pathways 2 Recovery launched in February of this year and is a collaboration between Rutgers and the Department of Labor that provides employment support to individuals impacted by opioids both directly and indirectly.

Resources available include training opportunities such as resume building, career services that include interviewing skills, mentorship and case management as well as supportive services such as childcare, transportation and license restoration.

A toolkit is also available for employers on how to become a recovery-friendly workplace. This toolkit is regularly updated by the Department of Labor and Rutgers staff. It provides information for employers on hiring and employing people in recovery and also addresses topics such as relapse, stigma, safety and Narcan training.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Celina thanked everyone for attaining quorum to vote on the FY26 County Plan resolutions last month.

The draft of the Master Plan has been completed and Ms. Levy shared that she hopes to have feedback from the Governor's office at the July meeting. Once the final draft is approved, it will be prepared for adoption by the Council.

Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro is working with DMHAS on the completion of the funding process and is continuing to work on the remaining funding. More updates will be available at the next Council meeting.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode thanked the Council members for completing their ethics training and Financial Disclosure forms for 2025. She also shared that 48% of the County Plans had been approved for the FY26 grant year.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their guidance and support, the County Alliance Coordinators for their good work, GCSUD staff for moving the office forward and to Neil Van Ess for his ongoing leadership and support.

Adjournment

Mr. Benson adjourned the meeting at 11:10.