



# State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

P. O. Box 345

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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**

**March 18, 2025**

**Attendance:** Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Eileen Fishman (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 Omidia (DOH), Don Hallcom (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Tiffany Wilson (LPS)

### **Call to Order**

The three hundred and ninety first 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 and shared that Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro and the Alliance unit staff would not be joining the meeting since they were participating in a Prevention Leadership Intensive training.

### **Approval of Minutes**

After a brief discussion, the minutes for February were approved. (Y-11; N-0; ABS-1)

### **Problem Gambling Awareness Month Resolution**

Executive Director Celina Levy read a resolution recognizing March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in New Jersey. After a vote, the resolution was approved. (Y-12; N-0; ABS-0)

### **Presentation: “The Hidden Epidemic: A Public Health Concern”**

Luis Del Orbe, Executive Director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey (CCGNJ) gave an overview of the organization and the effects of gambling.

CCGNJ is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services to those affected by problem gambling. The Council also offers 24/7 support via the NJ Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER. Brochures, educational links and fact sheets can also be found at their website: [www.800GAMBLER.org](http://www.800GAMBLER.org).

There are three types of gamblers: social gamblers, problem gamblers and disordered gamblers. Possible causes of problem and disordered gambling are trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), early experimentation, peer pressure, family history of gambling or co-occurring mental conditions.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Executive Director Celina Levy thanked the departments and public members for providing their input into the Master Plan. Once the final draft has been created, it will be shared with the Governor’s office and then to the Council members for adoption.

Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro is continuing to close out part of the DMHAS grant and is working with Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode on other DMHAS grant funding.

The FY26 County and Municipal Alliance planning process has begun in MAGS. The FY25 plan modification process is projected to go live in MAGS within the next month. GCSUD staff will provide county and municipal trainings on processing plan modifications once the process is live.

The State Ethics Commission will be reaching out to all Council members shortly to request that the 2025 Financial Disclosure forms be completed. This will be done in a new online system; however, the questions will remain the same.

Ms. Levy thanked the Council members for their support and input, County Coordinators and Alliances for their commitment to New Jersey communities, to GCSUD for going above and beyond to ensure the work of the Council moves forward and to Neil for his leadership and commitment to the Council.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:35.