



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
PO BOX 345
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0345

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

JOHN L. HULICK, MS, CPS
Executive Director

Letter to the Editor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: John Hulick
609-777-0526
John.hulick@treas.state.nj.us

March 12, 2012

To the editor:

Governor Chris Christie's recent remarks regarding addiction demonstrate a real compassion for and understanding of those in recovery from addictive illness and for those who continue to struggle with it. The Governor's remarks, as well as his announced plans to mandatorily treat addicted non-violent offenders instead of incarcerating them, underscore an extraordinary commitment to addressing New Jersey's number one public health concern -- addiction.

The Governor's statements and initiatives also send a powerful message about the stigma associated with addiction by confirming the fact that addiction is a disease that should not leave those with it on the scrap heap of humanity nor negate their positive contributions to society. Stigma remains a major barrier to awareness, education, treatment and recovery for individuals and their families.

I've worked professionally for nearly a quarter century to improve the lives of addicted individuals and their families and am also a person in long-term recovery from alcoholism for twenty six years. During this time, I and untold others have waited for a Governor to seize the bully pulpit and bring much needed focus to addiction, it's devastating consequences, and the hope that recovery from addiction instills.

That time has arrived. As former Governor James McGreevey remarked, no Governor, other than Governor Christie, has provided the level of attention and execution of policy on these issues. McGreevey also characterized Governor Christie as having acted "boldly, with guts" when there's almost no political dividend.

I offer a debt of gratitude and thanks to Governor Christie for shedding light on this important issue. His words inspire and will continue to inspire addicted individuals and their families, as well as the shared

efforts of tens of thousands of professionals and community stakeholders who make it their passion and commitment to create healthy, safe and drug-free communities in New Jersey.

Sincerely,

John L. Hulick, MS, CPS
Executive Director
Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse