



## State of New Jersey

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE  
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KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

### MINUTES

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*

CELINA GRAY  
*Acting Executive Director*

### Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse March 18, 2014

#### Call to Order

The two hundred eighty seventh regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Elected Chairman Neil Van Ess.

#### Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Chairman 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).

#### Roll Call

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

#### Approval of December Minutes

After a brief discussion, the December 2013 minutes were approved. (Y-11; N-0; ABS-3)

#### Bylaws Provision

Chairman Van Ess then asked for a motion to continue operating under the Emergency Powers of the 2010 Bylaws. Kevin Meara made this motion and it was seconded by BettyAnn Cowling-Carson. After a vote, the motion was approved. (Y-9; N-0; ABS-5)

#### Election of Officers

Chairman Van Ess informed the Council that his term for first vice chair had expired and he asked for nominations. Kevin Meara made a motion to nominate Mr. Van Ess and BettyAnn Cowling-Carson seconded this motion. (Y-10; N-1; ABS-3) Chairman Van Ess asked if there were any other nominations and Paul Ressler made a motion to nominate himself. This motion was seconded by Bob Zlotnick. (Y-1; N-8; ABS-5) After a vote tally, Chairman Van Ess was reelected.

## **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Neil Van Ess stated that he was pleased to announce the Heroin and Other Opiate Task Force Report would be released at today's meeting. He acknowledged Paul Ressler, Kevin Meara and members of Parent 2 Parent for their courage and stated that this was Riley Regan's mission for the Governor's Council when it was established.

## **Presentation: Donald Weinbaum and Recovery Speakers – Problem Gambling Awareness Month in New Jersey**

Donald Weinbaum, Executive Director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, gave a presentation to the members on the work of the Council. March has been designated "Problem Gambling Awareness Month" with the theme being "Navigating Problem Gambling".

The goals of this campaign are to educate the public as well as reducing the stigma of gambling which is the most challenging. The Council is also working on expanding the network of agencies that are involved in problem gambling so that help is more readily available. At the present time, the Council is working with forty different agencies and departments throughout the State.

Mr. Weinbaum also invited two members in recovery who shared their personal and family experiences to put a face to gambling addiction. Both members expressed that support groups were an integral part of the recovery process. They also expressed the urgency with which the issue of problem gambling should be addressed by the Council and in any conversations about addiction.

Acting Executive Director read a resolution designating March as "Problem Gambling Awareness Month". Chairman Van Ess asked for a motion to approve this resolution. Herbert Kaldany from the Department of Corrections made this motion and it was seconded by Kevin Meara. After a vote, this resolution was passed. (Y-15; N-0; ABS-1)

## **Heroin and Other Opiate Task Force**

Chairman Van Ess read a statement from Task Force Chairman, Frank Greenagel in regards to the release of the Heroin and Other Opiate Task Force Report. Mr. Greenagel wrote that he was proud of the work that the Task Force had accomplished and that they had made good on a promise to the parents who had lost their children due to overdoses. He stated that some of the recommendations in the report could take place immediately and encouraged readers to spread the word. He also thanked the members of the Task Force for their hard work, the parents for their testimonies and the Governor for his commitment to the issue.

Chairman Van Ess informed the Council that the report would be made available online after the meeting. He also stated that this report was a roadmap for New Jersey to move ahead with this issue.

Bob Zlotnick made a motion that the report be dedicated to those who had lost their lives in this struggle. This motion was seconded by BettyAnn Cowling-Carson. After a vote, a dedication will be inserted into the Task Force Report. (Y-15; ABS-1; N-0)

### **Alliance Update**

Rebecca Alfaro informed the Council members, that individual meetings would be scheduled with the Alliance Coordinators to address any concerns that the county may be having as well as to discuss any additional training needs. The next quarterly meeting of the Alliance Coordinators will be held on Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Strategic Plans are due to GCADA on March 31<sup>st</sup>. An internal review team is being established and will begin meeting in April to review and approve these plans.

### **Acting Executive Director's Report**

Acting Executive Director Celina Gray thanked Don Weinbaum for his presentation to the Council.

She also shared that Barbara Sprechman had resigned from the Council and she would be missed.

Ms. Gray shared that she was thrilled to release the Task Force Report and that she had a deep admiration for the parents who had been involved in the hearings. She also thanked the current administration for their commitment to the issue. She informed the Council that the report would be made available on the GCADA website under the Policy and Planning section, Master Plan heading.

Ms. Gray informed the Council that GCADA would be working on a public announcement anti-stigma campaign on addiction the week of May 18<sup>th</sup>. This would also include an information warmline regarding heroin and other opiate usage.

### **Public Comments**

Nick Loizzi, Sussex County Alliance Coordinator and President of the Alliance Coordinator Association, shared with the Council his frustrations of not being recognized by the Council. He asked the Council return to the original provision of the guidelines which required the Coordinators to attend the monthly GCADA meetings and he also requested that Coordinators be asked to join subcommittees.

Kass Foster, Kathleen Dobbs, and Tonia Ahern of the Parent 2 Parent organization as well as Abby Boxman from G.R.A.S.P., thanked the Council for their hard work in releasing the Task Force report. They stated that the children who had lost their struggle with addiction were not lost in vain and they hoped that this report would be able to make a difference.

Randy Thompson of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) informed the Council that they would be holding a conference on

April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Edison, New Jersey with over 180 mental health associations. More information can be found on their website.

Michael DeLeon of Steered Straight shared with the Council that he had just released a documentary on the heroin epidemic. He stated that education was paramount and felt that the Task Force report was a blueprint in solving this problem.

### **Adjournment**

Elected Chairman Neil Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.