



**State of New Jersey**

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE  
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*Governor*  
TAHESHA L. WAY  
*Lt. Governor*

NEIL VAN ESS  
*Acting Chairman*  
CELENA LEVY  
*Executive Director*

**MINUTES**

**Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**

**October 17, 2023**

**Attendance: Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Sweta Kansagra (Public Member), Erin Talbot (AOC), Michelle Graham-Lyons (DCA), Herb Kaldany (DOC), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Valerie Mielke (DHS), Rebecca Glinn, (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA), Allison Samay (NJ President's Council)**

**Call to Order**

The three hundred and seventy fifth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair Donna DeStefano.

**Open Public Meetings Act Statement**

Ms. DeStefano 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, Ms. DeStefano stated that public comments were to be provided electronically, through the GCADA website contact portal between the hours of 10am and 1pm on the day of the meeting.

**Roll Call**

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record. Ms. DeStefano informed the Council that this meeting would be informational purposes due to the lack of quorum.

**Chairman's Report**

On behalf of Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess, Executive Director Celina Levy shared that today would be DMAVA designee, Chuck Robbins' last meeting. She thanked Mr. Robbins for his service to GCADA and welcomed new designee Noelle-Lee Turner.

She also welcomed Valerie Mielke, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Mental Health and Addiction services who would be serving as designee for the Department of Human Services.

**Presentation: “The Intensive Recovery Treatment Support (IRTS) Program and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in Jails”**

Micah Hillis, DSW, LCSW, Program Director of the Community Outreach Department of Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care shared with the Council that the Intensive Recovery Treatment Support (IRTS) is a program designed to provide recovery-focused services that include links to treatment and ongoing support for individuals with opioid use disorder for up to 12 months after an individual’s release from the jail system. The program consists of 3 teams: peer navigators, case managers and nurses and to date 240 individuals have been served.

Peter Treitler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of the Boston University School of Social Work gave a brief overview of findings from evaluations of the IRTS program. Interviews were held with program participants, peer health navigators as well as IRTS leadership and data was collected by Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. It was found that over time, participant numbers have increased and approximately 3,000 people had been served through June of 2023. Through conducting interviews, participants reported a very positive experience with the program, however more improvement was mentioned in the areas of linkages to housing and employment resources.

Harry Reyes, DHSc, LPC, LCADC, Assistant Division Director of the Office of Treatment and Recovery Supports, Division of Addiction and Mental Health at the NJ Department of Human Services gave an overview of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in the NJ jail system. The initial pilot program started in Atlantic County in 2017 and it is a collaboration between DMHAS, the Opioid Treatment Program, jails, judge and the prosecutor’s office. The purpose of this program is to assist inmates with an opioid use disorder who are eligible for pretrial release as well as those who are in jail for longer stays in the areas of assessment, medication, therapy and other treatment resources. Training for medical staff is conducted by MAT Centers of Excellence at Cooper/Rowan as well as Rutgers Medical Schools.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Executive Director Celina Levy once again welcomed DMHAS Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke, thanking her and her team for bringing this month’s presentation to the Council.

She also shared that the DMHAS Suicide Prevention Conference would be taking place on Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Assistant Commissioner Mielke let GCADA members know that the conference was being recorded and would be available to view for those unable to attend.

Ms. Levy and Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro and the team at GCADA are working on the process changes that come with the funding change and are also continuing to work with the Governor's office on other additional potential funding options.

The Master Plan subcommittee met last month, and the meeting was very productive. The Council will continue to receive updates about next steps, which will include reaching out to GCADA members in regard to gathering additional content.

Director of Prevention and Planning, Sara Thode, thanked the Council members who volunteered to be judges for the 2023 Statewide Volunteer of the Year. The Volunteer of the Year Ceremony will be held on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. DeStefano adjourned the meeting at 11:57.