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August 2023

RE: NJ Assembly and Senate Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

Dear Candidate:

The National Center for Advocacy and Recovery, Inc. (NCAAR) is pleased to forward the 2023 New Jersey Assembly and Senate Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Survey. The questionnaire is intended to gauge your general policy inclinations as a candidate running for the state Assembly or Senate on the issues related to what the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation declared the nation's number one public health problem: addiction. NCAAR is an incorporated non-profit organization that is non-partisan. It neither endorses candidates for office nor contributes donations to political campaigns.

NCAAR hopes you will take the time to respond so that New Jersey's citizens who are interested in the prevention, treatment of, and recovery from addiction can review your survey responses as they consider your candidacy. The constituency focused on addiction issues includes the thousands of local volunteers of the over 500 municipal drug-free alliances and professionals across the state treating addiction, as well as, the thousands of people in recovery.

The survey has been mailed to all major party candidates in New Jersey seeking election to the Assembly and Senate. The results will be widely disseminated to New Jersey citizens via the NCAAR website (www.ncaar.org) and other media outlets.

We request your review of the enclosed Background and Important Instructions for Candidates worksheet before completing the survey. Please return the questionnaire by **Monday September 25, 2023.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Summer Brancoccio
President / CEO



2023 NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY AND SENATE

ADDICTION PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SURVEY

Background and Important Instructions for Candidates

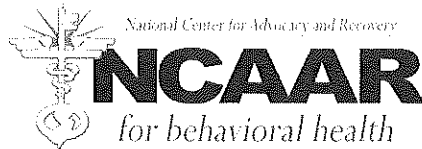
The 2023 New Jersey Assembly and Senate Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Survey serves as one tool the National Center for Advocacy and Recovery, Inc. (NCAAR) uses to inform the general public and promote awareness of key issues and candidate positions related to the prevention, treatment, and recovery from alcohol and substance use disorders.

NCAAR supports the recovery of individuals and families impacted by addiction and works to reduce the societal stigma surrounding substance use disorder. The agency formulates solution-based public policy initiatives and advocates for legislation and regulations that support a public health approach to the negative effects of alcohol and substance use disorder. In our public information efforts, we underscore the fact that substance use disorders are both preventable and treatable.

The 2023 New Jersey Assembly and Senate Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Survey is not designed to commit candidates to specific positions or to vote in a certain way later. The survey simply indicates a candidate's general inclinations on the issues related to the prevention and treatment of addiction he or she will most likely be confronted with if elected. If you do not select a specific option or response, it does not necessarily mean that you oppose this option.

Important Instructions

1. Please attach a separate page when responding "other" to a question.
2. Please sign the completed form to be included in the survey results.
3. If you have questions regarding the questionnaire, please contact Nikki Tierney, NCAAR Policy Analyst by phone at 732-687-9796 or email: ntierney@ncaarbh.org.
4. You may return the survey by using either of the following methods: email to the NCAAR public affairs unit at: policy@ncaarbh.org or by fax to the NCAAR administrative office at: **609-689-3244**, but please return the **original completed survey** by mail to: NCAAR, Inc./Public Affairs, 360 Corporate Blvd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691 by September 25, 2023.



**2023 NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY and SENATE
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISORDERS
PREVENTION, TREATMENT, and RECOVERY
CANDIDATE SURVEY**

I. General Views on Alcohol and Drug Disorders Policies to Address Stigma

Substance use disorders are chronic conditions, much like diabetes or hypertension. Yet the stigma associated with them continues to persist and often prevents people from seeking and receiving the treatment and services they need, contributing to the severity of the disorder and adding huge costs to public programs.

Indicate which principles (if any) you agree with regarding your general views of substance use disorder and recovery policies by placing a check mark next to the letter(s) that correspond with your opinions.

a) Substance use disorders are preventable, treatable, chronic medical conditions and are as diagnosable/treatable as diabetes, asthma and hypertension.

b) Substance use disorder is a matter of will. Government assistance is warranted, but ultimately, recovery is dependent on the individual's choices.

c) I would support sufficient funding to ensure that high-quality treatment and recovery services are available to those who need them.

d) The criminal code (Title 2C) should be examined to identify and rethink stigmatizing and ineffective drug policies.

e) Other _____

II. NJ Policy Perspective and the NJ Harm Reduction Coalition released a report recommending the elimination of criminal penalties for personal possession/use and sales of all drugs. Which best represents your view?

a) I would support the decriminalization of possession of drugs for personal use and sales.



- b) I would support the decriminalization of possession of drugs for personal use, but not sales.
- c) I do not support the decriminalization of personal possession/use or sales of drugs.
- d) Undecided, would like to learn more.
- e) Other See attached

III. I would support the following initiatives if they are demonstrated to facilitate and improve access to recovery for individuals with substance use disorder:

- a) Continued criminal record expungement reform.
- b) Tax credits for employers who hire people in recovery.
- c) Enhanced financial aid and program assistance to communities disparately impacted by the War on Drugs.
- d) Reduction of court-ordered fees and fines for individuals who successfully complete a treatment or diversion program.
- e) Investment in community-based outreach teams.
- f) Housing First programs with a harm reduction philosophy for those with substance use disorder
- g) Expanded use of peer recovery support services.
- h) Other _____

IV. Drug overdoses continue to be a major public health concern. New Jersey has implemented life-saving programs to ensure access to naloxone, syringe exchange, and harm reduction



centers. I would support adequate government funding to expand the accessibility and use of harm reduction practices. Check all that apply:

- a) Mobile vans for safe supply distribution
- b) Expansion of Medication for Opioid Use Disorder programs in high-need areas
- c) Vending machines for harm reduction supplies
- d) Overdose Prevention Centers
- e) Drop-In Centers equipped with showers, meals, and social services
- f) All drug testing supplies (i.e xylazine test strips, etc.)
- g) Other _____

V. On an attached page, in seventy-five (75) words or less, please explain any other legislative priorities you will have regarding the prevention, treatment of and recovery from addictive illnesses if elected.

CANDIDATE MUST SIGN SURVEY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATABASE

Candidate Name: Anthony S. Verrelli
(please print)

Candidate Signature: Anthony S. Verrelli

District: 15

Party: Democrat

Date: September 12, 2023

NCAAR Questionnaire Supplemental
(Anthony S. Verrelli, candidate for NJ Assembly District 15)

II. NJ Policy Perspective and the NJ Harm Reduction Coalition released a report recommending the elimination of criminal penalties for personal possession/use and sales of all drugs. Which best represents your view?

(E) Other: First and foremost, we need to look at incarceration alternatives, such as expanding drug courts and other similar programs. With regards to the decriminalization of substances, I think we need to take a delicate case-by-case look at that depending on the substances themselves and how we define or adjudicate who is a distributor of harmful substances and who is a victim of substance use disorder.

V. On an attached page, in seventy-five (75) words or less, please explain any other legislative priorities you will have regarding the prevention, treatment of and recovery from addictive illnesses if elected.

Throughout my career in the assembly and even before being an elected official, I advocated for the needs of those suffering from substance use disorder—an illness no different than any other chronic medical condition. I strongly believe that we need to be creative with our approaches and get out of our comfort zone with new policies and approaches. It starts with recognizing that this is above all a public health crisis.