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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](http://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  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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**



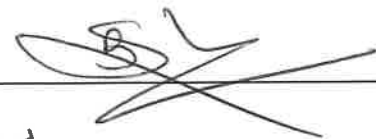
centers. I would support adequate government funding to expand the accessibility and use of harm reduction practices. Check all that apply:

- 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: BARAMDAI "Alicia" SHARMA (please print)

Candidate Signature: 

District: LD 24

Party: Democratic

Date: 09/21/2023

As a candidate, what I would focus on is getting to the root cause of addiction. While preventative measures are great for short-term planning I believe a more long-term solution is needed.

I would focus on one area of the population at a time, for e.g. what is causing the youths and adolescent population <sup>to do drugs?</sup> Which school district is most at risk or have a high percent of its students more expose to drugs and alcohol? Where are the students living? What is going on in those communities? What is going on at home?

I would collaborate with various stakeholders to develop evidence-based programs to stop this even before it start. I believe the state should allocate funding in its budget for this.