

### **WHAT IS THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE?**

In 1989, by an act of the New Jersey Legislature (P.L. 1989, Chapter 51), the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA) was established as an independent planning and coordinating body covering all state, county and local efforts regarding alcoholism, tobacco and other drug abuse. The GCADA has two primary missions; one is the development of a Master Plan with a State Government Component, and the second is to maintain the Municipal Alliance Program.

#### **WHAT DOES THE GCADA DO?**

The Planning Committee develops the annual Master Plan which sets forth objective and strategies that will be worked on in the coming year. The GCADA has statutory authority to collect information from the departments of State government on the substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment programs they fund. This information is compiled in the State Government Component which then becomes part of the Master Plan.

Through the Municipal Alliance Program, the GCADA unites New Jersey's communities in a coordinated and comprehensive grass roots prevention effort. As of October 2008, there are 403 Municipal Alliances involving 526 municipalities.

#### **HOW IS THE GCADA ORGANIZED?**

The membership of GCADA consists of 14 public members and ex-officio memberships from 12 departments or agencies of State government for a total of 26. Ten of the public members are appointed by the Governor and two each by the Senate President and Speaker of the Assembly.

The GCADA holds public meetings the third Tuesday of every month usually in the State House Annex.

To ensure its independence, the Legislature placed the GCADA 'in but not of' the Department of Treasury.

The GCADA accomplishes its work through its committees which are made of up Council members, representatives from other state agencies and volunteers from across New Jersey with specific experience or interest in alcoholism, drug abuse and related areas of concern. The GCADA committees are Planning, Alliance-Prevention, Legislative, Criminal & Juvenile Justice, Treatment and Veterans. As needed, ad hoc committees or working groups are formed.

#### **WHAT IS THE MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE PROGRAM?**

Municipal Alliances are local planning and coordinating bodies established in all 21 counties to assess needs, set priorities, develop plans and implement programs that form the foundation of New Jersey's substance abuse prevention activities. New Jersey's Municipal Alliances provide over 3,800 prevention programs statewide.

The Municipal Alliance program has earned national awards from Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education, Inc. (PRIDE) and Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), for being an outstanding network of community substance abuse prevention programs.

#### **HOW DOES A MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE COMMITTEE WORK?**

The Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC) is established by the local governing body. The members are appointed from a broad cross section of stakeholders in the community. Members include representatives from the governing body, education, health, law enforcement, civic, religious, and business organizations. From the inception of the Municipal Alliances, community volunteers have been the backbone of the program and they are parents, coaches, peer leaders, youth, seniors and others.

The 1989 legislation gave authority to the counties to administer the Municipal Alliances through the County Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Offices. Specifically, each Local Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (LACADA) establishes a County Alliance Steering Subcommittee (CASS).

Utilizing a risk and protective factor framework, Municipal Alliances determine the needs of their communities and develop prevention plans to address identified priorities. The plans are submitted to the county where they proceed through a review and approval process involving the CASS, LACADA and Board of Chosen Freeholders. The approved municipal alliance plan is included in the county plan that is submitted to the GCADA for approval and funding.

#### **WHERE DOES THE FUNDING COME FROM FOR THE MUNICIPAL ALLIANCES?**

Funding for the GCADA and the Municipal Alliance program comes from the Drug Enforcement Demand Reduction (DEDR) Fund. The 1989 legislation established a set of fines on convicted drug offenders specifically to be collected into the DEDR Fund for the purpose of being returned to communities and used for local substance abuse prevention activities.

#### **WHY SHOULD I GET INVOLVED?**

Our communities continue to witness unacceptable levels of illicit drug use, underage drinking, and the misuse of prescription drugs, as well as, high rates of juvenile delinquency, school drop outs and teen pregnancy. Research completed over the past two decades shows us that local level planning and implementation through community coalitions is an effective approach to prevent substance abuse, underage drinking, juvenile delinquency and more. Contact your County Alliance Coordinator today to find out if your municipality has an Alliance Committee and how you can get involved.