



**2021 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

Alcohol and drug disorders have only recently become recognized as chronic diseases, much like diabetes or hypertension. Yet the stigma associated with them continues to persist and often prevents people from seeking the treatment they need, contributing to disease severity and adding huge costs to public programs.

Indicate which principles (if any) you agree with regarding your general views of alcohol and drug addiction (Substance Use Disorder) and recovery policies to address behavioral health issues by placing a check mark next to the letter(s) that correspond with your opinions.

a) Substance Use Disorders are preventable, treatable, chronic diseases and are as diagnosable/treatable as diabetes, asthma and hypertension.

b) Addiction is a matter of will. Government assistance is warranted, but ultimately, recovery is the individual's choice.

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

d) The criminal code (Title 2C) should be examined as to whether the state's drug laws ought to be re-worked

e) Other _____

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

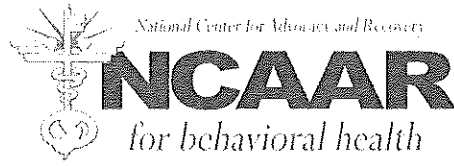
a) I would support the decriminalization of all low-level drug use, possession and sales

b) I would support the decriminalization of all low-level drug use/possession, but not sales

c) I do not support the decriminalization of all possession/use of drugs

d) Undecided, would like to learn more

e) Other _____



III. I would support any, or all, of the following initiatives if they could be demonstrated to get and keep people in long-term recovery.

- 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) Expanded use of peer recovery support services
- f) Other _____

IV. In the past year, drug overdoses have dramatically increased. Naloxone (brand name – NARCAN) is an opioid antidote that can reverse an overdose. I would support adequate government funding in order to expand the use of naloxone. Check all that apply:

- a) Mandating every pharmacy maintain a minimum supply of naloxone
- b) On public transportation
- c) In public libraries
- d) On college and university campuses
- e) In homeless shelters
- f) Authorize EMT's to dispense naloxone
- g) Mandate a supply of naloxone in other public spaces, e.g. stadiums, theaters, arenas, etc.
- h) 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.

In order to improve drug rehabilitation programs within New Jersey prisons, I wish to introduce legislation that would benefit countless individuals who are currently incarcerated and participating in Medicine Assisted Treatment(MAT) for Opioid Use Disorder(OD).

Approximately 25% of the New Jersey prison population is addicted to opioids, with 75% of these individuals relapsing within 3 months of release. Currently, state and county prisons utilize certain medicines, often opioids themselves, in order to treat addiction. The most common brand-name medication utilized in these programs is Suboxone, which is a combination of the opioid Buprenorphine(pronounced 'bew-pre-nor-feen') and the drug Naloxone(pronounced 'nuh-laak-sown'). This medication directly treats symptoms of opioid dependence by reducing cravings, alleviating symptoms of withdrawal, and increasing safety in cases of overdose. Unfortunately, prescribers within prison treatment programs are consistently prescribing doses that are too low, leading to patients reporting cravings and withdrawal symptoms by the end of the day.

Additionally, once released from prison, these patients are usually given a stronger dose, leading to a higher potential for relapse due to a sudden rise in dosage. I am advocating for the introduction of a case-by-case medical review process for patients in these programs who report symptoms of withdrawal and cravings. Furthermore, I am advocating for the introduction of educational programs that demonstrate the effectiveness of these life-saving medicines for all participants and prescribers in such programs.



CANDIDATE MUST SIGN SURVEY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATABASE

Candidate Name: Valeria Reynolds-Jackson
(please print)

Candidate Signature: Valeria Reynolds-Jackson

District: 15th Legislative District

Party: Democratic

Date: Sept. 7, 2021