



NEW JERSEY GUBERNATORIAL AND ASSEMBLY PERSON CANDIDATE SURVEY
FOR PREVENTION, TREATMENT, and RECOVERY
FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

NOVEMBER 2025

Substance use disorders are chronic health conditions, yet the stigma associated with them continues to persist and often prevents people from seeking and receiving services, contributing to the severity of the disorder and adding huge costs to public programs. The National Center for Advocacy and Recovery, Inc. (NCAAR) provides candidates the opportunity to share their perspective with statewide constituents on prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts to build a healthier and more equitable New Jersey.

For each question, please place an “X” next to all responses that best reflect your position.

I. General Views on Substance Use Disorders

1. What is your general view of substance use disorders? (Select all that apply)

X__ a) Substance use disorders are preventable and treatable health conditions that require a public health approach with health-based interventions.

___ b) Substance use disorders are matters of personal responsibility. Government assistance is warranted, but ultimately, recovery is dependent on the individual’s choices.

___ c) Substance use disorders are a criminal justice issue that require legal and punitive responses.

___ d) Other (please specify): _____



2. Please rank the following groups in order of how important you believe their influence should be on substance use disorder (SUD) policy and spending decisions in New Jersey, with **1 being the most important and 8 being the least important**:

4____ NJ State Government and Agencies

1____ Experts in public health and addiction

3____ Individuals, families, and communities with lived experience of SUD

7____ Law enforcement Leadership

6____ Community-Based Organizations

2____ Treatment Providers

5____ Institutions of higher education and research scientists

____ Other (Please specify):

II. Strategies to Address Substance Use Disorder in New Jersey

3. If elected, I would support the following approaches to address substance use disorder: (Select all that apply)

X____ a) Increase investment in the treatment and recovery infrastructure to address substance use disorders

X____ b) Expand strategies to reduce health risks related to substance use (i.e. naloxone distribution, syringe access, etc.)

X____ c) Housing First programs for those with substance use disorder

X____ d) Expansion of peer recovery support services



- ☒ e) Community-based recovery alternatives to incarceration
- ☒ f) Continued reform for criminal record expungement
- ☒ g) Implementation of evidence-based standards of care for substance use disorder
- ☒ h) Increase funding for law enforcement responses and criminal penalties for drug-related offenses
- ☒ i) Increase collaboration between law enforcement, healthcare, and community organizations
- ☒ j) Strengthen prevention, education, and support services for families and communities affected by substance use
- ☐ k) Other (please specify): _____

4. What is your position on the use of general health strategies that reduce harm and health risks associated with substance use (i.e. medication, naloxone distribution, syringe exchange, etc.)? (Select all that apply)

- ☒ a) Strongly support
- ☐ b) Somewhat support, but with restrictions
- ☐ c) Oppose, prefer abstinence-based or punitive responses
- ☐ d) Need more information before deciding
- ☐ e) Other (please specify): _____

5. I would support sufficient government funding for the following initiatives to reduce harm and improve access to care for individuals with substance use disorder: (Select all that apply)

- ☐ a) Harm Reduction Centers and mobile outreach vans for distribution of safer use supplies and information on resources in the community
- ☐ b) Drop-In Centers with showers, meals, and social services
- ☒ c) A capacity expansion initiative for a “treatment on demand” model, particularly in high-need areas



_____ d) Overdose Prevention Centers

x e) Expansion of peer and community-led prevention, outreach, and overdose response teams

_____ f) Continued support for no-cost naloxone distribution programs

_____ g) I would like more information about these initiatives

_____ h) Other _____

6. What are your top priorities for opioid settlement funding? (Select all that apply)

_____ a) Expand access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)

_____ b) Increase naloxone distribution and overdose prevention resources, especially in high need areas.

X_____ c) Build and support recovery housing and supportive employment

X_____ d) Expand school and community-based prevention initiatives

X_____ e) Enhance law enforcement capacity to combat the illegal drug supply

X_____ f) Support research and innovation in substance use disorder approaches

_____ g) Other (please specify): _____

III. 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.

X I permit NCAAR to provide direct quotes from the statements below to inform the public of my position on substance use disorders and the overdose crisis in New Jersey.

CANDIDATE MUST SIGN SURVEY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATABASE

Candidate Name: Heather Simmons

(please print)

Candidate Signature: Heather Simmons

