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## **Luis Laboy, President, New York Certification Board**

*Luis Laboy began his distinguished career in addiction treatment at Cornerstone Medical Arts in 1999 – “while I was still on Parole, with two years in recovery.” By 2002, he was serving as a supervisor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. From there, he has held positions of increasing seniority at Argus Community ACT, Samaritan Daytop Village, and Emma Bowen Community Service Center. In 2022, he completed an LMSW at Fordham University and joined Acacia Network Inc. as Senior Administrator of OASAS Residential programs. Luis Laboy was elected NYCB Board President in 2024.*

### **As an experienced service provider, can you also tell us about your voluntary background in the field?**

I’m a person in long-term recovery for 27 years, I was released from prison through the Phoenix House Marcy Correctional Facility program. Since then, my recovery capital includes a BA in Deviant Behavior & Social Control, an MPA, an LMSW, a Master-CASAC-G, and, most important, a CRPA, with Mutual Aid in Narcotics Anonymous. I’m honored to serve with long-time FOR-NY Alumni Association steering committee colleagues such as Ira Weiss and Albert Aponte, Association President, as chairperson for the Bronx Council on Alcoholism and Substance Use Disorders, and at NYCB.

### **How did you start engaging with peer recovery professionals?**

The value of “one addict helping another is without parallel.” My passion for recovery led me to the original OASAS Alumni Association meetings with Willie Townes and NYCB Board member, Malik Hutchinson, and the Recovery Implementation Team meetings with Lureen McNeil. I supported John Coppola's 2012 proposal to develop the New York Certification Board to oversee the emerging Peer Workforce. I was part of the Florida Cert Board when it was doing business in NYS (through 2018).

### **How did you get more directly involved with the New York Certification Board?**

I was recruited by Roy Kears, a passionate recovery warrior, who nominated me to join NYCB Board. Roy is retired now but continues with us as NYCB President Emeritus. We are very grateful for his service.

### **What value do you see peers bringing to the workforce or the continuum of care?**

Peers provide unconditional support to recoverees, meeting them where they are and motivating them in their recovery, resulting in increased retention and positive outcomes in all levels of the continuum - prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction - by supporting all pathways of recovery.

### **What do you see as the value of certification?**

Certification ensures professional boundaries, and that knowledge, skills, and abilities are maintained for a high level of quality in the workforce.

### **NYCB has now merged into a predominantly mental-health organization (IUA). How will you promote NYCB in this new environment?**

NYCB will promote the Peer Supervision Professional (PSP) certification as a requirement for anyone supervising any type of peer within all disciplines, like Recovery Coaches, Certified Recovery Peer Advocates, Peer Specialists and so on. [Details at <https://www.asapnys.org/asap-pwi/>.]

### **The inaugural IUA annual conference didn't offer continuing education credits for peers. And peers weren't on the "who should attend" list. What does the NYCB President say about this situation?**

NYCB Board members will be at the table for planning and implementation for conferences moving forward. There will be nothing about us without us.

### **What are your priorities for NYCB?**

Recruiting NYCB registry trainers to implement the PSP throughout NYS. This ensures our certified Peers are getting the best out of supervision for the best performance of their job function.

### **What does the NYCB President do to relax?**

I like to run and swim. I’m a New York Road Runner and completed the NYC Marathon twice. I attend the YMCA "La Central" in Mott Haven South Bronx.

Editor’s Note: Luis Laboy also marches proudly in the annual NYC Puerto Rico Day Parade.

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