

CONNECTICUT CONNECTIONS

January 2003

As part of *National Problem Gambling Awareness Week*, a statewide spring symposium on the prevention of problem gambling is being held on March 13, at Wesleyan University. The symposium is hosted by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Problem Gambling Services. Topics for discussion by regional and national experts include: school based prevention, the impact of public policy, the role of responsible and safe gambling initiatives, and lessons from substance abuse prevention. Contact Chris Armentano for further information at 860-344-2244.

Executive Director's Report:
National Problem Gambling Awareness Week
March 10-16, 2003

Each of the National Council on Problem Gambling's (NCPG) state affiliate councils is working cooperatively with the NCPG and the National Steering Committee (NSC) to highlight the first *National Problem Gambling Awareness Week (NPGAW)*. Major undertakings by the CCPG during this week include:

Open House

An Open House will be held on Wednesday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the CCPG administrative office in Guilford. An invitation to meet the staff and access resource materials is extended to all interested individuals and local organizations, including churches, senior centers, chambers of commerce and to all CT legislators.

New Helpline Video

The new CCPG video depicting how assistance may be obtained from the CCPG Problem Gambling Helpline will be distributed to various groups in CT. Other affiliate councils of the NCPG will be given the opportunity to use the video in their own states.

University Student Gambling Symposium

The major CCPG focus during *NPGAW* is college/university student gambling. A **free** symposium will be held at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain on Tuesday, March 11, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for college faculty, coaches and counselors. Presentations will address the following:

- Screening for and intervening with student problem gambling on campus
- Ways faculty of various disciplines can infuse information on problem gambling into their curricula
- A National Collegiate Athletic Association representative will discuss athletics and gambling
- The recently completed university student problem gambling study will be described and discussed.

From 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm. an additional presentation will be open to students and the general public:

Gambling in Connecticut: Balancing Costs and Benefits.

For further information on any of the above programs, please contact the CCPG office (203-453-0138).

CCPG Reaches Out To Libraries

In 2002, CCPG encouraged public libraries across Connecticut to acquire new materials and/or start new collections of important resources on problem gambling. In addition, each of the 250 Connecticut libraries received a package containing the following: the book Behind the 8-Ball: A Guide for Families of Gamblers; the booklet Personal Financial Strategies for the Loved Ones of Problem Gamblers; 3 videos including ***Out of the Money*** a Dateline special, and our two agency videos ***Easy Money, Hard Times***, and ***Teen Gambling: Minor Bettors, Major Problems***. The package also contained several brochures, posters, and agency bookmarks. The materials were well received, resulting in requests for more materials and presentations for local communities. In 2003, CCPG will be expanding efforts to college libraries and media centers.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VIDEOS AVAILABLE FROM THE CCPG!

Gaming Industry Video Training Series

Two videos dealing with customer and employee problem gambling in a casino setting.

Easy Money, Hard Times

Professionals, compulsive gamblers and family members discuss compulsive gambling.

Minor Bettors, Major Problems

Young recovering gamblers, parents and professionals in the field address youth gambling.

Taking a Second Look:

Problem Gambling Awareness Training for Improved Customer Service

Training video for pari-mutuels dealing with problem gambling among customers.

Out of the Money

NBC's DATELINE program about the impact of compulsive gambling on a family over a 20-year period.

Contact the CCPG at 203-453-0138 for further information or visit our website at www.ccpg.org

Helpline Advertisement

One of CCPG's most important programs is the operation of a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential problem gambling Helpline. As part of CCPG's campaign to raise awareness of the Helpline, ads were run on billboards (as above), radio stations, buses and in the yellow pages.

When someone calls the Helpline, they speak with staff who themselves have been affected by problem gambling. The trained staff are able to refer problem gamblers and those whose lives are affected by a loved one's gambling to professional treatment, Gamblers Anonymous and/or Gam-Anon.

**If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call
CCPG's Problem Gambling Helpline at
1-800-346-6238.**

CCPG conducts Problem Gambling Survey of Senior Centers in CT

CCPG released the results of its survey of senior center directors in CT. Some of the major findings include the following:

- Responses were received from 31 of 168 senior centers.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) had a moderate to very high concern about problem gambling among their clients, while only 29% thought that their senior clients had this level of concern themselves.
- Although 48% indicated that they suspected or knew of seniors who had a gambling problem, the median number of seniors suspected or known was only one.
- Thirty-two percent (32%) reported having addressed senior problem gambling in their programs.
- Forty-two percent (42%) wanted problem gambling prevention activities and resources, such as print and video educational materials, presentations to senior groups and to their care providers.

For a complete report of the CT Senior Center Problem Gambling survey, please contact Vani Anand, Prevention Specialist at (203) 453-0138 or at vania@ccpg.org.

Problem Gambling College Study Completed

For the first time in Connecticut, a study has been completed at the college/university level examining the prevalence of problem gambling and its relationship to other risk behaviors. The CCPG's Executive Director, Marvin Steinberg, Ph.D. and collaborators Douglas Engwall, Ph.D. and Robert Hunter, Ph.D., studied 1348 undergraduates at the four state university campuses. The findings indicated that 11.4% of the students scored at a problem gambling level. Students with a gambling problem, as compared to other students, were also significantly more likely to be binge drinkers, report negative consequences of alcohol consumption and be regular tobacco and marijuana users. Further, a gambling problem was also related to binge eating and greater use of weight management control efforts. University athletes were also found to have significantly greater problem gambling rates.

In 1996, a state sponsored study found less than half of the university student rate for the general population (11.4% vs. 5.4%). Also in 1996, a CCPG study of state high schools found approximately twice the rate of problem gambling for the high school students than was found for the general adult population (10.9% vs. 5.4%).

CCPG conducts Minorities and Problem Gambling Needs Assessment

CCPG's 2001 needs assessment with agencies serving minorities in CT revealed concern about problem gambling.

Level of Concern:

- Seventy-three percent (73%) of agencies expressed some level of concern, including 15% 'major concern' and 23% 'moderate concern'.
- Forty percent (40%) of agencies serving Cambodians, 29% serving Laotians, and 25% serving Vietnamese expressed 'major concern'.
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of agencies were aware of CCPG's Helpline, and almost half of them had referred clients to it.

Specific Needs:

- Almost all agencies wanted educational brochures on problem gambling in languages relevant to their ethnic clients (Spanish, Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese).

- Other services requested: presentations on problem gambling to clients/staff; educational video on culture and gambling; conduct surveys; and training for non-professional caregivers/natural helpers in communities.

For a complete report on the results of Minorities and Problem Gambling Needs Assessment, please contact Vani Anand, Prevention Specialist at (203) 453-0138 or at vania@ccpg.org.

New Resources Available

CCPG has been hard at work building our library of available resources. Currently, two new brochures created by CCPG staff are available. One reaches out to the spiritual community, ***The Spiritual Community Responds When Gambling Becomes a Problem!*** and the other deals with gambling and low income, ***Broke and Gambling Too Much? Why Not Gamble Your Last Quarters Here?***. If you are interested in acquiring copies, contact Sarah McClure at 203-453-0138 or sarahm@ccpg.org for more information.

Website Spotlight

In each newsletter we will spotlight one section of our website to alert readers about resources that can be accessed.

Recently, CCPG gave a set of the 22 tape series "Problem Gambling Tonight" to all 14 CT Regional Action Councils and to the 23 state affiliate councils that indicated an interest in utilizing the videos as an educational tool. Thirteen of these videos are available for viewing on our website. In 2001, the videos received the Electronic Media Award from the National Council on Problem Gambling.

We're under construction

Over the next few months, we have planned updates to our existing pages and are adding more pages. So far, our Financial Markets page has been updated. In addition to our Financial Markets brochure, we have added three papers dealing with the issue of problem gambling and the financial markets. Please visit us at www.ccpg.org.

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) is a private, not-for-profit organization affiliated with the National Council on Problem Gambling.

The mission of the CCPG is to reduce the prevalence and impact of problem and pathological (compulsive) gambling on individuals, families and society through:

- A Problem Gambling Helpline
- Public Awareness and Prevention Education
- An Information Clearinghouse
- Professional Training
- Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy
- Research
- Corporate Services

The CCPG is funded primarily by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and the Mohegan Tribe with additional funding from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

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SAVE THE DATE!

- The 8th New England Conference on Problem Gambling will be held **May 15, 2003** in Lake Morey, Vermont. For more information, contact the Vermont Council on Problem Gambling at 802-254-9800.
- The 12th International Conference on Gambling and Risk -Taking will be held **May 26-30, 2003** in Vancouver, British Columbia. For more information, contact the University of Nevada at Reno at 775-784-1057 or www.unr.edu/gaming.
- The 17th National Conference on Problem Gambling will be held **June 19-21, 2003** in Louisville, Kentucky. Over 60 accepted presentations by the leading national and international experts in the gambling field will be placed in one of 3 tracks: Clinical, Research or Public Policy, Prevention and Gaming Industry. The conference will take place over 2 1/2 days, starting at noon on Thursday

and ending Saturday evening. Join presenters and attendees from around the world at the oldest and largest conference dedicated to problem gambling issues. For more information, contact the National Council on Problem Gambling at 202-547-9204 or www.ncpgambling.org.