

Problem Gambling in Nevada FY2013 Legislative Session Talking Points

- **Problem gambling impacts tens of thousands of Nevadans**
 - About 68,000 adult Nevadans are estimated to meet the criteria for pathological gambling.¹
- **Throughout Nevada's recent internet gambling legalization process, problem gambling was a central and important policy concern.**
 - Nevada's Gaming Policy Committee heard testimony from gaming industry experts that a strong problem gambling system must accompany this expansion of gambling in the state – a perspective the GPC endorsed.
 - Internet gamblers have a different profile than non-internet gamblers, and as such, training of clinical and prevention staff will be crucial.
 - In light of the above, we need to invest in and develop a robust, effective, and efficient problem gambling system now in order to be prepared for these needs in the not too distant future.
- **Problem gambling impacts families, children and communities**
 - Problem gambling affects more than just the problem gamblers. Typically seven others are affected via financial crises and even acts such as domestic violence, child neglect, & elder abuse.¹
 - About one third of Nevada youth gamble at least once monthly.² Youth gambling correlates with increased delinquency, disruption of familial relationships, and poor academic performance.³
- **Treating problem and pathological gamblers saves Nevada taxpayer dollars**
 - Untreated PG results in higher rates of bankruptcy, divorce, civil and criminal judicial system involvement.
 - Untreated problem gamblers manifest high rates of mental health problems and suicide attempts.
 - Untreated PG often leads to loss of productivity due to problems on the job, absences, and workplace disruptions.
- **Treatment is effective and inexpensive**
 - Gambling treatment saves lives, preserves families, and improves our communities.
 - More than 3,000 adult Nevadans have received state funded treatment since the program originated in 2006.
 - UNLV research finds that treatment works for nearly all Nevadans (92%) who receive treatment – 52% quit gambling and 40% reduce their gambling.⁴
 - Nevada's treatment recipients also report improvements in their financial, housing, family, school, and work lives.
 - The average treatment cost per case for FY12 is estimated at only \$1,440.28.
- **Funding for awareness, prevention, and workforce development are needed**
 - The greatest and most cost-effective impacts will be achieved by funding all components of the service system – treatment, prevention, outreach, workforce education, and research.
 - Nevada provided funding to develop a Problem Gambling Prevention Five-year Strategic Plan⁴ that was placed on hold in FY11. Investing in prevention is investing in the future.
 - The longer a problem gambler is in action, the greater the harm and socioeconomic costs. Funding is needed to reach out to problem gamblers and direct them into treatment early in their addiction.
- **Nevada should play a leadership role in problem gambling prevention and treatment**
 - There are no federal programs dedicated to problem gambling, and most insurance plans do not cover gambling-related disorders. As such, states across the U.S. generously support these needed efforts
 - Nevada is a leader in the global gaming industry, and its problem gambling programs should reflect this leadership status. As it stands now, many other gaming jurisdictions devote significantly more resources to this important problem, but our expansion of internet gambling provides a robust opportunity to restore our leadership status in the U.S. and around the world.

¹ Australian Government Productivity Commission Report. <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling/docs/finalreport>

² Nevada Department of Education Youth Risk Behavior Survey <http://nde.doe.nv.gov/YRBS.htm>

³ http://dhhs.nv.gov/Grants/Documents/PG_StrategicPlan.pdf

⁴ Bernhard, B. et.al. (2010). The Nevada Problem Gambling Project: Follow-up Research. University of Nevada Las Vegas, International Gaming Institute.