

Problem Gambling in Nevada Talking Points (3.16.11)

- **Problem gambling impacts thousands of Nevadans**
 - Nevada has among the highest rates of problem and pathological gambling in the country.⁵
 - About 68,000 adult Nevadans are estimated to meet the criteria for pathological gambling.¹

- **Problem gambling impacts families, children and communities**
 - For each problem gambler, approximately 7 others are affected (e.g., spouse, children).⁶
 - About one third of Nevada youth gamble at least once monthly.⁷ This is of particular concern because research shows that problem and pathological gambling among youth results in increased delinquency and crime, the disruption of familial relationships and poor academic performance.⁸

- **Untreated problem and pathological gamblers cost Nevada vital economic resources**
 - Annually, social costs of each pathological gambler are estimated to be \$11,3049 or \$768.7 million for Nevada.⁵
 - Higher rates of bankruptcy, divorce, civil and criminal judicial system involvement.
 - Higher rates of other mental health problems and suicide.
 - Higher frequency of problems on the job and loss of productivity.

- **Treatment is effective and inexpensive**
 - 500-600 clients are projected to enter state subsidized gambling treatment in FY 12.¹⁰
 - 2,145 adult Nevadans received state funded treatment from 2006 - 2010.⁶
 - Follow-up research suggests treatment works for 92% of all clients; 52% quit gambling, 40% reduce.¹¹
 - Treatment improves the client's quality of life, as demonstrated by follow-up studies.⁷
 - The average treatment cost per case for FY 12 is estimated at only \$1,610.60.

- **Funding for Awareness, Prevention, and Workforce Development are needed**
 - The greatest impact on reducing gambling-related hardships will be achieved by funding all components of the service system; treatment, prevention, outreach, workforce, evaluation.
 - Nevada recently developed a Problem Gambling Prevention Five-year Strategic Plan 4 that was placed on hold in FY11. Investing in prevention is investing in the future.
 - Losing prevention and workforce development dollars weakens the treatment structure.
 - 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.

- **The State has a key role in problem gambling prevention and treatment**
 - There is no federal program or department dedicated to problem gambling.
 - There are no adequately funded national media campaigns.
 - Most public and private insurance programs do not provide benefits for gambling related disorders.
 - If the State doesn't fund problem gambling prevention and treatment programs, no one will and Nevada's public health and economy will be harmed.

⁵ Volberg, R (2002). Gambling and Problem Gambling in Nevada: Report to the Nevada Department of Human Resources. Northampton, MA: Gemini Research, LTD.

⁶ Australian Government Productivity Commission Report. <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling/docs/finalreport>

⁷ Nevada Department of Education Youth Risk Behavior Survey <http://nde.doe.nv.gov/YRBS.htm>

⁸ http://dhhs.nv.gov/Grants/Documents/PG_StrategicPlan.pdf

⁹ E. L. Grinols (2004). Gambling in America: Costs and Benefits, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

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¹⁰ [http://dhhs.nv.gov/Grants/Meeting%20Materials/ACPG/2011-02-25_Meeting/2011-02-23_V\(a\)_GamblingTxRateScheduleWorkgroupRecommended.pdf](http://dhhs.nv.gov/Grants/Meeting%20Materials/ACPG/2011-02-25_Meeting/2011-02-23_V(a)_GamblingTxRateScheduleWorkgroupRecommended.pdf)

¹¹ Bernhard, B. et.al. (2010). The Nevada Problem Gambling Project: Follow-up Research. University of Nevada Las Vegas, International Gaming Institute.

Suggestions Submitted by Dr. Bill Eadington –

Nevada is viewed throughout the world as a leader in the casino and gaming sector with regard to regulation, technology, and business strategies and sophistication of its gaming companies. In the same manner, many other jurisdictions look to Nevada for guidance on social impact issues related to gaming, such as dealing with problem gambling and developing strategies that encourage responsible gaming.

Such activities are typically the result of public-private partnerships, with cooperation between gaming companies and helping services organizations. Nevada's current model, with public funding allocated to problem gambling treatment programs by way of the Governor's Advisory Committee, along with gaming industry support through the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling, the National Center for Responsible Gambling, the American Gaming Association, and other outlets, is a structure other jurisdictions can and should emulate.

It is important for the State to continue funding the existing structure for the Governor's Advisory Committee on Problem Gambling in order to continue to demonstrate that there are effective ways of responsibly addressing this important issue.

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