

KYCPG Annual Conference Features Renowned Speakers

Dr. Ken Winters, director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research, University of Minnesota Department of Psychology, recognized as one of the leading experts in the United States on adolescent and young-adult gambling behavior, will keynote the opening session of the Sixth Annual Educational and Awareness Conference on Problem Gambling. The Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling's premier awareness event will be held at the Holiday Inn South, Lexington, KY, Feb. 21-22, 2002. His Thursday, Feb. 21, topic is "Adolescent and Youth Adult Gambling."

Winters joins Dr. Robert Ladouceur, School of Psychology, University of Laval, Canada, in making this KYCPG Annual Conference a significant training opportunity for counselors and a great awareness event for anyone interested in the topic. Dr. Ladouceur will present first on Friday morning, Feb. 22, addressing "Psychology of Gambling — From Basic Research through Applications for Clinicians, Industry and Policymakers." On Friday afternoon, he will cover "Treatment of Compulsive/Pathological Gamblers."

Winters also will moderate a Thursday panel, "Preventing Underage Gambling," featuring Rick Redman, Kentucky Lottery Corporation; Fred McCarter, Argosy Casino and Hotel; Trish Candler, Churchill Downs, Inc.; and a representative from the Department of Charitable Gaming. Other Thursday presentations will review the KYCPG-developed *Lesson Plans on Gambling Behavior* and an American Compulsive Gambling Counselor Certification Board update.

Friday will begin with an announcement of plans being developed for Kentucky's first Responsible Gaming Week, to be held Aug. 5-9, 2002. Nichelle Lee, Kentucky Lottery Corporation, chairs the committee of gaming industry representatives, state officials, clinicians and KYCPG members.

Registration still is open. Contact KYCPG Executive Director Mike Stone (502/223-1823 or by e-mail at kmstone@mis.net) for more information.

"We are bringing in the very best in the field of cognitive behavioral therapy on compulsive/pathological gambling and the best in researching problem gambling issues among youth and teen gamblers," KYCPG Professional Adviser Curtis L. Barrett, Ph.D., said. "This conference is a must for practicing clinicians and anyone interested in learning more about problem gambling."

2001 Helpline Statistics

Total calls to 1-800-GAMBLER, the helpline sponsored by the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling, were 1,740 in 2001. Of those, 610 calls were provided some form of measurable service — referral to counseling or Gamblers Anonymous, on-phone consultation, or follow-up material being sent.

Kentucky's helpline callers are almost equally divided between men and women. About two-thirds of the callers report being 31-50-years-old. Most callers are from the Louisville metro area, followed by Western Kentucky, but calls were received from all geographic areas. The type of gambling reported by callers was led by casinos, followed, in order, by lottery, horse racing and charitable gaming.

Calls to 1-800-GAMBLER are answered by trained crisis line telephone counselors at River Valley Behavioral Health in Owensboro. The confidential service is available 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week.

Coleman Introduces HB 203; Coalition Proposes Expansion

Representative Jack Coleman (Burgin) introduced HB 203 in January to establish a Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund. The bill would shift existing money received by the state from the three legal forms of gambling in the Commonwealth (lottery, pari-mutuel racing, and charitable gaming) to fund the program of awareness, education and treatment. The proposal calls for \$300,000 in each year of the 2002-2004 biennium for awareness and education, rising to \$900,000 in 2004-2006 by adding counseling, and \$1.8 million in 2006-2008 adding residency treatment.

A coalition of racetracks and horse-racing support organizations is advocating expanding gambling by adding video lottery terminals that simulate slot machines at racetracks. The proceeds would support the horseracing industry, but estimates are the state would receive more than \$200 million in tax receipts, which may be attractive to legislators as the state faces a significant budget shortfall. Governor Paul Patton proposed a budget that provides mostly static funding for the state's programs. The bill was to be introduced by mid-February. There is opposition organized by the Kentucky Council of Churches.

On-Line Resources

Valuable references on problem gambling are available on the Internet. Sites include a variety of topics that can help clinicians, researchers, public policymakers or gaming industry personnel.

The site maintained by the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey — www.800gambler.org — has a New Jersey focus, but the New Jersey Council is the oldest in the United States and has developed many resources. The site also has an extensive list of hotlinks to other information sites.

The National Council on Problem Gambling site — www.ncpgambling.org — also provides hotlinks to several useful websites with gambling-related information and studies. The NCPG's own studies and research reports are listed.

Canada's Responsible Gambling Council (Ontario) has revised its site to focus on its new responsible gaming mission. It is located at www.responsiblegambling.org. It publishes *NewsScan*, a convenient on-line newsletter of gambling-related articles.

Cost of Doing Business

(Editor's Note: *This is Part 2 of a paper authored by KYCCG Professional Adviser Curtis L. Barrett, Ph.D., ABPP, CCGC. As serialized in this space, Dr. Barrett reviews the results of studies that capture the "cost of doing business" related to the actions of compulsive gamblers.*)

What might such "costs of doing business turn out to be? There is some evidence that we can use. In 1995, a study in Wisconsin looked at a sample of Gamblers Anonymous members who had an average if 6.5 years of "serious problem gambling." Four forms of social cost were assessed: 1) work-related costs, 2) bad debt and theft-related costs, 3) police and judicial-related costs, and 4) health and welfare-related costs. Included in the calculation, in other words, were such things as cost of imprisonment, civil and criminal proceedings, bankruptcy, probation, treatment, and care for children when the gambler has lost employment or has been jailed. Few would argue that these are not real costs to the community. In dollar terms, the average cost, across all categories, for a person with serious gambling problems was \$9,468! This figure is even more startling when the statewide cost, for Wisconsin's 32,000 problem gamblers was considered. The bill, in 1995 dollars, was more than \$32 million!

Some might say that this study has no relevance to Kentucky and cite any number of reasons for that belief. Unfortunately for that view, there are some data for Kentucky. Under the leadership of former Murray State University president, Dr. Kern Alexander, there was a study in 2000 of the annual social cost of a pathological gambler in Marshall County, Kentucky. The term "pathological gambler" used in the study equates to the category of "serious problem gambler" used in the Wisconsin study. The results were quite comparable. Looking at much the same category of costs to the community (e.g., crime, bankruptcy), it was

found that the average pathological gambler in Marshall County cost more than \$13,000 per year. Extending these costs to the estimated number of pathological gamblers in the county, the **annual** bill for Marshall County was more than \$4 million. Very clearly, these are not small costs.

The Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling, like other affiliates of the National Council on Problem Gambling, does not look at the costs just listed and conclude that gambling in Kentucky either should or should not exist. Decision of that sort are for the Kentucky legislature and, in the final analysis, for the voting citizens of Kentucky. On the other hand, the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling does have a role in preventing gambling disorders and advocating for the care of the problem gambler and those whom he or she harms.

Fortunately, a number of gambling-related businesses and other organizations, including state agencies, have responded to the facts about the cost of gambling disorders. They have, in effect, accepted responsibility for paying some of the "cost" part of the "cost of doing business." Very few of these businesses ask for publicity for their efforts. Instead, they view the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling as the proper vehicle for expressing their concern. In turn, KYCPG conducts some prevention, training, and some service events (e.g., a statewide helpline, 1-800-GAMBLER).

Despite the good intentions and actions by many across Kentucky, the practicing clinician in this state nevertheless faces a flood of clients and a paucity of resources. Using the most conservative figures available, it is estimated that Kentucky has more than 30,000 problem gamblers right now. Undoubtedly, more problem gamblers will surface if gambling expands in Kentucky.

(In the next issue of Inside the Numbers, Dr. Barrett will conclude this essay on the "Cost of Doing Business.")

KYCPG Resources

KYCPG provides resources to further awareness about problem and compulsive gambling. At present, all items are free on request. Contact Executive Director Mike Stone (502/223-1823 or e-mail kmstone@mis.net) to order.

* *It's A Great Game* is a booklet currently under revision that generally reviews compulsive gambling.

* *When It's More Than A Game* is a brochure that promotes awareness and the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline.

* *Financial Strategies for the Loved Ones of Problem Gamblers* is a booklet offering insights on money issues.

* *Lesson Plans on Gambling Behavior* is a youth awareness curriculum suitable for schools or youth groups.

Gamblers Anonymous Meetings

The following is a list of the current G.A. (Gamblers Anonymous) meetings in or serving Kentucky. For exact times, locations and a phone number for contact person, **please call 1-800-GAMBLER.**

Monday

- Southeast Christian Church, 7 p.m., Louisville (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting at 6 p.m.)
- United Way Building, 7 p.m., Bowling Green
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, 8 p.m., Huntington, WV
- Steppingstone Counseling, 7 p.m., Evansville, IN

Tuesday

- CARE Center, 9 p.m., Louisville

- First Presbyterian Church, 6:30 p.m., Lexington

- First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m., Pikeville (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

- Florence Christian Church, 8 p.m., Florence

Wednesday

- Pigeon Roost 12-step Club, 7:30 p.m., Louisville

- St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 6:30 p.m., Lexington

Thursday

- Southland Christian Church, 6:30 p.m., Lexington

- Caritas Hospital B Cafeteria, 7:30 p.m., Louisville

- St. Mary's Church, 6 p.m., Evansville, IN (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

Friday

- Generations Center (downtown), 6:30 p.m., Hazard

- Southeast Church of Christ, 7:30 p.m., Louisville (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

- Lourdes Hospital Classroom #4, 7 p.m., Paducah

Saturday

- Pigeon Roost 12-step Club, 8:30 a.m., Louisville

- Token Club III, 6 p.m., Louisville

Sunday

- Iroquois Pizza (2nd&4th), 1 p.m., Louisville (Open Meeting, family welcome)

- KET Building, 4:30 p.m., Lexington (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

- Methodist Temple, 5 p.m. Evansville, IN (Also separate Gam-Anon meet.)