

Lesieur to Keynote Seventh Annual Educational Conference in Lexington Feb. 5-6, 2004

Henry Lesieur, Ph.D., staff psychologist, Rhode Island Hospital Gambling Treatment Program, will deliver the keynote address at the KYCPG Seventh Annual Educational and Awareness Conference in Lexington at the Holiday Inn North, I-75/64 at Newtown Pike, on Thursday-Friday, Feb. 5-6, 2004. The program will begin at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 5, and conclude at a joint reception with the Lexington Area Gamblers Anonymous MiniProgram on Friday evening, Feb. 6.

The Journey from Researcher to Clinician is the topic of Lesieur's address, and it will provide insights on his professional path. As a researcher, Lesieur co-authored the *South Oaks Gambling Screen*, one of the most widely recognized assessment tools for determining whether an individual may have a gambling problem. He also authored the often-cited book, *The Chase: Career of the Compulsive Gambler*. Lesieur now treats compulsive gamblers as the staff psychologist at the Rhode Island Hospital Gambling Treatment Program.

Following Lesieur's presentation, Curtis L. Barrett, Ph.D., KYCPG professional adviser, will lead a discussion on the messages and lessons that can be found in Lesieur's journey.

Many Journeys on Program

Journey's on Problem Gambling Issues in Kentucky is the theme of the Seventh Annual Conference. The registration fee is \$125 for KYCPG members and \$150 for non-members. A \$25 late fee will be added to all registrations received after Feb. 2, 2004. Registration information is posted on the KYCPG website, www.kycpg.org. The registration fee covers all handout materials, breaks, a Friday continental breakfast, the Friday Awards Luncheon and a Friday reception held in conjunction with the Lexington Area Gamblers Anonymous MiniProgram, Feb. 6-8, at the same site.

The room rate at the Holiday Inn North is \$69.95, plus tax, for single or double rooms. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel at 859/233-0512. Please advise the reservations clerk you are attending the KYCPG Conference. **The deadline to make room reservations to receive the special rate is Jan. 21, 2004.**

For registration information on the Lexington Area Gamblers Anonymous MiniProgram, which will include open meetings that counselors seeking certification may attend to obtain required meeting hours, please contact Tony S. at 859/533-8954.

Lesieur's journey is the first of many that will be presented at the Seventh Annual Conference. Following his address and the discussion, Nichelle Anthony, director, minority and community affairs, Kentucky Lottery Corp. will present *The Journey to Youth Awareness*. She will review the Beat Addiction in-school awareness program the Lottery is pilot testing across Kentucky with the help of KYCPG. Focusing on middle school and high school youth, the 50-minute program is adapted from a successful effort in Missouri.

The Seventh Annual Conference will offer for the first time two concurrent sessions that will follow the continental breakfast on Friday, Feb. 6. Kentucky's existing certified compulsive gambler counselors and those who are working through the certification process have requested more in-depth discussion on treatment processes. *The Counselors' Journey* will give them an opportunity to share clinical approaches. RonSonLyn Clark, CCGC, director, substance abuse programs, River Valley Behavioral Health, will moderate the discussion.

At the same time, Randy McGraw, president, American Compulsive Gambling Counselor Certification Board, will lead a session on *The Journey Toward Certification*, which will appeal to first-time attendees, participants from the gaming industry, and those who desire a more basic understanding of compulsive and problem gambling.

Following the Awards Luncheon, where KYCPG will honor the recipients of its 2004 awards, the program focuses on the impact of compulsive gambling on society and public policy.

Angie Moore with Proctor Hospital in Peoria, Ill., recently authored a graduate paper on the financial impact of compulsive gamblers. She will cite data in *The Money Journey: The Financial Impact of Compulsive Gambling*. William Skinner, Ph.D., University of Kentucky professor of sociology and KYCPG Board member, will present *The College Journey: Gambling on Campus*. He will review survey data collected at UK that indicates the extent of on-campus gambling and possible societal implications.

The program will conclude with *The Journey Toward Public Awareness*. The presentations will revolve around gambling issues before the Kentucky General Assembly, beginning with a synopsis of the 2003 Legislative Research Commission study on *Compulsive Gambling in Kentucky* (Report No. 316 published in November 2003 and summarized in the last issue of *Inside the Numbers*). Karyn Hascal, acting director, Kentucky Division of Substance Abuse, will comment on the ramifications of the study on the Division and other developments regarding services to compulsive and problem gamblers. Kentucky legislators will be invited to provide their comments and review developments before the legislature. Four gambling-related bills were prefiled, two to permit electronic slot machines at horse race tracks, one to cause a referendum vote on whether Kentucky should expand gambling, and one to establish a Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund.

Embry Prefiles Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund Bill

Representative C.B. Embry prefiled legislation that was supported by KYCPG in each of the last three Kentucky General Assembly Sessions to establish a Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund. The measure currently is designated as *BR 898*, but it will receive a new filing number when the legislature convenes in January and it is initially read for debate. It is identical to the previous measures, taking small portions of revenue from existing state gambling income to fund awareness and education programs.

Who Do We Target for Prevention?

By Curtis L. Barrett, Ph.D., ABPP, CCGC, NCGC
KYCPG Professional Adviser

This column recently established the idea that expanded gambling is widely touted as a "Miracle Tax" in a time that taxes have been re-defined as inherently evil. The Miracle Tax is one that is paid only by the willing or by individuals who can't vote for the legislators who impose the tax. Requiring that a portion of gambling revenue go to a state or community's general fund, or specific projects such as "education," is an example of the Miracle Tax.

Rejection of taxation as means to fund a civilized society is widespread but not universal. On a recent NOW program on public television, former Maine Gov. Angus King, an Independent, spoke out against the idea. He pointed out that citizens consistently vote against increased taxes but "still want the roads fixed." Nevertheless, Gov. King opined that the idea of gambling as a solution will need to run its course and that will take some time.

Like Gov. King, the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling accepts that gambling opportunities are likely, at least, to remain as they are. If that is so, the question of who should be targeted for our prevention efforts looms large.

There are three standard, common ways of dealing with the harm of gambling: Harm Reduction, Harm Minimization, and Responsible Gaming. **Harm Reduction** approaches focus on policies or programs aimed at lessening harm to some extent. For example, gambling might be prohibited or limited to certain venues, e.g. casinos or racetracks but not at convenience stores. **Harm Minimization** aims at lessening the harm of gambling to the lowest *practical* level. This approach implies that there is a known standard against which Harm Minimization measures can be judged. Presently, in Australia, these methods include efforts to program slot machines to warn players about the amount of money they have gambled or the time that they have spent on the machine. Or,

machines may permit players to decide in advance how long they will play or what the speed of play may be.

Responsible Gaming, by contrast, targets certain risk groups and attempts to move them to a lower level of risk through such methods as education and disclosure of gaming odds. Responsible Gaming assumes that safe levels of gambling are possible. For those who do not gamble at all, of course, there is no risk of gambling addiction. Those who do gamble fall into one of three categories with regard to gambling disorders: moderate risk, severe risk, and already established pathological gambling. The latter category implies that treatment, not prevention, is needed. Those in the Moderate Risk category are targeted for reduced risk. Those in the Severe Risk category are targeted for movement to a lower risk category.

What can make Responsible Gaming approaches successful? At this point, we can't say for sure. The recognized expert on the subject, Robert Ladouceur, Ph.D., Laval University, Canada, says that the gaming industry must accept a *possible* reduction in income in order to accomplish the longitudinal research that will answer the question of "how." Dr. Ladouceur, who was a speaker at a 2002 KYCPG conference, includes states and provinces as part of the gambling industry. In other words, we, as citizens, have a stake in developing Responsible Gaming approaches that are effective.

There is some irony, perhaps, in noting that citizens who were once directly responsible for state revenue, through taxes, will take on new responsibility (through reduced income) when the so-called Miracle Tax, aimed at eliminating or reducing taxation, is implemented. In the final analysis, however, who but the citizen has the strongest stake in providing that any form of entertainment is safe? We may delegate that responsibility to legislators, but it remains ours, does it not?

Upcoming Events

- February 5-6, 2004, KYCPG Annual Educational and Awareness Conference, Holiday Inn North, Lexington. (Registration information posted on KYCPG website, www.kycpg.org.)
- March 8-14, 2004, Second Annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.
- June 17-19, 2004, National Conference on Problem Gambling, Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Phoenix, AZ.
- August 2-6, Responsible Gaming Education Week
- September 23-24, KYCPG Annual Fall Conference, Northern Kentucky Area, site to be determined.

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

- The Living Stone, 7 p.m., Louisville
- Southeast Christian Church, 6 p.m., Louisville (Gam-Anon meeting)
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, 8 p.m., Huntington, WV
- Steppingstone Counseling, 7 p.m., Evansville, IN

Tuesday

- Beargrass Christian Church, 3:30 p.m., Louisville
- 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, 7:30 p.m., Florence
- Lincoln Trail Behavioral Center, 7:30 p.m., Radcliff

Wednesday

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

Thursday

- Southland Christian Church, 6:30 p.m., Lexington
- Caritas Peace Ctr., 1st Fl. Cafeteria, 7:30 p.m., Louisville
- St. Mary's Church, 6 p.m., Evansville, IN (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

Friday

- Living Stone, 7:30 p.m., Louisville (Also separate Gam-Anon meeting)

Saturday

- St. Michael's Catholic Church, 9 a.m., Louisville
- Token Club III, 6 p.m., Louisville

Sunday

- Hazelwood United Methodist Church, 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.)
- Unity Trinity Methodist Church, 7 p.m., New Albany, IN