

**NOTE:** *Due to personnel and production issues, this issue is being delivered about one month late. The proper timing will be reestablished next month. KYCPG thanks you for your patience.*

## **Legislators Introduce Gambling Bills; Passage Appears Slim**

The 2004 Kentucky General Assembly session began with uncertainty as the state's first Republican governor in 32 years prepared budget and tax proposals. The session followed a slow pace through mid-March as the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives and the Republican-controlled Senate spent much of the first two months refusing to hear each other's bills.

Although some gambling-related legislation was introduced, the most significant addiction-related initiative released in January was Lt. Gov. Steve Pence's proposal to treat drug addiction more from a treatment perspective than a criminal one. Pence also serves as Justice Cabinet secretary. KYCPG suggested by letter to the lieutenant governor that he may wish to include gambling addiction, since a significant and growing number of criminal cases are stemming from problem gambling behavior. Recent increases in gambling-related crime were documented by the *Louisville Courier-Journal* last year.

*HB 144* was legislation introduced early in the session by Rep. C.B. Embry, co-sponsored by Rep. Jack Coleman and Rep. Charlie Hoffman, to establish a Compulsive Gambler Assistance Fund. The bill, endorsed by KYCPG, is similar to legislation introduced in each of the last three sessions to redirect portions of the state's receipts from the three legal forms of gambling in the state to create programs for education, awareness and treatment of compulsive and problem gamblers. It remains assigned to the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee.

Three bills also introduced early in the session by Rep. Tom Burch seek to expand gambling in Kentucky by permitting the Kentucky Lottery to oversee video slot machines at the state's pari-mutuel horse race tracks. *HB 45* and *HB 46* detail the operation and division of monies — including at least \$2 million for compulsive gambling education, awareness and treatment — and *HB 47* places the issue of expanding gambling in this manner on the November 2004 ballot as a constitutional amendment. No action has taken place on these measures.

A hearing before the House Licensing and Occupations Committee was held in early March on two bills introduced by Rep. Larry Clark, and others, to permit full-scale casino gambling at five horse race tracks and four additional locations in the state. *HB 636* would place the decision to expand gambling before the voters in November 2004 as a constitutional amendment. Senator David Boswell introduced identical legislation, *SB 249*, in the Senate.

*HB 637* and *SB 250*, introduced by the same legislators, authorizes the casinos, specifies their locations, and identifies how revenues will be distributed. Compulsive and problem gambling awareness, education, research and treatment would receive a minimum of \$2 million annually under the proposal. As of March 10, Rep. Clark reported that expanded gambling legislation would

not pass this year. He cited lack of consensus from the horse race tracks as the reason, which was disputed by horse racing industry officials. No hearing was held in the Senate.

Two bills address charitable gaming issues. *HB 426*, introduced by Rep. Adrian Arnold, reduces the residency requirement from three years to two years for charitable organizations to obtain a license. *HB 705*, introduced by Rep. Dennis Horlander, which includes some technical and administrative provisions, expands charitable gaming by raising payout limits, permitting electronic pull-tab machines, and allowing progressive bingo games. Neither bill has been scheduled for a hearing before the House Licensing and Occupations Committee. According to information obtained in a KYCPG telephone conversation, the Kentucky Office of Charitable Gaming does not support *HB 705*.

One of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's first acts was to abolish the Kentucky Racing Commission and replace it with a Kentucky Horse Racing Authority, whose responsibilities would be expanded to include promotion of thoroughbred racing. *SB 156*, introduced by Sen. Dan Kelly, Senate majority leader, codifies the governor's executive order.

The final gambling-related bill introduced in the 2004 General Assembly session permits the Kentucky Lottery to advertise what happens with the proceeds of its various games. About \$175 million annually is turned over to the state, and most of that money is used for educational scholarships. Currently, the legislation establishing the Kentucky Lottery Corp. prohibits advertising the disposition of the proceeds. *HB 154* was introduced by Rep. Mary Lou Marzian.

The 2004 Kentucky General Assembly will meet through March 31, then recess for two weeks. It will reconvene April 14 and 15 for a two-day veto session in which additional legislative action may take place.

## **KYCPG Participates in PAR (People Advocating Recovery); Urges Drug Summit Comments**

KYCPG Executive Director Michael R. Stone attended the Feb. 19 Steering Committee meeting of PAR (People Advocating Recovery). The proposed organizational mission distributed at the meeting read: "People Advocating Recovery is a statewide group of concerned individuals working to eliminate barriers to recovery from addiction." Although some attendees felt PAR's focus should be on alcoholism and chemical addiction, others expressed a holistic view of treating the whole person regardless of the addiction.

Significant discussion centered on the 16 drug summit hearings organized by Lt. Gov. Steve Pence, who also serves as Justice Cabinet Secretary, to gather information from across the state regarding his proposal to expand treatment for those arrested for drugs rather than incarceration. The hearings will take place through April 21. Regardless of the ability to attend a hearing in person, every one is encouraged to access a website and provide input. The website is <http://kydrugsummit.ky.gov>.

# The 'Straight Skinny'

By Curtis L. Barrett, Ph.D., ABPP, CCGC, NCGC  
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In military jargon, the "straight skinny," the "dope," and "the word" refer to reliable information. In Kentucky, the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling (KYCPG) aims to have "the straight skinny" on matters pertaining to prevention and treatment of gambling disorders. Often this is a difficult task. Anti-gaming and pro-gaming organizations alike use information of all sorts in ways they believe will further their goals.

An example of mis-information is the allegation that this or that gaming device is "the crack cocaine" of gambling. This allegation attempts to merge the perception of a dangerous drug of abuse with a some form of gambling, usually Video Lottery Terminals or "VLT's." Not long ago, in Kentucky, a proposed Kentucky Lottery Corporation game, Keno, had the "crack cocaine" tag put on it. Truth is, there is no scientific basis for this allegation.

What can be said is that the science of learning, a major field of psychology, *has* established characteristics of activities that strengthen learning. Devices, including gaming devices, that provide rapid feedback, spaced and irregular rewards, and the *illusion* that players have control of random outcomes, strengthen learning. In England, Dr. Mark Griffiths has studied which gaming devices have the most effective of these characteristics. Responsible Gaming Programs, including KYCPG's, should inform patrons about them.

Counselors also need the "straight skinny" about gaming assessment. For example, in his keynote address to KYCPG's recent conference, internationally known expert Dr. Henry Lesieur pointed out that pathological gambling is characterized by *prolonged* chasing. Chasing, briefly, is the name for increasing one's bets, for

no valid reason, after a loss. The assessment instrument that Dr. Lesieur designed, the South Oaks Gambling Survey (SOGS), makes very clear that chasing must occur in half or more of a patron's betting before it is deemed to be pathognomic (i.e., indicating disordered gambling). Unfortunately, neither the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual (DSM IV)* nor the instrument derived from it (NORC Diagnostic Screen or NODS) makes this requirement.

Can this be significant? Certainly! What might appear to be pathological chasing of bets is actually part and parcel of more sophisticated pari-mutuel wagering or "handicapping." Counselors need to take this into account before applying the DSM IV or NODS "chasing" criterion to a gambler who is being evaluated.

Some arguments regarding expanded gambling hold water and some do not. An excellent recent discussion of this issue by Thomas A. Garrett appears in *The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review* (January/February 2004, pp.9-22). The article addresses the "typical perception that casino gaming is more often seen as a savior for rural communities rather than urban communities." Also, the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission's November 2003 report, *Compulsive Gambling in Kentucky* (Research Report No. 316, Frankfort, KY) summarizes some of the pro-expanded-gambling arguments as they relate to pathological/problem gambling.

Keeping on top of the "straight skinny" is a major task. Mike Stone, as executive director, and I, as professional advisor for KYCPG, will appreciate your input regarding strong research reports that support any position on gambling disorders. Please send them to us, care of the Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling, at: P.O. Box 4595, Frankfort, KY 40604-4595, or e-mail [kmstone@mis.net](mailto:kmstone@mis.net).

## Upcoming Events

- Through April 21, Public Input Meetings on Kentucky Drug Summit sponsored by Lt. Gov. Steve Pence. For locations and to give input: <http://kydrugsummit.ky.gov>
- June 17-19, 2004, National Conference on Problem Gambling, Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Phoenix, AZ.
- July 25-30, Kentucky School on Alcohol and Other Drug Studies, Northern Kentucky University — Two-day program on problem gambling scheduled for July 26-27.
- 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