

**SENATE COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC &
RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Good afternoon to the members of the Senate Gaming Oversight Committee. My name is Joanna Franklin, and I serve as the Director of Training, Education and Help Line Services for the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania. The Council is a non-profit advocacy organization that has been serving compulsive and problem gamblers and their families in Pennsylvania since 1985. Our mission is to offer assistance to those negatively impacted by problem gambling. We do this by offering Helpline, information, public awareness, prevention, training and education programs.

We operate the three Problem Gambling Helplines through the National Council on Problem Gambling call center 24/7/365, in English and in Spanish. You should have received copies of our data collection for the year of 2007, as well as data collection for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2008, and also the monthly data for October & November of 2008. One or the other of our Helpline numbers (800-848-1880, 800-GAMBLER and 800-522-4700) is used by the Pennsylvania Lottery and all the licensed, racetracks and casinos in Pennsylvania. Over 1200 callers a month learn about our services when they call our Helpline and at least 115 per month are referred to direct assistance with a treatment provider or Gamblers Anonymous/GamAnon meeting. Beginning this fall we added just over two dozen providers who have been enrolled by BDAP and approved to offer gambling treatment services within their system. This system cares for enrolled clients regardless of ability to pay, as do the BDAP drug and alcohol programs. We hope this system will continue to grow and help answer the need for services statewide.

In addition to the Helpline services we also provide Problem Gambling Training Programs. These include:

- **Employee Training for Racetrack and Casino employees;**
- **clinical training programs for behavioral health professionals and**
- **specialized training programs for schools,**
- **pastors,**
- **attorneys and**
- **our general public outreach and awareness programs.**

To date we have trained over 1510 behavioral health professionals from all over the state. Training programs are either our 30 hour basic training program (the minimum required by the IGCCB for Level I certification and by BDAP to meet their gambling specific training requirements), or our advanced training program

with hours 31 thru 60 of the gambling specific training hours required for IGCCB National certification at Level II. These training hours have been approved for psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mental health counselors, EAP's, attorneys, addiction counselors and gambling counselors.

We also respond to government agencies, media, schools, researchers, treatment professionals and the military for information and interviews to increase public awareness about problem gambling and the resources available for help. We have helped to establish counselor training programs at the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh and with the Penn State System. We are very proud of the nationally certified counselors coming from the Univ. of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work program under the direction of Jody Bechtold.

We have appreciated our working relationship with the Pennsylvania Lottery, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board and the commercial gaming industry in Pennsylvania as we all join to work together to assist those negatively impacted by problem gambling. Just one example of this partnership can be found in Bethlehem. With the support of the Sands Casino-Bethlehem we have been able to offer to hundreds of counselors, psychologists and social workers our basic, and now, our advanced clinical training program, as well as a 30 hour program for pastors and pastoral counselors in the Lehigh Valley. Our corporate partners have helped to fund training in several areas of the state for a variety of groups.

Our "Training of Trainers" Program was done for BDAP so we could add just under a dozen trainers on problem gambling topics to the BDAP –IRETA system of regional training programs. This of course allows us to reach more behavioral health professionals statewide. We also have made a proposal to BDAP for a Problem Gambling Prevention Program. We are hoping a pilot program can be started this year for elementary, high school and college age students that will allow us to develop a statewide system of prevention and awareness for all students in Pennsylvania including those in the juvenile detention settings. From the third graders at St. Joseph's School in York, to the Penn State and Univ. of Pittsburgh systems we are very encouraged to see the interest in problem gambling increase statewide.

Please note on your calendars that March 1-7 is National Problem Gambling Week. Please join us in promoting a better understanding of the devastation problem gambling can cause as well as how we can prevent, refer and treat those in need of assistance.

www.NPGAW.org

Respectfully submitted, and we welcome any questions or comments you make have this time.

**Joanna Franklin
Director, of Training, Education & Help Line Services
Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania**