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March 14, 2006

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“MARCH MADNESS”

Gambling on Basketball Tournament Sometimes Problematic

BOSTON, MA – The NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament, known as “March Madness,” is a time of considerable gambling – especially among college students. Some people will be devastated by bets they make. The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling wants the public to know that help is available. The organization offers a confidential 24-hour Helpline (1-800-426-1234) for problem gamblers, their families, and the greater community. Anyone who is concerned about their own or a loved one’s gambling is encouraged to call.

Although it is illegal in Massachusetts, gambling on sports is extremely widespread. For some people, gambling is not a problem. For others, it becomes a serious problem with potentially devastating social, financial and emotional consequences. “Many people don’t realize that gambling can become a serious problem much like alcohol or drug dependency,” said Marlene Warner, Program Director for the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. A number of factors place college students at particular risk, including:

- **Financing:** College students are able to find numerous ways to finance their gambling, including the easy availability of credit cards.
- **Accessibility:** There are over 1,800 websites that offer gambling opportunities, and the betting line and point spread are available in newspapers, TV and radio shows, and on the Internet.
- **Early Onset:** Much like smoking, drug use and drinking, the earlier an individual starts gambling the more likely they are to develop a gambling problem.

One way that the Council is working to address this problem is by holding two half-day programs for college administrators. “Gambling on College Campuses,” will take place on both Friday, April 7th and Friday, April 28th at Bentley College in Waltham.

“We encourage students, parents, coaches and administrators to be aware of the warning signs, which can include: being preoccupied with gambling, betting increasing amounts of money over time, repeated unsuccessful attempts to stop or control gambling and chasing losses,” said Warner. For more signs, please visit the Council website at www.masscompulsivegambling.org or call 1-800-426-1234.

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