



Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling

We understand the problem. We can help.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 11, 2005

CONTACT: Margot Cahoon, Communications Specialist
margot@masscompulsivegambling.org
Office - 617-426-4554 / Cell- 857-222--7139

MASSACHUSETTS & PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Mass. Council on Compulsive Gambling Announces Public Opinion Survey Results

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS – On Tuesday, October 11th, from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling held a press conference at the State House to share the results of a statewide Public Opinion Survey regarding public awareness and attitudes toward problem gambling in the Commonwealth.

The event was sponsored by Representative Daniel Bosley (1st District Berkshire). Other speakers included: Massachusetts State Treasurer, Timothy Cahill; Kathleen M. Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling; Michael Botticelli, Assistant Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health /Bureau of Substance Abuse Services; Senator Susan Tucker (2nd Essex and Middlesex); and a person in recovery who spoke about his personal experience with problem gambling. All of the speakers discussed the survey and the impact it would have on gambling services in Massachusetts.

The survey indicated strong agreement that problem gambling is a serious problem that can affect anyone and that the state needs to fund problem gambling programs so long as it continues to sponsor gambling. It also indicated that while nearly a quarter of Massachusetts residents are personally aware of someone with a gambling problem, only one in four of those people know anyone who has sought help for the problem.

Other findings included:

- Massachusetts residents most often participate in state lottery games (33% often or sometimes); 16% often or sometimes visit a casino or gaming facility in nearby states; 8% often or sometimes gamble at church or nonprofit events; and 9% often or sometimes visit a casino or gaming facility in Las Vegas.

- Nearly one-quarter (22%) of Massachusetts residents personally know someone who has had a gambling problem.
- Of those who personally know someone who has had a gambling problem, two-thirds (67%) of Massachusetts residents have seen problem gamblers experience debt problems; 46% have seen problem gamblers experience family or friend problems; 35% have seen problem gamblers experience physical or emotional health problems; 31% have seen problem gamblers experience work or school problems; 26% have seen problem gamblers experience legal problems; and 18% did not know.
- Nearly half (46%) of Massachusetts residents think that compulsive gambling is either a very or somewhat serious problem; 30% of residents do not think it is a serious problem; and 24% of residents were unsure.
- Over three-quarters of Massachusetts residents agree that "problem gambling is a public health issue that affects people of all ages, races, ethnic and economic backgrounds" (81% strongly or somewhat agree).
- Over three-quarters (78%) agree that "as long as the state derives revenue from legal gambling, it should continue to fund problem gambling programs".
- Over three-quarters (80%) agree that "problem gambling has a significant social and economic cost".

"The survey has helped the Council to see how gambling problems are perceived in the Commonwealth and plan for future awareness efforts , as well as to identify the target areas to focus its message," said Kathleen M. Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

For more information or to download a complete report, please visit the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's website at www.masscompulsivegambling.org, call the toll-free Helpline (1-800-GAM-1234) or e-mail the Council at gambling@aol.com. The Helpline, which is staffed by trained specialists, is confidential and available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

The survey was conducted for the Council by Opinion Dynamics Corporation of Cambridge by telephone using random-digit-dialing (RDD) methodology. In total, 600 interviews were conducted between June 1 and June 6, 2005. The margin of error for the total sample size of 600 is +/-4% at the 95% confidence level.

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit health agency dedicated to reducing the social, financial and emotional costs of problem gambling. The Council provides information, education, advocacy and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones and the greater community.

###