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MASS. COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING TO SHARE TESTIMONY AT BOSTON CITY COUNCIL HEARING

BOSTON, MA – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (2000) estimated that 3.2% of the Massachusetts population that gambled in the past year experienced gambling-related problems. Problems were reported by nearly 8% of people age 65 and older and by 7% of people between the ages of 18 and 34.

That is why, on Monday, April 12th at 11:30 a.m., the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling will appear before a public hearing of the Boston City Council's Committee on Health and Human Services. The event, which is sponsored by Councilor Jerry P. McDermott, will be held in the Christopher A. Iannella Chamber on the 5th Floor of Boston City Hall.

The subject of the hearing, Docket #0337, is the impact of Governor Romney's proposed cuts to prevention and treatment programs among Boston residents with gambling problems. In the Governor's recently-released FY05 budget, he recommends the elimination of funding that addresses the downside of state-sponsored gambling. This funding does not come from general state funds, but rather from unclaimed lottery winnings of the Massachusetts State Lottery, the most successful lottery in the nation, with 4.4 billion in sales in 2002.

Representatives from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, the Massachusetts State Lottery, the Boston Public Health Commission, City of Boston's Employee Assistance Program and Gambler's Anonymous have been invited to attend and provide testimony.

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's mission is to provide leadership in reducing the social, financial and emotional costs of problem gambling and to promote a continuum of prevention and intervention strategies including information and education, capacity building, advocacy and referral services (including the Mass. Council's confidential 24-hour Helpline – 1-800-426-1234) for problem gamblers, their families and the greater community.

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