

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LEGISLATORS FROM GAMING STATES  
COMMITTEE ON RESPONSIBLE GAMING  
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA  
JANUARY 9, 2009  
MINUTES

The National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS) Committee on Responsible Gaming met at the Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Friday, January 9, 2009, at 1:15 p.m.

Representative Kevin Ryan of Connecticut, acting chair of the Committee, presided.

Other members of the Committee present were:

Rep. James Buskey, AL  
Sen. Tom Harman, CA  
Rep. Bill Oberle, DE

Other legislators present were:

Rep. Mac Gipson, AL  
Rep. Helene Keeley, DE  
Sen. John Sparks, OK

Others present were:

Susan Nolan, Nolan Associates, NCLGS Executive Director  
Nicholas Brozean, Nolan Associates, NCLGS Assistant Legislative Coordinator

#### MINUTES

The Committee voted unanimously to accept, as submitted, the minutes of its June 13, 2008, meeting in Napa, California.

#### PROBLEM GAMBLING STUDIES AND STATE INITIATIVES

Tim Christensen of the Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA) reported on state initiatives to curb problem gambling through treatment, prevention, and self-exclusion services. He said there were three trends among states, including:

- increased collaboration to address problem gambling issues across states
- the economic downturn's impact on services
- increased state sophistication and innovation

Mr. Christensen reported that state treatment initiatives—which focused on the outcomes of various approaches to problem gambling services—included, among others, the following:

- a comprehensive Louisiana report on problem gambling services
- effectiveness studies in Arizona, Iowa, Maine, Nebraska, and Nevada
- collaborative efforts with the federal Center for Substance Abuse to develop National Outcomes Measures (NOMS) specific to problem gambling
- an International Gaming Institute study to track treatment impacts over time
- development of national counselor certification and licensure requirements
- development of long-distance treatment options for states with rural populations, such as phone-based counseling

- outreach studies to increase public awareness of problem gambling services
- reviews of the comorbidity, or “dual diagnosis,” of substance abuse and problem gambling as a way to increase outreach

Mr. Christenson said several states—including Minnesota, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and New Mexico—had also focused on problem gambling prevention by:

- reviewing adolescent gambling behavior
- developing problem gambling prevention standards
- preparing comprehensive strategic plans for problem gambling
- training and educating casino and video lottery employees

In response to a question from Rep. Keeley about ailing state budgets and funding for problem gambling services, Mr. Christensen said the programs—which were funded through gaming operations revenues in most states—would be impacted by the economy. He said that revenue declines decreased available funding for treatment and prevention programs.

In response to a question regarding how difficult it would be to use substance abuse treatment standards for problem gambling since many of the measures were unrelated and not comparable, Mr. Christensen replied that the University of Nebraska was reviewing this issue and would be releasing a paper on what substance abuse treatment measures are appropriate for gambling treatment and which ones are not.

#### SUCCESSFUL RESPONSIBLE GAMING PROGRAMS

Arnie Wexler of Arnie & Sheila Wexler Associates said state legislators needed to more actively promote and establish comprehensive responsible gaming programs. He cautioned that problem gambling was a growing issue, was larger than most realized, and would devastate the gaming industry if left unchecked. He said that gaming industry employees were especially susceptible to problems.

Mr. Wexler said that legislators should mandate responsible gaming programs in their state to help curb rising lawsuits against casinos and employees. He said underage gambling was also a growing issue that needed to be addressed by state legislators, as evidenced by prominent media reports being conducted by *The New York Times* and CBS News’ *60 Minutes*.

Mr. Wexler concluded by saying that a successful responsible gaming program would require the following parts: a corporate commitment; a mission statement; a written policy; internal practices to support the program; a thorough understanding of compulsive and problem gambling issues; training and education programs for employees and executives; forged partnerships with issue experts; maintenance of brochures, signage, and hotlines in casinos; gambling treatment programs for employees; development of responsible gaming task forces and committees; a team-oriented approach for establishment of exclusion lists; links to Websites where people can get help; and the use a local suicide hotline to help problem gamblers.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.