

2010 Midwest Conference Provides Learning Opportunities and More; DVDs Available

More than 250 attendees gathered at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City for the seventh annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse. The conference featured more than 15 workshops and presentations from internationally and nationally renowned experts in the field of problem gambling, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

The three-day event opened on July 28 with keynote addresses presented by Dr. H. Westley Clark, director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services; and Jim Wuelfing, director of prevention at Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, followed by a panel discussion titled, "Recovery Systems – A Collaborative Process," which featured experts in the judicial, treatment, industry, child welfare and consumer fields.

In addition to Clark and Wuelfing, additional keynote speakers included: Don Feeney, research and planning director at Minnesota State Lottery; Tasha Barker, compliance manager at Penn National Gaming; Matt Cihak, therapist at Jackson Recovery Centers; Linda Cottler, director of the Master of Psychiatric Epidemiology program at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis; and Julia Dinsmore, author and motivational speaker.

To order DVDs of the 2010 keynote presentations, call (573) 526-7467 or e-mail betsoff@molottery.com.



Message from Alliance Chairperson Keith Spare, Lakewood Counseling Service Program Director

It had been said that every good leader who accomplished anything did so because they were standing on the shoulder of giants. If the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling is to accomplish anything this year with me as chairperson, it is because of those who have served before me.

We are certainly in challenging times. Therefore, I believe our primary goals for the year are to work hard as an Alliance, not lose ground and to strengthen our programs and services for problem gamblers and their families.

The Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, traditionally hosted in either St. Louis or Kansas City, was once again held in Kansas City this year. More than 250 attendees gathered at the three-day event, which provided an excellent learning opportunity to converge with peers and professionals in the problem gambling and substance abuse fields. Plans are underway for the 2011 conference, which will also be held in Kansas City. The Alliance is focusing on providing support at the 2011 conference and lending our combined goodwill to this initiative.

During the course of the year, the Alliance will also focus on securing funding for the Problem Gambling Fund. Legislation needs to ensure that funds are protected for problem gambling. I believe that this is a moral imperative that we not only restore the funding for problem gamblers, but we also need to set the stage for a process by which funds are automatically increased when the need increases. This may involve new alliances with legislators and advocates.

What was accomplished last year in regards to securing funding for the Problem Gambling Fund, was a result of a combined effort, which was sustained during several months. It is time to begin that process again. Although, we have varied boundaries and responsibilities, we can share the common interest of serving the needs of problem gamblers and their families.

It has never been more poignant than when a Missouri resident was recently arrested for the suspected murder of another Missouri citizen allegedly due to compulsive gambling. It is truly a life and death issue that problem gambling treatment be available to those who need it.

I look forward to a year of challenges with new alliances and allies working together.

Sincerely,
Keith Spare
Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling Chairperson

2010 National Legislative Wrap-Up

By Keith Whyte, executive director, National Council on Problem Gambling

It was an exciting legislative year for problem gambling as H.R. 2906/S.B. 3418, the Comprehensive Problem Gambling Act (CPG), gained significant momentum.

CPG, the first-ever bill to fight gambling addiction, was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in June 2009 as H.R. 2906 by Representatives Moran (D-VA), Wolf (R-VA), Berman (D-CA) and Terry (R-NE). As of November 2010, CPG has 72 sponsors in the House and four sponsors in the Senate. The companion bill was introduced in the United States Senate in May 2010 as S.B. 3418 by Senators Merkley (D-OR), Johanns (R-NE), Casey (D-PA) and Brown (D-OH).

If passed, CPG will amend the Public Health Service Act to specifically include problem and pathological gambling in programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Additionally, CPG will establish a national program to address the consequences of problem gambling.

To help pass this legislation in the next session of Congress, contact your representatives and senators and ask them to support H.R. 2906 and S.B. 3418. For legislative tools, tips and templates, visit www.ncpgambling.org/advocacy.

Voluntary Exclusion Program Helps Gamblers Curb Addiction

The Missouri Gaming Commission administers a voluntary exclusion program from Missouri's casinos for problem gamblers.

This unique program, created in 1996, provides problem gamblers with a method to acknowledge that they have a gambling problem and take personal responsibility for it by agreeing to stop visiting casinos. The exclusion is for life.

Research indicates that problem gambling is a lifetime condition, and those who suffer from it are never "cured" but are constantly "recovering."

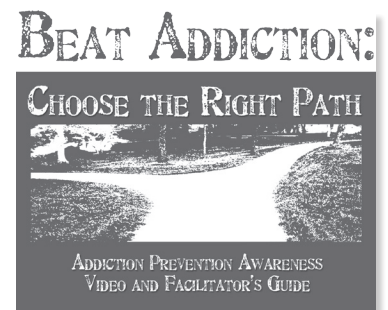
For more information about the program, call (573) 526-4080 or go to http://www.mgc.dps.mo.gov/prob_gambling/pg_vep.htm.

New Version of Beat Addiction Now Available

The award-winning "Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path" youth addiction prevention program has been revised and updated.

The new program, which is recommended for grades 6 through 12, includes a 30-minute DVD featuring four personal stories from a diverse cast of youth in recovery from various addictions, a facilitator's guide and poster. The DVD also includes a closed-caption and Spanish version, as well as the original video released in 2003.

To request a free copy of the new program, please e-mail koofeh@molottery.com or call (573) 526-7467.



Upcoming Alliance Events

March 6-12, 2011

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week

June 30-July 2, 2011

National Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Research, Recovery and Treatment, Boston, Massachusetts

July 20-22, 2011

Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City

Your Ideas Welcomed

Do you have a story idea for the next *Betsoff Bulletin*, or would you like to write a story for the next issue? There's a lot going on in Missouri concerning problem gambling, and we would like to include as much as possible in the *Bulletin* and on our Web site, so please be sure to pass on any ideas you may have.

To suggest story ideas for the *Bulletin* or the Web site, contact the editor, Holly Koofer-Thompson, at betsoff@molottery.com, or call (573) 526-7467.

Member Activities

Former Alliance Chair Named Director of Community Programs

Congratulations to Nora Bock, former Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling chairperson! Bock was promoted from clinical director to director of community programs for the Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Bock served as Alliance chairperson from 2009 to 2010.



Project 21 Provides Scholarships for High School Seniors

The Missouri Gaming Association (MGA) is proud to announce and sponsor the 15th annual Project 21 scholarship program. The goal of Project 21 is to not only inform Missouri youth that it is not permissible in Missouri for persons under the age of 21 to gamble in a casino, but to also educate them about the dangers and consequences associated with underage gambling.



“We strongly believe in the continuation of education and awareness programs such as Project 21 as effective tools in deterring underage gambling,” said Mike Winter, executive director of the Missouri Gaming Association and former chairperson for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling.

The 2011 Project 21 scholarship program provides students an opportunity to disseminate their message by writing an article or creating a poster or video addressing the issue of underage gambling. Two \$1,500 first prizes and four \$1,000 second prizes will be awarded to Missouri high school seniors.

To read about 2011 Project 21 guidelines, rules or to download a scholarship application, visit http://www.missouricasinos.org/pdfs/2011_Project_21_Application.pdf. The application deadline is March 4, 2011.

Publication Available Online

The *Bets Off Bulletin* is available through the Alliance's Web site, 888betsoff.org. If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the *Bulletin* through regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

If you received this edition via e-mail, you're already on our e-mail list, but remember to send us updates on any e-mail address changes. In addition, please feel free to forward the link for the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested in reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

Speakers Bureau Educates, Raises Awareness About Problem Gambling

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state on topics ranging from the prevention of youth gambling to the warning signs of problem gambling. For more information about the speakers bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467. All presentations are free of charge.

Save the Date!

Make plans now to attend the eighth annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, which will be held July 20-22, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center, 2354 McGee St., in Kansas City.

More than 250 individuals attended the multi-state conference in 2010, which featured free public presentations and panel discussions presented by nationally acclaimed addiction experts from throughout the country.

For more information about the 2011 conference, visit 888betsoff.org.



Help Available to Problem Gamblers and Families

The first step to overcoming a compulsive gambling disorder is admitting there is a problem and recognizing that it won't go away without help.

Counseling for compulsive gamblers and their family members is provided through agencies contracted through the Missouri Department of Mental Health. A list of these agencies, along with a complete list of certified compulsive gambling counselors in Missouri, can be found online at 888betsoff.org.

In addition to the website, help is available by calling the toll-free help line at 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633) or e-mailing freehelp@888betsoff.org.

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MISSOURI ALLIANCE
TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling's mission is to heighten public awareness for the dangers of problem gambling; develop prevention and education programs for gamblers of all ages; and direct problem gamblers and their families to the 1-888-BETSOFF help line and treatment.