Annu Al report

Prevention

Education & Training

Information & Public Awareness

Referral

Advocacy

Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling

We understand the problem. We can help.

Celebrating 25 years of compassion, understanding and solutions

1983 - 2008
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 PREVENTION, INFORMATION, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, AND REFERRAL SERVICES FOR PROBLEM GAMBLERS, THEIR LOVED ONES, AND THE GREATER COMMUNITY.

Dear Friends,

This year, 2008, has been one of looking back in celebration and remembrance as the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling has marked its 25th year. At the same time, we are looking forward to new challenges.

When Tom Cummings founded the Council 25 years ago, the issue of problem gambling was, at best, ignored or, at worst, swept under the rug. Over the last 25 years, through the efforts of the Council and our partners, we have established a solid record of research, education, training and prevention that has made Massachusetts one of the leaders in the field in the United States.

For 25 years, the Council staff has worked to provide problem gambling services in the Commonwealth. From providing prevention, information and public awareness outreach to offering community education and professional training, advocacy and referral services, the Council’s work has been far reaching in the impact it has had on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Our work has succeeded because we have partnered with some of the best and most professional organizations and individuals to be found. In particular, we note that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions are at the top of the class. We also highlight the major contribution that the Gamblers Anonymous (GA), Bettors Anonymous (BA) and Gam-Anon fellowships make in helping people with gambling problems.

Twenty-five years ago, it would have been unimaginable for an organization like the Council to be consulted in a public policy discussion about gambling issues in the Commonwealth. Today, with the possibility of casino gambling again on the table, it is inconceivable that the Council would not be part of the process and it is a foregone conclusion that any plan that is proposed will have a well-funded prevention and treatment component that is clear proof of what the Council has accomplished.

With both the past and the future in mind, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report to you in what has been a special year for the Council. The report details the projects and accomplishment that have marked 2008. We are grateful to you, our supporters, for your continued interest and commitment to the work of the Council.

Very truly yours,
Rod Hoffman, President
2008 HIGHLIGHTS

2008 CONFERENCE Focused on Prevention, Treatment and Technological Advancements

On Friday, May 9, 2008, the Council held the 2008 Conference on problem gambling entitled, Gambling Disorders in the Commonwealth: Honoring Past Achievements, Recognizing Present Accomplishments, and Looking to the Future at the University of Massachusetts, Boston Campus. The Conference highlighted some of the latest problem gambling research, and its application to service delivery. Throughout the day participants had a choice of three workshop tracks: Advancing the Prevention of Problem Gambling Agenda, Extending Our View of Problem Gambling Treatment, or Utilizing Technological Advancements to Help Problem Gamblers. Additionally, the Council began its celebration of 25 years of providing services to problem gamblers and their loved ones during a special luncheon event.

PROBLEM GAMBLING Prevention

Prevention Plan

To prevent and reduce problem gambling in the Commonwealth, the Council developed a comprehensive prevention plan. The plan begins with the definition of prevention as “an active process that encompasses fostering personal attributes as well as creating a supportive environment conducive to healthy choices and living.”

A comprehensive prevention initiative primarily targets those who do not presently exhibit symptoms related to problem gambling with a goal of preventing gambling-related problems from developing, as well as targeting those who have exhibited some problems related to their gambling but are not yet experiencing pathological gambling. The Council’s prevention initiative includes multiple strategies with multiple domains with a special focus on high risk groups (e.g., adolescents, young adults, older adults, economically disadvantaged). In the plan, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) strategies are used in the absence of evidence-based programs or practices in problem gambling prevention at present. Several objectives are outlined for each of the strategies.

A number of principles guide the prevention efforts including: as much of the work as possible will be done at the local/community level; efforts will be made to develop the capacity of existing service structures; best practices in prevention will be utilized; programs will seek to enhance protective factors and reverse or reduce risk factors and shall be aimed at general populations at key transition points and cultural and linguistic competency will be the expectation and the rule.

Prevention Resource Library

An on-line Prevention Resource Library which catalogues gambling prevention materials from across North America and makes these available for public use was introduced in FY08. It is the Council’s goal that the library will serve as a tool for other groups interested in the prevention of problem gambling.

Older Adult Peer to Peer Training Program

As part of the Council’s initiative to prevent problem gambling among older adults, the Council initiated an Older Adult Peer-to-Peer Training Program, which provides population-specific information about problem gambling, as well as suggests ways to facilitate discussions with older adults about the issue. The training is designed to provide information and resources regarding problem gambling in an interactive, informal, and non-clinical format. Training participants learn what gambling is, strategies for effectively managing and lowering one’s risk while gambling, signs that can indicate a potential problem, and how problem gambling affects the gambler and those around him or her, all with a focus on issues specific to older adults. In addition to the basic information on problem gambling, the Council suggests ways to initiate a conversation or intervention with a person with a gambling problem.

“How has it been said that no progress has ever been made against any epidemic by treating only the casualties.”

- Anonymous
2008 HIGHLIGHTS

Your First Step to Change Developments

The Council worked with Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, causermedia, Inc. and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services in 2002 to create Your First Step to Change. The publication serves to help people understand problem gambling, consider if they need to change their gambling behavior, and decide how to deal with the actual process of change. In FY08, the Council worked on some interesting adaptations of Your First Step To Change:

Your First Step to Change Guidebook

• The Council contracted with the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders at the Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School, to develop and disseminate culturally and linguistically accurate translations of Your First Step to Change into Chinese, Vietnamese and Khmer. As a result, a total of 5,180 copies of the guidebooks were produced in Chinese/English, 3,180 copies in Vietnamese and Khmer. The Council distributed the guidebooks to 23 health agencies and community centers serving the targeted Asian populations.
• To prepare for adaptation of Your First Step to Change in Nevada, the Division on Addictions conducted a randomized clinical trial of individuals who reported that they were “concerned” about their gambling behavior. One-hundred-eighty participants were assigned to one of three study groups: no guidebook (control); guidebook only; or, guidebook with a follow-up educational session. Baseline, 1-month, and 3-month gambling behavior and attitudes were then recorded for each participant, as well as other pertinent health-related information. Outcome data suggests that individuals who received the guidebook improved more, and more rapidly than individuals in the control group. The Your First Step to Change brief intervention facilitates rapid reconsideration of gambling beliefs and alterations to gambling activity. This is a promising and relatively cost-effective early intervention for people who are concerned about their gambling.
• Using a process established by the Council and our partners, Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, causermedia, Inc. and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, in creating the guidebook, representatives of the state of Pennsylvania adapted Your First Step to Change for use within that state adding local resources and contact information.

Your First Step to Change was translated into Chinese, as pictured here

Thomas N. Cummings

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The first Thomas N. Cummings research fellowship was awarded to Ryan J. Martin, Ph.D. The fellowship is a joint appointment of the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders at the Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School, and the Council and was named for the Council’s founder, first President and longtime Executive Director, Thomas N. Cummings. The primary focus of the fellowship is to gather and incorporate evidence-based data to inform and enhance Council activities and initiatives. It is funded in part by the National Center for Responsible Gaming, Ryan came to this position from Alabama, where he earned his PhD in Health Education and Promotion at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and served as an Instructor and a Graduate Research Assistant.

Partnership Supports Educating Casino Patrons About Problem Gambling

With a partnership among Mohegan Sun, Sunshine Travel and Quincy Asian Resources, Inc., a short educational video about recognizing signs and symptoms of problem gambling and finding ways to gamble safely was created for travelers to the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut on Sunshine Travel buses from locations in Dorchester, Allston, Boston, Quincy, Methuen, Lawrence, Lowell, Worcester, Lynn and Malden. The video has been produced in Cantonese, and dubbed in Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Khmer with English subtitles. The video informs viewers about the warning signs of compulsive gambling and offers resources for help in the Asian community. The video was presented at the Council’s annual conference, and received much positive feedback. Mohegan Sun casino generously provided a portion of the funding for this unique initiative.

Planning for a Comprehensive Continuum of Problem Gambling Services in Massachusetts

Hosted in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, the Council launched a series of Listening Sessions to help guide the development of problem gambling services in Massachusetts. The first session, A Massachusetts Listening Session with Gambling Treatment Practitioners: Exploring a Continuum of Treatment Services was held on February 15, 2008 and included treatment professionals from Massachusetts, Arizona, Connecticut, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Canada. The group gathered information and data on the continuum of care that exists for problem gambling treatment and explored best practices and gaps in services to inform new directions recommended for Massachusetts.

The second session, A Massachusetts Listening Session with Prevention Professionals: Exploring a Continuum of Prevention Services was held on April 11, 2008. Prevention practitioners from Massachusetts joined experts from Canada, Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and Vermont, for an informative and productive discussion of the existing prevention models and how these can inform problem gambling prevention initiatives in Massachusetts. The final session, Problem Gambling in Massachusetts: Cross Systems Services and Workforce Development was held on June 19, 2008. Leaders of Massachusetts’ state agencies explored the impact of problem gambling within their populations. Participants discussed strategies to diminish the impact of problem gambling on the clientele of state systems through assessing policies, procedures, and screening and identification tools.

Mohegan Sun, Sunshine Travel and Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. partner to develop a video designed for use by bus riders to Mohegan Sun Casino
The prevention team promotes the development of programs designed to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors in individuals and communities through education, capacity building, policy development and early intervention.

High School Outreach Efforts
The Council sought applications from across the Commonwealth and awarded mini-grants of $300 to ten Massachusetts' high schools. The awards supported each school as it began efforts around the prevention of problem gambling. The Council also trained and offered technical assistance to the staff of the three recovery High Schools in Massachusetts and offered Gambling is Not Magic, a live show that uses magic to teach problem gambling prevention concepts. In addition, a ten-hour teacher training on using the curriculum Facing the Odds, The Mathematics of Gambling was held for professionals from three Massachusetts high schools. In addition, two posters were adapted for use and 1,400 copies printed, to assist the high school outreach efforts. The posters attempt to normalize the conversation between peers around problem gambling prevention.

College Outreach
Research has demonstrated that college students have higher rates of disordered gambling than the general adult population. With this fact in mind, the Council reaches out to colleges and universities in Massachusetts, and performed outreach to 17 colleges and universities in FY08. The program offers training and technical assistance to colleges and universities focusing on a systemic approach to problem gambling prevention that involves policy and program development. The program staff has partnered with representatives from the Massachusetts chapter of the New England College Health Association to offer training and technical assistance to local college health personnel. Ads on 140 college radio stations were used to promote the message of responsible gambling and direct college students to their campus resources and the Council for help and materials.

Congregation Assistance Program
The Congregation Assistance Program (CAP) is designed to train teams of three to five members of a congregation to serve as educators and early referral agents in their faith communities regarding alcohol, drug and gambling problems. Participants receive a six hour training and ongoing technical assistance and materials. Latino and African-American churches have been recruited to host six CAP trainings across the state with six Latino and African-American outreach team members as trainers.

Older Adult Outreach
As part of the Council's efforts to reach elders, the video, One Last Bet, was sent to 32 Councils on Aging in Massachusetts. This followed a mailing to 350 Councils on Aging in Massachusetts in which the video was offered with a current list of problem gambling treatment providers and a Senior Problem Gambling Fact Sheet. The Council printed 4,000 Senior Problem Gambling Fact Sheets and produced two posters featuring a problem gambling prevention message targeted to male and female older adults. Designed for use as an educational tool, 2,000 copies of the poster were printed and distributed to councils on aging and other providers serving this population. In addition, through a six-hour peer-to-peer training session developed and delivered to three councils on aging, older adults from these councils are now prepared to act as educators and early referral agents on problem gambling issues to their peers.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS
Representatives from the Council participated in 180 media interviews in FY08, representing an increase of 53% from the 85 media interviews in FY07. One hundred twenty-three interviews were in print and included The Christian Science Monitor, The Boston Globe, The Boston Herald, MetroWest Daily News, Framingham and the Lowell Sun, WBUR, Boston and WRZ. Boston were among the 36 radio station interviews of FY08 and the 21 television interviews included appearances on NBC and NECN.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
The Council created and printed 5,000 inserts to a brochure which details the mission, objectives and programs of the Council. With the insert, the brochure now contains problem gambling prevention information and resources, as well as information on the Council's Asian initiative. In addition, Council staff prepared and printed wallet cards containing the DSM-IV criteria for pathological gambling diagnosis and, two and four question problem gambling screening tools.

PRESS RELEASES
Sixteen e-press releases and e-invitations were disseminated to a list of 1,800. These included press releases developed for The Super Bowl, March Madness and Problem Gambling Awareness Week. The e-format also served to release information on The Massachusetts Problem Gambling Prevention Plan, The Prevention Resource library, and to promote the Council’s annual conference.

The WAGer is a monthly joint publication between the Council and the Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, which summarizes problem gambling research. Once a stand alone publication, the WAGer is now part of a weekly addiction science review entitled The BASIS which was sent to 16,728 individuals in FY08. It can be found on the web at www.basisonline.org.
Massachusetts’ Problem Gambling Specialist Certificate Awarded

The Council, together with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, maintains a Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MAPGS) Certificate and related application. Clinicians who earn the certificate must meet certain requirements in education and time spent working in the addictions field. In addition, in order to earn the MAPGS certificate, the clinicians must participate in 30-hours of gambling-specific training approved by the Council, and are required to have documented clinical supervision regarding problem gambling-specific cases with a clinical supervisor. The annual renewal process requires an additional 7.5 hours of problem gambling-specific training.

Clinicians awarded a MAPGS certificate are authorized by the state to bill the Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services through a contracted problem gambling treatment program for clients unable to pay for treatment. MAPGS clinicians are also able to receive referrals from the Council’s local clinical practices. Finally, the certificate allows clinicians access to all of the newest information, research, and resources the Council has to offer.

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY
Through Council Trainings

Regional Trainings
In FY08, the Council held five regional trainings, with 131 people in attendance. The goal was to equip helping professionals with the tools they need to understand, assess and treat problem gambling, while earning Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Ninety-two percent of participants rated the trainings as “above average or excellent.”

Training topics included:
- Basic Clinical Work with Problem Gamblers: Etiology, Treatment & Recovery
- Prevention of Problem Gambling for Clinicians and Community Agencies
- Incorporating an Understanding of Latino and Asian Gambling & Problem Gambling into Your Clinical Practice
- Facilitating Problem Gambling Clinical Treatment Groups
- The Next Steps in Treating Gambling Disorders: Identifying Comorbidity & Countertransference Issues and Understanding Family Therapy and Self-Help Resources

Online Trainings
The Council also held three online trainings, in which 35 people participated. An 85% rating of “above average or excellent” was attained:
- Recognizing and Managing Countertransference in Problem Gambling Clinical Work (offered in both the spring and the fall)
- The Gambling Brain: How It Works & How to Treat It

On-Site Trainings
The Council conducted 35 trainings on-site at local agencies, organizations and schools, reaching approximately 519 attendees. A sampling of FY08 trainings included presentations to: the Pocasset Department of Mental Health, the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans, the Lowell Department of Social Services, the Chinatown Coalition, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Metta Community Health Center in Lowell, the Southeast Asian Health Task Force at the Lowell Senior Center and race track personnel at Suffolk Downs. A 90% evaluation rating of above average or excellent was attained.

Specialty Trainings
Beyond onsite, regional and online trainings, the Council also offered 22 specialty trainings to over 1,300 people. These trainings include presentations at state, national and international conferences and trainings directed towards a variety of audiences.

Exhibits
Additionally, the Council disseminated information at 17 exhibits throughout the State, including: Suffolk University in Boston, the Northeast Independent Living Program in Lawrence, the Fit Fest Health Fair in Springfield, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Corporation of Massachusetts’ Annual Meeting, the Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival, and the Chinatown August Moon Festival. An estimated 1,700 people were reached via these events.

HELPLINE CALLS & REFERRALS FOR HELP

A total of 1,305 Helpline Calls resulted in 1,080 referrals to Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Problem Gambling Treatment Centers, self-help groups (Gamblers Anonymous, Bettors Anonymous and Gam-Anon), and other services including legal assistance. A consumer satisfaction survey conducted of FY08 calls found that 92% percent of Helpline callers reported finding their experience helpful.

Council staff responded to requests for 314 informational packets. In FY08, 137 packets were sent to people experiencing problems with their own gambling. 141 packets were sent to loved ones or family member of people with gambling problems. 18 packets were sent to professionals seeking to learn more about the disorder, and 18 Your First Step to Change guidebooks were distributed to callers.

WEB SITE

In FY08, Council staff recorded 128,138 visits to its website, an average of 351 visits each day. Approximately 6,000 visitors to the website sought information for people experiencing problems with their gambling, just over 3,700 family members affected by problem gambling sought information, and nearly 3,000 professionals interested in learning more about the field of problem gambling searched the Council’s website.

The Council’s website homepage, prevention pages, and Prevention Resource Library were updated and streaming media capability was added. Updates to the website content took place regularly in FY08. A partnership with www.goodtogether.com was formed to promote Council events.

VOLUNTEERS

Various volunteers have offered their skills, expertise and time in FY08 for a total of 121 service hours. Some volunteers arrived at the Council through Governor Patrick’s SERV initiative (State Employees Responding as Volunteers), others through local organizations or institutions, while yet others shared their personal stories through Council programs and materials. All volunteers participated in projects to assist the Council in achieving its mission and goals.
The Council annually advocates with the executive and legislative branches, as well as other state and local public officials, to ensure services are in place across the Commonwealth to meet the needs of problem gamblers and their families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
The Council’s Board of Directors met its goal to provide effective oversight and governance to the Council through the diversification of its membership. In FY08 the Board of Directors increased by seven members with significant emphasis placed on new expertise.

SUFFOLK DOWNS RACETRACK
The Council worked with the staff of Suffolk Downs Racetrack regarding incorporating problem gambling services at the track and planned with racetrack management for a responsible gambling program.

PROBLEM GAMBLING TREATMENT EXPANSION
The Council assisted the Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services in its evaluation and expansion of the state-sponsored problem gambling-treatment programs. The four programs added in January 2008 were:

• Community Care Services, Taunton
• Noddles Island Multi Service Agency, a program of North Suffolk Mental Health, East Boston
• Project Cope, Lynn
• Team Coordinating Agency, Haverhill

Contributors
The Council is grateful to the following individuals and organizations who have contributed to the Council’s mission through their generous donations in FY08:

Bensinger Dupont
Nancy Cummings
Cheryl Dale
Marilyn Feinberg
Joan Friese
Gamblers Anonymous
Pierre Gabriel
Kevin Grant
Hill, Holiday, Connors,
Cosmopolous, Inc.
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Rodman Ford
Kathleen M. Scanlan
James Spriggs
Ed Talbot
Bruce Tassone
The New England Center
Eric Turner
Rory Winters

The Council’s Board of Director’s Annual Meeting

Council Staff
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Diane Casey Crowley, MSW, Special Projects Director
Kathleen M. Scanlan, MA, Executive Director
Haner Hernandez, PhD, CADACII, LADC1, Assistant Director of Prevention and Programs
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Katie Warner, Prevention Assistant
Marlene D. Warner, MA, Program Director
Jim Wuelfing, CPP-R, NRPP, Prevention Director

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling’s FY08 Members

President
Rodney Hoffman, Esquire, Deutsch, Williams, Brooks, DeRensis and Holland PC, Boston

Treasurer
Edmond Talbot, AdCare Educational Institute, Dartmouth, former Chief of Staff, Bristol County Sheriff’s Dept., Dartmouth

Clerk
Kevin Donohue, MBA, Principal, Donohue Financial Services, Boston

Nancy Cummings, widow of Mass. Council Founder, Thomas N. Cummings

Cheryl Dale, MBA, Principal, DaleBurnham, Brookline

Marilyn Feinberg, MA, LMHC, Clinician in private practice

Pierre Gabriel, Director International Marketing, Foxwoods Casino

Kevin Grant, MPP, Vice President, The Karol Group, Boston

Steve Janssen, Mansfield

Jo-Anne Kane, Worcester

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Kathleen M. Scanlan, MA, Executive Director, Mass. Council on Compulsive Gambling

Bruce Tassone, Boston

Eric M. Turner, MBA, Investor in private practice, former Director of Mass. State Lottery

Rory Winters, MPA, former budget director for Representative Daniel E. Bosley, North Adams
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
June 30, 2008

ASSETS
CURRENT ASSETS:
Cash $ 105,089
Contracts and Grants Receivable $ 92,827
Prepaid Expenses $ 126,346
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS $ 324,262

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:
Machinery and Equipment $ 75,832
Furniture and Fixtures $ 16,662
Software and Website $ 57,199
Total Property and Equipment $ 149,693
Less Accumulated Depreciation $ (72,682)
TOTAL PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT $ 77,011

TOTAL ASSETS: $ 401,273

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
CURRENT LIABILITIES:
Accounts Payable $ 6,355
Accrued Expenses $ 20,904
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt $ 4,728
Loan Payable - Bank -
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES $ 31,987

NET ASSETS:
Unrestricted $ 68,194
Temporarily Unrestricted $ 290,076
TOTAL NET ASSETS $ 358,270

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS: $ 401,273

*THESE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REFLECT INCOME RECEIVED IN FY07 AND RELEASED IN FY08

SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES
June 30, 2008

Sources of Revenue for FY08
Total: $ 1,495,302

Sources of Expenses for FY08
Total: $ 1,416,824
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 prevention, information, education, advocacy, and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones, and the greater community.