Keep Kids Out of Super Bowl Betting
Exposing Children to Sports Betting Could Set the Stage for Addiction

Boston, MA – The Mass. Council on Compulsive Gambling (Mass. Council) is encouraging parents to think twice before allowing their children to participate in gambling activities over Super Bowl Weekend.

“Parents protect their kids from all sorts of dangers and teach them about the consequences of drinking alcohol and why they shouldn’t smoke,” said Marlene Warner, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. “We do our best as parents to address their changing bodies and to encourage safe relationships. Unfortunately, many parents don’t talk about the risks associated with gambling - in fact, some are actually encouraging it.”

“We understand sports betting will still happen in the Commonwealth even though it’s illegal. We want parents to be aware that research has increasingly sounded the alarm about the hazards of allowing children to gamble – even when it seems like innocent entertainment,” said Warner.

Fourteen states now offer legal sports betting, including Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Massachusetts is currently considering legalized sports betting with several bills active in the legislative process. Sports betting is illegal for children in all states.

According to the National Council on Responsible Gambling anywhere from 2 percent to 7 percent of young people experience a gambling addiction, compared to about 1 percent of adults. An estimated 6 to 15 percent of youth have gambling problems that are less severe, while 2 to 3 percent of adults fall into that category.

Nearly 70 percent of Americans aged 14 to 19 years gambled in the past year. They wagered money on poker, sports, the lottery and a variety of other games.
Here are some examples of youth gambling:

- Two students playing basketball in the gym after school bet a dollar on who will make the first three-point shot.
- A 10th-grader forms a betting pool for wagers on football.
- A high-school senior uses his parents’ credit card to gamble online.
- Students play poker on Saturday nights for pennies or for a bigger pot.

According to the American Gaming Association $6.8 billion will be wagered on the Super Bowl this Sunday between the Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49ers. Much of the gambling will happen on illegal online platforms.

If you or a family member may be experiencing a gambling problem, we’re ready to take your call on our confidential helpline 24-hours a day 7 days a week at 1-800-426-1234.

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The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private non-profit health organization dedicated to reducing the social, financial, and emotional costs of problem gambling. The Mass Council is neutral on legalized gambling.