

New Mexico Compulsive Gambling Council

Final Report:

Recommendations to Governor Richardson

July 2009

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Responsibilities of NMCGC.....	2
Participating Entities.....	2
Overview and Background.....	3
Research.....	3
New Mexico Data Report Card.....	3
Funding for Compulsive Gambling Prevention and Treatment Programs.....	5
Prevention.....	10
Treatment.....	13
Training Guide for Gaming Establishment Employees.....	14
Training of Professional and Support Staff.....	15
Gambling Accountability and Transparency Assessment.....	16
Policy and Legislative Development.....	19
Conclusion.....	21

Attachments

- *New Mexico Compulsive Gambling Council Members*
- *1-800# Fact Sheet*
- *New Mexico Fact Sheet*
- *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards*
- *New Mexico Problem Gambling Treatment Standards*
- *New Mexico Responsible Gaming Instructor Guide*
- *Training of Professional and Support Staff*
- *Gambling Accountability and Transparency Assessment*
- *Self Exclusion Program/Legislation*
- *Pre-prosecution Diversion Program/Legislation*
- *Summary of Surveys on Gambling in New Mexico*
- *Pilot Training Evaluation Findings*
- *Memorandum of Understanding (HSD/DOH) with NM Gaming Control Board*

Introduction

The Governor's Task Force on Compulsive Gambling (Executive Order 2005-015, March 2005) laid the ground work that led to the passage of House Bill 267 in the 2006 Legislative Session and the creation of the New Mexico Compulsive Gambling Council (NMCGC).

The New Mexico Council on Compulsive Gambling (the "*Council*") is charged with developing and implementing a New Mexico Strategic Prevention and Treatment Approach to Compulsive Gambling Plan.

Responsibilities of the Council

1. Recommend "standards" based on best practices to the NM Department of Health (DOH) for both the prevention and treatment of compulsive gambling (**attached**)
2. Explore and establish means to collect data on gambling-related behaviors, including bankruptcy, domestic violence and suicide

See DATA REPORT CARD

3. Research, assess and make policy recommendations on voluntary self-exclusion legislation
4. Coordinate efforts between the Department of Health and the Aging and Long-Term Services Department in order to provide educational and prevention programs and materials to the elderly population
5. Collaborate with appropriate state agencies to coordinate data collection efforts through annual surveys, crisis hotlines (referrals), and youth and domestic violence initiatives (1-800# Fact Sheet utilized by CYFD **attached**)
6. Submit an annual report to the Governor and appropriate legislative interim committees regarding key findings of research, data collection and standards development in the areas of professional training for treatment and educational/prevention programs targeting at risk populations (New Mexico Fact Sheet **attached**)

Participating Entities

Members of the Council represent the gaming industry (lottery, race tracks, casinos, and fraternal organizations), behavioral health experts and the general public. Contact names and information for the Council members are **attached**. Members also represent the following entities:

New Mexico Compulsive Gambling Council

National Council on Problem Gambling (New Mexico affiliate)

Responsible Gaming Association of New Mexico (Tribal casinos)

New Mexico Gaming Control Board

Lottery Board Authority

Overview and Background

As with many other states in the US, the increase in legalized gambling opportunities, and states' increased dependence on revenues generated through gambling, has increased the incidence of gambling-related problems in New Mexico. Unfortunately, problem gambling can increase the potential for repercussions in other areas of people's lives, including behavioral, financial and psychological problems. Symptoms of addictive gambling are similar to addictions to drugs and alcohol. These include a loss of control and preoccupation with the activity and denial that a problem exists. By contrast, the public is less aware of problem gambling and problem gambling is easier to hide.

While the issue is being researched around the country, a great need still exists for more research and for the development of accurate survey instruments to identify problem gamblers, measure the incidence of compulsive gambling among the general public, and assess the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs. Research conducted by the National Gambling Impact Study Commission shows that .07% to 4% of the population that gambles can be expected to have a gambling addiction problem. Data review conducted by the Compulsive Gambling Task Force (2005) and the Council identified the following populations as potentially at risk due to problems related to excessive gambling: people with other addictive problems, especially alcohol and tobacco (the correlation with illegal drug use is much lower); Hispanic women (they have the highest incidence of calling help lines, often times for other people); and teens.

Through the development and coordination of statewide educational outreach, the Council has established compulsive gambling prevention efforts that target at-risk teen and adult populations. The Council has established best practice standards by which compulsive gambling prevention and treatment programs statewide should operate. The Council has also worked with the designated statewide entity for behavioral health, ValueOptions New Mexico, to establish training programs for counselors and gaming industry employees. Current certification services are provided by the New Mexico affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NMCPG).

Research

In 2007, the Council initiated measures to establish New Mexico-specific data on the prevalence of compulsive gambling and problems stemming from or related to compulsive gambling.

As a first step, the Council added questions to the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) conducted by the NM Department of Health in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal is to be able to track the incidence of compulsive gambling from year to year. In time, the Council will examine BRFSS data and the prevalence of suicide and bankruptcy among problem gamblers. In addition, the Department of Health conducted a short study through Research and Polling Inc. among people who had filed for bankruptcy and measured the correlation to gambling problems. The results of both surveys are included in the Data Report Card below.

New Mexico Data Report Card

The New Mexico Report Data Card combines data collected in New Mexico since 1996 related to various gambling surveys conducted by the Department of Health, the NM Association of Indian Gaming Study (Indian Gaming Studies) and the University of New Mexico.

Gambling and Problems with Gambling Among Adults in New Mexico	
Indicator	Prevalence Estimate (%)
Proportion of Adults Gambling in the Past Year	67.6%*
Past-year One or More Problems with Gambling	4.0 [†] to 4.9%*
Past-year Problem and Pathological Gambling (3+ problems)	0.8 [†] to 1.3%*
Past-year Pathological Gambling (5 or more problems)	0.3 [†] to 0.6%*
Lifetime Problem and Pathological Gambling	2.2%*
Historical Past-year Problem & Pathological Gambling ('96/'98)	3.9%**

Suicidal Ideation and Suicide Attempts, and Gambling[†]

Gambling Status	Thoughts of Suicide, Past Year Percent (%) (95% CI)	Suicide, Attempt Ever Percent (%) (95% CI)	Suicide, Attempt Past Year Percent (%) (95% CI)
Non-Gamblers	6.0 (4.7 – 7.7)	5.2 (4.1 – 6.7)	0.9 (0.4 – 1.9)
Gamblers w/no Problems	4.8 (3.3 – 6.9)	4.1 (2.8 – 6.0)	0.7 (0.2 – 1.9)
Gamblers w/1+ Problems	14.8 (8.7 – 23.9)	10.9 (6.4 – 17.8)	4.7 (1.9 – 11.1)

Gamblers who reported one or more problems with gambling were significantly more likely to report suicidal ideation, ever having attempted suicide and a suicide attempt in the past year than either non-gamblers or gamblers who reported no problems with gambling.

Bankruptcy and Gambling

History of Bankruptcy by Past-year Gambling Status	
Proportion Ever Filed for Bankruptcy Among:	Prevalence Estimate (%)
Non-Gamblers	8.6% [†]
Gamblers with No Problem Behaviors	7.9%* to 10.9% [†]
Gamblers with One or More Problem Behaviors	9.8% [†]
Gamblers with Three or More Problem Behaviors	6.7% [†]

Gamblers reporting problems with gambling were not more likely to report a history of bankruptcy than non-gamblers or gamblers reporting no problems with gambling.

Two surveys^{†‡} asked respondents for the primary reason that they had filed bankruptcy. Both surveys reported that credit card debt was the most frequently reported reason for bankruptcy and that gambling or problems with gambling was the least frequently reported reason for bankruptcy. It is unknown what percentage of credit card debt is related to gambling, as this question is not on the Bankruptcy Court Survey. The survey of Bankruptcy Court records[‡] estimated that between 2.2% to 7.0% of adults who filed for bankruptcy between August 25, 2005 and October 24, 2006 reported gambling as the primary reason for filing for bankruptcy.

The study conducted by Research & Polling (2006) found that among those who filed for bankruptcy (N = 683), 86% said credit card debt contributed to their financial difficulties. In a separate line of questioning among those who said gambling contributed to their bankruptcy (N = 40), 45% said gambling constituted 0% to 25% of the cause of their financial difficulties and 13% said gambling contributed 26% to 50% of their financial difficulties. At the extreme, 13% said gambling constituted 51% to 75% of the cause of their financial difficulties and 30% said gambling constituted 76% to 100% of the cause of their filing for bankruptcy.

Sources: * R. Volberg, B. Bernhard. Gemini Research, Ltd. June 21, 2006
 † BRFSS, CDC & NM Department of Health. October 2006
 ‡ Bankruptcy Court Survey, NM Department of Health with
 Research & Polling, Inc., October 2006
 ** UNM CASAA, 1996 (with NMDOH) and 1998, data sets
 combined.
 (**Attached** is a *Summary of Surveys on Gambling in New Mexico*
 that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each of the above
 surveys.)

Funding for Compulsive Gambling Prevention and Treatment Programs

Currently, four sources of revenue fund compulsive gambling prevention education and treatment programs: General fund from the State of New Mexico to the Human Services Department, taxation on tribal and non-tribal casinos and the NM Lottery.

- A. State of New Mexico General Fund: In Fiscal Year 2009, the NM Human Services Department (HSD) received \$100,000 for compulsive gambling training and treatment. The funding was sent to ValueOptions New Mexico. Funds have been spent to produce the following (each of which is **attached** and discussed later in the report):

The New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards
New Mexico Problem Gambling Treatment Standards
New Mexico Responsible Gaming Instructor Guide
Training of Professional and Support Staff

These State funds are considered recurring funds, which means that HSD and the Council will work with the new behavioral health statewide entity, OptumHealth New Mexico, to help advise on how the funds should be allocated.

- B. NM Gaming Control Board Regulated Casinos: State law requires gaming institutions regulated by the NM Gaming Control Board to dedicate .25 of 1% of net win to compulsive gambling prevention and treatment programs. In 2008, the net win revenue was approximately \$621,446. The operators currently contributing revenues are Sunland Park Racetrack & Casino, Black Gold Casino – Zia Park, Sunray Park & Casino, Billy the Kid Race Track & Casino (Ruidoso Downs), and The Downs at Albuquerque.

At licensing, casino operators submit a responsible gaming plan to the Gaming Control Board, which receives input (through a Memorandum of Understanding) from DOH and HSD for approval. The board reviews these plans annually for compliance. Currently, most operators contract with the NM Council on Problem Gambling (NMCPG) to train employees of the casinos in awareness and dealing with problem gamblers, to support the NMCPG 1-800 helpline, and to distribute literature on problem gambling. In addition, the operators pay for public service announcements, radio, newspaper and TV time to conduct awareness campaigns, and provide treatment related to compulsive gambling.

- C. Tribal Casinos: According to the Tribal Compacts with the State of New Mexico, tribal casinos are required to spend no less than .25 of 1% of their net win revenue on compulsive gambling treatment, assistance programs and prevention efforts. In calendar year 2008 this amount was approximately \$1,700,000. As part of the compacts, the Tribes – through the Responsible Gaming Association of New Mexico (RGANM) – are required to allocate a portion of the funds to an organization with expertise in providing counseling, intervention and other services for compulsive gambling. Many choose to contract with the NMCPG. Along with the work of the NMCPG, the RGANM has taken other steps to assist problem gamblers such as: training to casino personnel on problem gambling; customer education through signs, posters and brochures; posting of the 1-800 Help Line number; a self exclusionary policy; employee assistance programs; advertising through radio, television and newspaper regarding problem gambling; and the creation of a pilot program for adult women and men who need long-term recovery for gaming addiction.

- D. NM Lottery: Section 6-24-7 (J) NMSA 1978 of the New Mexico Lottery Act states that the NM Lottery Board shall “support problem gambling initiatives and provide information to players about where to obtain problem gambling assistance in New Mexico.” By contract, the New Mexico Lottery pays approximately \$84,000 to the New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling to help provide hotline/helpline services. The lottery also promotes the hotline number as part of a "Play Responsibly" message featured on its tickets, marketing materials and advertising, including a multi-media campaign that airs statewide during National Problem Gambling Week in March. Currently, \$55,000 of the lottery's \$2.2 million advertising budget is committed to problem gambling messages.

New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling:

The New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling (NMCPG) receives funding, in part, from the .25 of 1% tax from the tribal and non-tribal operators and the NM Lottery to conduct compulsive gambling prevention and treatment programs. To date, the NMCPG operates on an annual budget of approximately \$988,000. About \$491,000 of its budget is spent on prevention programs, crisis intervention services, education/training of casino employees and consumers, and the 24-hour helpline. The 24-hour helpline operates seven days a week and provides assistance in both English and Spanish. The NMCPG receives calls from individuals needing information for themselves or their families on how to access help regarding problem or compulsive gambling (see **attached** *Gambling Accountability and Transparency Assessment* – excerpts on page 17 below).

In addition, the NMCPG manages an Indigent Care Treatment Fund funded by the Responsible Gaming Association of NM, which is about \$400,000 yearly. The fund provides treatment services statewide to anyone (inside or outside New Mexico) regardless of race or tribal membership. Treatment services through the NMCPG are provided by certified, licensed and insured therapists, largely in New Mexico, with a few located in surrounding states. All therapists are in good standing with their respective state boards and commissions. In addition, the NMCPG has its own enhanced certification program that provides therapists with additional training specifically around problem gambling.

NMCGC Recommendations:

Single State Oversight Committee and Fund for Compulsive Gambling Prevention and Treatment: The Council recommends the creation of a Single State Oversight Committee that would include (but not necessarily be limited to) state agency representation, public members including those engaged in New Mexico gambling activities, the gaming industry, and tribal representation. The purpose of the oversight committee would be to: create a common mission and message regarding preventing and treating compulsive gambling; create transparency in program effectiveness and how funds are received and spent; coordinate resources to ensure consistency in our approach to compulsive gambling prevention programs and treatment services for consumers and gaming operators; and create and implement uniform programs in prevention and standards in treatment services. In order to facilitate these functions, the Council recommends the creation of an Office of Problem Gambling, which would be housed at the Gaming Control Board. The funding recommended for this would be **\$200,000**.

In 2009, similar recommendations were brought forth in the ***New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards*** (attached and discussed below in the *Prevention* section). The report emphasizes that without infrastructure changes, individual initiatives aimed at preventing problem gambling will have little impact. The report pointed out that New Mexico's problem gambling prevention system lacks adequate, consistent and coordinated funding; lacks an overall governing body; and, collects insufficient data for targeted planning implementation, and evaluation. A set of recommendations are provided to develop New Mexico's infrastructure to address problem gambling prevention. A primary recommendation was to establish a centralized authority for problem gambling efforts whose responsibilities would include overall budgeting, funds distribution, data collection, coordination of program planning, system evaluation and strategic planning among others.

A distinct additional need exists to formalize, make consistent, and create unique and standard statewide programs in the state. For example, having all non-tribal operators submit operator service plans to the new oversight committee for approval would bring the state one step closer to ensuring the use of best practice prevention and treatment programs.

Furthermore, the Council will create a legislative strategy over the next year to create a single state fund for compulsive gambling prevention and treatment, called the Compulsive Gambling Prevention and Treatment Fund. Initial funding would come from the .25 of 1% tax on non-tribal gaming institutions. The fund would be attached to the Department of Health, or eventually to the Office of Problem Gambling if it is created, and all funding dedicated to the fund would flow to the Department of Health. With time, however, the Council encourages the Tribal casinos to consider contributing their net win revenue to the state fund. The newly created Single State Oversight Committee would advise and oversee the distribution of money from the state fund. Funding related

to compulsive gambling treatment services would not initially be sent to the behavioral health statewide entity (OptumHealth New Mexico) to give the Single State Oversight Committee time to assess, learn and make initial recommendations. In time, the Single State Oversight Committee would work with OptumHealth New Mexico to distribute treatment funding.

Excerpts from the *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards* reinforce the recommendations regarding the need for a *Single State Oversight Committee & Fund*:

*“Funds **should be collected and managed centrally in a set-aside budget** to ensure transparency and coordinated efforts that produce maximum impacts. Currently, tribal casinos and private gaming operators designate 0.25% (one quarter of one percent) of their net for Compulsive Gambling Treatment and Prevention efforts but each operator has their own plan, as they choose where and how those funds are distributed. This type of system lacks the coordination necessary to produce meaningful statewide impacts on problem gambling prevention. It is recommended that these funds be transferred into a single account/fund that is administered by a single State authority and that authority earmarks no less than 20% of the expenditures toward problem gambling prevention efforts.*

There is no centralized coordination of efforts in the State, so partners operate on their own. This system is akin to tackling a large fire with individuals wielding buckets of water without the benefit of a coordinated bucket brigade or a command center to strategically maximize resources and employ a set of comprehensive tactics. Information about problem gambling prevention efforts is not readily available, making it difficult to determine who is doing what, which makes coordinated planning and accountability extremely difficult, if not impossible. New Mexico will not be able to achieve the system envisioned in its Problem Gambling Prevention Standards unless efforts are coordinated.

Recommendations:

*“Establish a **centralized authority** for problem gambling efforts whose responsibilities would include overall budgeting, funds distribution, data collection, coordination of program planning, system evaluation and strategic planning, among others. There are several effective models developed by other states. The most common model entails the establishment of a dedicated fund where a single centralized authority has administrative responsibility over that fund. Typically, that administrative authority is with a state department responsible for some facet of public health. Other times the fund is controlled by a state accounting or control office and program administration is contracted out. The most successful models for effectively and efficiently utilizing a problem gambling fund are based on the following principles: (a) strong **stewardship**, (b) **single administrative authority**, (c) **transparency**, (d) **dedicated staff** including a strong administrator, good administrative support, and treatment and prevention*

specialists, (e) collaborative relationships with stakeholder groups including industry, providers, consumers, and allied professionals.”

*“Adopt an overall **implementation planning/program evaluation form** that can be submitted by partners interested in receiving problem gambling prevention funds. Establish and operationalize a timeline for submission and process for evaluation of proposals.”*

NM Veteran and Fraternal Organizations: The Council recommends that NM veteran and fraternal organizations provide to the State (and the newly created State Fund) .25 of 1% of the 10% revenue generated by the 64 veteran and fraternal organizations that are currently taxed. The only veteran and fraternal organizations that would be considered for this recommendation are those hosting gambling activities.

New Mexico Lottery: The Council recommends a thoughtful, objective assessment of what is a fair amount for the New Mexico State Lottery (Board) to contribute for purposes of compulsive gambling prevention programs and treatment services. Furthermore, the Council recommends that serious consideration be given to requiring the New Mexico Lottery Board to change its current formula used in donating funds for compulsive gambling prevention and treatment to be consistent with the requirements placed on the racetracks/casinos and tribal casinos, which is .25 of 1% of net win revenue.

Data Needs Funding Recommendations:

The Council recommends that a study be done to update New Mexico specific prevalence data, at a cost of **\$200,000**. This would include data in a system-wide needs assessment to lead to ongoing planning efforts. Information is needed specific to youth, adults, and the elderly (as recommended in the ***New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards***). These funds should also be used to include questions on youth gambling, using model language developed by other states, in New Mexico’s annual youth survey (as recommended in the ***New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards***).

Prevention

Problem gambling, like many disorders, is a complex condition that appears to emanate from diverse sources including a mix of individual traits, social and economic circumstances, and the overall community environment. Because of the interactional facets of the problem gambling, a strong argument can be made for constructing prevention efforts based on a public health model. Public health approaches incorporate prevention, harm reduction and multiple levels of treatment by emphasizing quality of life issues for the gambler, families and communities. The public health model proposes that problems arise from the interaction and relationship of three critical elements: the host, the agent, and the environment. With regard to gambling, the host is the individual; the environment is the social and physical context in which gambling occurs; and the agent is the gambling device or game itself. This model has demonstrated its

effectiveness and versatility in addressing a broad range of public health concerns that are similar to problem gambling. The goal of problem gambling prevention is to reduce the incidence and prevalence of problem gambling while attempting to reduce the emotional, physical, social, legal, financial, and spiritual consequences of problem gambling for the gambler, the gambler's family and the community at large.

The *Center for Substance Abuses Prevention* promotes a set of prevention strategies (stressing primary prevention – before the problem develops – rather than secondary or tertiary strategies once the problem is identified) that has been shown to be effective in the well-researched area of substance abuse prevention, and mounting evidence suggests these strategies generalize to the area of problem gambling prevention. These prevention strategies include: dissemination of information and increased community awareness; education and skill development; community development; capacity building and institutional change; alternative activities; social policy; and early intervention. It is critical that multiple prevention strategies be used targeting multiple populations in order to create meaningful, sustainable change.

Prevention activities will need to educate all New Mexicans, including youth and teens, about the potential for problem gambling. To avoid duplication, the Council is collaborating with Tribal governments. Currently, the New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling provides training to employees of the gaming establishments and brochures and posters for education of the general public.

General Public – Prevention Recommendations:

A. *1-800 Helpline:* The Council recommends expanding and standardizing the 1-800 helpline into a single statewide 1-800 line for people experiencing gambling-related problems. Every gaming operator, family, problem gambler, treatment provider and the State would use the same 1-800 helpline. The line would be widely publicized in public and private venues, so everyone knows of its existence. The NM Council on Problem Gambling would expand their market efforts of the 1-800 helpline, the 1-800 number will be on the back of every lottery ticket, and tribal casinos would be asked to use the 1-800 number on their responsible gaming materials. Tracking call volume and caller demographics to the 1-800 helpline will enhance the state's ability to measure the success of outreach efforts to help problem gamblers and their families.

B. *Media/Awareness Campaign:* The Council recommends a year-long effective and standard media campaign to include television, radio, billboards and newspaper. The gaming industry, businesses, entertainment venues and the State would use the same messages for repetition and effective awareness efforts. It is recommended that approximately 12% of the state's total allocation for prevention and treatment be devoted to marketing (source: *Association of Problem Gambling Services Administrators* as referenced in the *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards*).

Children and Adolescents – Prevention Recommendations: The Council recommends a youth program now in operation in Lane County, Oregon because it has one of the most

comprehensive prevention programs for school-age children in the country. It includes an evidenced-based school curriculum for health education, special events activities, a video, and poster contests as means of educating youth. The program also has a policy of encouraging schools to exclude gambling from special events and include information on gambling prevention in parent-student handbooks. Within its prevention curriculum, the program provides evidence-based substance abuse literature and information.

The Council has continued to work on prevention recommendations throughout 2009 that include more detail on the type of programs (attached in the *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards*). In addition to the specific examples above, the Council has also reviewed the development of educational outreach programs for parents to inform them of the risks of youth gambling and the development of problem gambling prevention strategies for college students that parallel other programs used to address college aged substance abuse.

Prevention Program Funding Recommendation:

The Council recommends **\$500,000** for prevention programs aimed at youth and seniors as summarized in Appendix A of the *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards (attached)*.

The *New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards (attached)* were created in response to a Letter of Direction from the NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. The directive stated that ValueOptions New Mexico “shall develop and write statewide prevention standards for compulsive gamblers and recommend evidence based prevention programs for various populations in New Mexico . . . “. To complete this directive, VONM contracted with Problem Gambling Solutions, Inc. and formed a Problem Gambling Prevention Workgroup. Problem Gambling Solutions, Inc. was charged with drafting this report under guidance from the Workgroup. The resulting report, “New Mexico Problem Gambling Prevention Standards: Considerations and Recommendations”, was organized into four sections: guiding principles; programming and infrastructure recommendations’ target groups and evidence-based practices; and appendices.

Problem gambling prevention standards are described as a set of guiding principles for providers of problem gambling prevention services. Utilizing these principles and implementing evidenced-based prevention programs hold a great deal of potential for reducing the incidence of problem gambling in New Mexico. However, as stated above in the *NMCGC Recommendations*, the report emphasizes that without infrastructure changes, individual initiatives aimed at preventing problem gambling will have little impact. Issues to be addressed are adequate, consistent and coordinated funding; the establishment of an overall governing body; and, the collection of data for targeted planning, implementation, and evaluation. Recommendations are provided to develop

New Mexico's infrastructure to address problem gambling prevention. A primary recommendation was to establish a centralized authority for problem gambling efforts.

Treatment

Treatment of problem gambling is relatively new field. Consequently, there are no nationally recognized best practices or federally approved medications for pathological gambling. However, there are a number of evidence supported problem gambling treatments, the most common being the use of cognitive-behavioral counseling. Through the funding made available by the gaming industry and the state Human Services Department, New Mexico has the opportunity to make professional treatment available to problem gamblers and their family and identify which approaches are most effective.

Creation of a Standard Training and Certification Program for Counselors/Therapists. The Council has assessed the current certification process provided by the NM Council on Problem Gaming and determined that a statewide standard for counselor training and certification needed to be developed. This effort coordinated the current efforts of the NM Council on Problem Gaming, the Department of Health, the Human Services Department and the work of ValueOptions New Mexico.

The ***New Mexico Problem Gambling Treatment Standards (attached)*** were also created by ValueOptions New Mexico through a contract with Problem Gambling Solutions, Inc. and the formation of a Treatment Standards Workgroup. The development of these treatment standards were in response to a Letter of Direction from the NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. The standards were written in the interest of improving problem gambling treatment and addressing issues of public health and safety by providing guidelines to direct the clinical practice of providers receiving public-funds to treat problem gamblers. The standards were developed to correspond, where appropriate, with (a) the Mental Health Comprehensive Behavioral Health Standards as cited in New Mexico Administrative Code Title 7, Chapter 20, Par 2; (b) the New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling Problem Gambling Counselor Certification requirements; and (c) best practice standards from the problem gambling treatment field at-large. The resulting problem gambling treatment standards set high standards for the provision of problem gambling treatment and provide a well defined and rigorous treatment structure. However, to address all the issues relevant to providing gambling treatment, contract language will need to accompany the practice standards to address administrative items such as reporting requirements, performance measures, oversight methods including onsite reviews and/or utilization review, and reimbursement methods.

Further Treatment Funding Recommendations:

The Council also recommends that gambling specific treatment programs that follow the recently developed standards be funded. Also, the Council recommends that a Treatment Manual be developed in order to implement the new standards. The total funding recommended for both of these items is **\$250,000**.

Creation of a Training Guide for Gaming Establishment Employees.

ValueOptions New Mexico was also tasked with the development of a standardized responsible gaming training program utilizing evidence based approaches for employees working in gambling establishments. To complete this task, VONM contracted with Problem Gambling Solutions, Inc. and formed a Training Workgroup. Problem Gambling Solutions, Inc. was charged with creating a draft training curriculum under guidance from the Workgroup.

The resulting training guide (**attached**) included two versions of responsible gaming training -- one for line employees of gaming establishments and the other for managers supervisors. The purpose of the training curriculum was to increase employee recognition of problem gambling among patrons, to engage in practices that promote responsible gaming, and to direct patrons with gambling problems to appropriate resources. Front line employees at problem gambling behaviors in patrons so as to alert their supervisors to these individuals. A more extensive training was developed for supervisory and management personnel at casinos, whose responsibilities include approaching the identified individual to offer immediate crisis management or treatment referral.

The guide provides an overview sheet identifying the main sections of the trainings what it takes to put those on; it further provides all of the PowerPoint slides and a script that indicates what should be said; finally, handout masters are also included. The author recommends that modifications can and should be made where organization-specific information is available. Training for managers/supervisors begins with the employee level information, then proceed to the manager/supervisor level.

The Training of Trainers (TOT) version of the program was designed to be taught by a counseling professional with experience in working with problem gamblers. The TOT should be presented to appropriate casino staff with capabilities to train the materials back at their workplace, and who can appropriately respond to questions and concerns. The manager/supervisor version should be taught by a management level casino employee. Modifications to make the materials specifically applicable to the casino sponsoring the training are recommended by the author.

The training curriculum has been tested and vetted among representatives from New Mexico casinos and current responsible gaming trainers (Pilot Training Evaluation Findings **attached**). This process is designed to further the development of the curriculum and an implementation process. The potential of on-line training is also an area that the Council recommends for additional development. Recommended funding for this is **\$250,000**.

Training of Professional and Support Staff

ValueOptions New Mexico in partnership with the NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative developed specific training activities (**attached**) to establish a foundational understanding of assessing and treating gambling-related disorders. The activities promoted the concepts that inform and shape prevention and treatment strategies and interventions when working with individuals who have gambling addiction issues. The information presented discussed the current research and practices that specify and support the identification and evidence of positive outcomes in the treatment of gambling-related disorders. ValueOptions New Mexico recruited national qualified speakers for the institute.

The target audience was mental health and substance abuse therapists/counselors, case managers, prevention specialists, school-based health staff and educators, all prevention program managers, city and county managers of senior programs, state epidemiology staff, Aging and Long Term staff, AARP, criminal justice, home healthcare and senior center staff, consumers, psychologists, psychiatrists, primary care staff, members of the Collaborative and any other interested community members.

The institute was designed in two parts. Part I included a fundamental view of problem gambling;

1. Gambling: The Hidden Addiction
2. Assessment & Treatment Protocol for Pathological Gamblers with Dual Addictions
3. Gambling based on the behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
4. Best/Promising Practices in the Treatment of Problem Gambling
5. Money: Therapeutic Strategies for Gambling Treatment

Part II included a more in depth view of problem gambling:

1. 2006 Study of Gambling & Problem Gambling in New Mexico
2. Cultural Consideration and a Cognitive Model of Addictions: Identifying Rumination in Pathological Gamblers.
3. Gambling Among Older Adults
4. Adolescence, the Developing Brain, and Gambling
5. Environmental Strategies and Prevention of Problem Gambling

Program Effectiveness

135 evaluations from 162 attendees (83%) were returned. Six evaluations indicated a Doctoral level of education; eighty indicated a Masters level of education; thirty-one indicated a Bachelors level of education; eighteen indicated no degree or other. Each attendee was asked to rate the training and overall effectiveness from 1 (low) to 5 (high). The average overall effectiveness ratings was 4.1

Those attending were asked to choose two reasons for taking the opportunity to attend the Institute. The top four reasons for attending were: advance my knowledge, learn new concepts, learn new approaches, increase my self-awareness.

Following the institute ValueOptions New Mexico proposed the following recommendations to the NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative for ongoing training and adoption of the institute:

- 1) Ongoing training of professional and support working in the area of compulsive gambling is needed in the New Mexico system of care network. Institutes on the treatment and prevention of gambling addictions must continue in an effort to develop the workforce capacity and meet the increased need. It is therefore recommended that an annual institute be sponsored by the Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative.
- 2) We support standardize training of all employees of gaming establishments throughout New Mexico as this segment of the population by percentage is the group displaying the highest number of persons with compulsive gambling issues.
- 3) Treatment standardized competencies for the delivery of treatment services to individuals with gambling addictions is highly recommended.

Statewide prevention strategies must be implemented to reduce the incidents of gambling addictions. These strategies may be implemented to target communities at large, youth and the school communities.

Gambling Accountability and Transparency Assessment

ValueOptions New Mexico contracted with UNM CASAA (Center for Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Addictions) for a comprehensive assessment of the services currently available in New Mexico for gambling -- specifically treatment services, service provider training, and crisis hotline -- to encourage responsible gaming. The three components of the study (**attached**) are summarized below.

Treatment Results

“Little is known about the availability and level of practice for treatment of problem gambling behavior in New Mexico, even though the prevalence of gambling is prominent in the state. In order to determine the types of treatment services available for problem gambling in New Mexico, a survey was conducted by the Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions (CASAA) at the University of New Mexico....The purpose of the current study was to provide a comprehensive description of treatment services available in New Mexico for problem gambling in relation to the evidence base and any existing standards.

In sum, this study provided a description of current treatment services that are available to people with gambling problems. Of positive note, many therapists reported seeing patients soon after a referral and providing them with a broad range of services including individual therapy, crisis intervention, medication consultation, and group therapy. Also, most therapists said they used cognitive-behavioral therapy in their work, which to date is a treatment modality that has received the most empirical support in the field of problem gambling. Other encouraging findings included the level of care therapists reported using with suicidal patients, the treatment options for significant others of gamblers, and the availability of Spanish-speaking therapists. On the other hand, the limitations that were noted included the use of therapy modalities with limited efficacy (e.g., EMDR) and the deficiencies in clinical assessment and outcome evaluation of gambling and other disorders.”

Treatment Services Provider Training

“The purpose of this part of the study was to describe the training programs that are available in New Mexico to treatment providers working with problem gamblers. These programs were examined in relation to current national standards. Some of the representatives who lead the training efforts in the state were interviewed. Relevant documents (e.g., conference brochures) were also reviewed to supplement the interviews.

In sum, there are sufficient local opportunities for treatment providers to receive training and education in the field of problem gambling. Professionals can easily complete the education requirements of NCGC-I [National Certified Gambling Counselor-I] or the NMCPG [New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling] by attending the training programs and conferences offered by the NMCPG, the Evolution Group, and/or the RGANM [Responsible Gaming Association of New Mexico]. Despite the high rates of attendance at these trainings, very few therapists complete the certification process. While more therapists in general may be more attuned and sensitive to problem gambling because of these trainings, there is a need for more certified gambling counselors, especially in areas outside of Albuquerque. Perhaps individuals conducting the gambling trainings can inform participants about the certification process to increase interest and awareness. Moreover, national standards require that a process of re-certification be upheld every three years. All professionals must complete CEUs at regular intervals to stay up-to-date with the most current and relevant information in the field. Certified gambling counselors should not be excluded from re-certification, especially since the field of gambling is just emerging and expanding. Finally, this study was descriptive and the aforementioned training programs were not systematically evaluated. Some of the organizations have obtained participant feedback regarding the presentations and have anecdotally received high marks. Future work can review this feedback and perform other evaluations to examine the basis, utility, and efficacy of current training programs.”

The New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling Crisis Hotline

“The NMCPG manages a 24-hour crisis hotline in English and Spanish (1-800-572-1142). The hotline is posted at various casinos, fraternal organizations, and on lottery cards. It is also advertised on television and radio media. The hotline serves people with gambling problems and the relatives or significant others of problem gamblers. Callers may receive informational materials (e.g., a booklet on Personal and Financial Strategies for Loved Ones of Problem Gamblers), Gamblers Anonymous meeting schedules, and/or referrals to certified treatment providers.

The purpose of this part of the study was to describe the recent utilization of the New Mexico Council on Problem Gambling (NMCPG) hotline and the referral outcomes of the calls. Some of the representatives of the NMCPG hotline were contacted to obtain relevant information. Also, hotline data from September 2007 to August 2008 were reviewed and analyzed.

In sum, the NMCPG hotline is widely advertised and it receives hundreds of calls a month. Callers to the hotline can expect to receive helpful information and resources for gambling problems. One of the most helpful resources the hotline offers is the network of treatment providers that the NMCPG has established and which the Responsible Gaming Association of New Mexico funds. These resources are available to both gamblers and their significant others.

NMCPG representatives may want to consider advertising the hotline in different settings to expand outreach to different groups. To illustrate, Cuadrado (1999) found that Latinos were more likely to find a gambling hotline number on the inside cover of a phone directory and Whites were more likely to learn of it from GA. Other venues that may be considered to increase awareness of the hotline by different ethnic and age groups include churches, community centers, senior centers, and non-profit organizations that work with these groups.

As seen in the data, there is a significant discrepancy between the total number of calls received (N=9,544) and the total number of crisis calls (N=488) during the 12-month period of September 2007 to August 2008. In other words, approximately 5% of the total calls received were from individuals asking for help for their gambling problems or for those of a loved one. Out of these crisis calls, 401 callers were referred to a counselor and 33% of these individuals made the initial call to the counselor. While the total volume of calls may indicate that many people are aware of the NMCPG hotline, the aforementioned discrepancy may indicate the need to find more effective ways to motivate callers to get help.”

Policy and Legislative Development

The Council assisted in the introduction and successful passage of the following legislation pertaining to compulsive gambling policy initiatives in the 2009 legislative session.

Self-Exclusion Program:

In 2009, the Council proposed legislation that was passed by the New Mexico Legislature and signed by the Governor (**Senate Bill 229 -- attached**), which outlined a specific process for an individual to seek self-exclusion from all non-tribal casinos, racinos (horse or greyhound race tracks that have casinos), licensed nonprofits and bingo enterprises, and the lottery within New Mexico. (The Tribes and Pueblos have a self-exclusion program in place.) The legislation only allows individuals to seek their own exclusion from gambling environments. A family member, friend or business associate cannot seek the exclusion for another family member, friend or business associate. Inherent in the self-exclusion process is the recognition that self-excluded people recognize that they have a gambling problem and must have internal motivation to address the problem. The self-exclusion legislation also includes a mandatory “hold harmless” release in favor of the State, the New Mexico Gaming Control Board and the licensed casinos and lottery from the self-excluded person’s violation of the self-excluded order.

Below are relevant excerpts from Senate Bill 229:

“60-2E-34.1. SELF-EXCLUSION FROM GAMING

ESTABLISHMENTS—PROCEDURE—FINES—CONFIDENTIALITY,—

- A. The board [Gaming Control Board] shall develop rules that permit a person who is a compulsive gambler to be voluntarily excluded from a gaming establishment.
- B. Self-exclusion shall occur through written application made by the compulsive gambler to the board and shall be governed by the following provisions:
 - (1) self-exclusion shall be enforceable upon issuance of a self-exclusion order by the board to each self applicable gaming establishment identified in the order;
 - (2) only the person who is the compulsive gambler may apply on that person’s behalf;
 - (3) the application shall be submitted to the board;
 - (4) except for notification of the gaming establishments for which the self-exclusion order is effective and for notification for mailing list exclusion pursuant to this section, the application and the self-exclusion order shall be held confidential by employees of the board and a gaming operator licensee and its employees and key executives;
 - (5) a self-exclusion order may apply to one or more gaming establishments licensed pursuant to the Gaming Control Act;
 - (6) a self-excluded person, if present at a gaming establishment from which the person is excluded, shall forfeit the following to that gaming establishment, provided that

all money or other property forfeited shall be used by the gaming establishment only to supplement the one-fourth percent of the net take of its gaming machines to fund or support programs for the treatment and assistance of compulsive gamblers pursuant to Subsection E of Section 60-2E-47 NMSA 1978:

(a) all winnings of the person obtained while present at the gaming establishment; and

(b) all credits, tokens or vouchers received by the person while present at the gaming establishment;

(7) a gaming establishment is immune from liability arising out of its efforts to exclude a person identified in a self-exclusion order; and

(8) a specific term shall be set for each self-exclusion order.

C. Notice shall be submitted by the board at least monthly to all gaming establishments listing all persons who are currently self-excluded and ordering the removal of their names from direct mail or electronic advertisement or promotional lists.

D. The state gaming representative may negotiate an agreement with each tribal casino in the state to allow the state to include tribal casinos in the self-exclusion orders.”

Pre-prosecution Diversion Program:

Compulsive gamblers have an enormous need for funds to continue to place bets or to pay off gambling debts. Some will go to extremes to get such funds. The costs to society of such problem gamblers go beyond immediate family, friends or business associates. The costs impacts communities on many levels, including increased costs to the criminal justice system associated with crimes committed to further the compulsive gambler’s addiction.

The Council recommended **Senate Joint Memorial 17 (attached)**, which passed the 2009 New Mexico Legislature, to minimize the negative social costs associated with minor criminal activity by removing the problem gambler accused of criminal activity from the criminal justice system and diverting him/her into a state-sponsored gambling treatment program. The Joint Memorial requests that the district attorneys make every effort to place defendants who are accused of committing nonviolent offenses that result from the defendant’s underlying gambling addiction in pre-prosecution diversion programs.

Pre-prosecution diversion (i.e., therapeutic justice) can be a solution to minimizing the negative social costs and free up our overly burdened criminal justice system. Gambling addictions may result in crimes which can have a long-term effect on the individual’s life. Rehabilitation has a more positive effect than incarceration, and can greatly reduce the social cost of gambling addiction.

Conclusion

New Mexico is not alone in its efforts to identify ways to assist individuals and families facing problems caused by compulsive gambling. With the increased availability of gambling throughout the nation, more and more jurisdictions are taking up the challenge of creating effective educational prevention campaigns and effective treatment programs. While the large majority of citizens will never encounter a problem with gambling, those who do generate a ripple effect of disastrous consequences in their families and communities. Through its current work, the Council has the opportunity to lay the groundwork for managing compulsive gambling for the benefit of current and future generations.