

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATING PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG LOCAL PURVEYORS OF NON-LOTTERY GAMBLING

Julie Hynes, M.A.  
Problem Gambling Prevention Coordinator  
Lane County Health & Human Services



September 2006

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations to mitigate the effects of problem gambling as projected to occur with non-lottery gambling purveyors, including social gaming venues and the Three Rivers Casino. Since increased access to gambling is shown to increase the incidence of problem gambling, attention should be given to mitigate the impact of problem gambling in order for any new gambling establishments to be viewed by the local community as interested in the health and well-being of the community.

This report does not include recommendations specific to lottery retailers, since Oregon Lottery retailers are already subject to the regulations of the Oregon Lottery, and Oregon Lottery invests 1% of its proceeds to minimize the negative effects of Lottery products. While this report does not address Lottery retailers, it is believed nonetheless that all gambling establishments can support, and be assisted by, local efforts to be responsible purveyors of gambling.

While the vast majority of people gamble with few or no negative consequences, problem gambling is an emerging public health issue that produces serious costs to individuals, families, and communities. In Oregon, more than 60,000 adults and 10,000 youth, ages 13-17 meet the criteria for problem or pathological gambling<sup>1, 2</sup>. In Lane County, an estimated 6,000 adults and over 1,000 youth meet the criteria for problem or pathological gambling.

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission and other groups have provided guidance on what measures can be taken to minimize the impact of legalized gambling within a community. From this knowledge base, it is recommended that policies of any new gambling establishment include language that addresses (1) access to care and effective resources for those affected by problem gambling, (2) protection of vulnerable populations from gambling-related harm, (3) establishment of measures that limit harm to those already engaged in

---

<sup>1</sup> Moore, T. (2001). *The prevalence of disordered gambling among adults in Oregon: A secondary analysis of data*. Salem, OR: Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Carlson, M.J., & Moore, T.L. (1998). *Adolescent Gambling in Oregon: A Report to the Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation*. Salem, OR: Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATING PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG LOCAL PURVEYORS OF NON-LOTTERY GAMBLING

gambling behavior, (4) the promotion of informed and balanced attitudes, behaviors and policies, and (5) support for continued monitoring and research related to the effects of the above recommended measures.

## Recommendations

### **1. Provide access to care and effective resources for those affected by problem gambling in Lane County.**

Social gaming (which to date overwhelmingly includes poker rooms) in Lane County is a recent trend, and the opening of the Three Rivers Casino was in 2004. Both are new to the area and we do not have any current data, nor funding to investigate, to show the relationship of social gaming or the casino on problem gambling rates in Lane County. However, while it is challenging to estimate the exact increase of problem gamblers due to a casino, the following data are worth considering:

- From 1997-2003, the distribution of Oregon gambling treatment clients reporting casino gambling steadily rose from 10.2% of clients to 17.5% of clients (T.L. Moore, personal communication, December 30, 2003)
- Oregon gambling treatment programs within about 50 miles of a casino are approximately three times more likely to have casino gamblers than programs not in proximity to a casino (T.L. Moore, personal communication, December 30, 2003)
- The availability of a casino within about 50 miles is associated with approximately double the prevalence of problem and pathological gambling<sup>3</sup>.

Due to the anticipated increase in problem gambling rates in Lane County, an increase is expected in number of people seeking treatment for problem gambling issues. Currently only about three to five percent of problem gamblers in Oregon seek treatment for problem gambling (J. Marotta, personal communication, October 28, 2003).

Oregon gambling treatment is currently funded entirely through the Oregon Lottery. Because of anticipated increases in problem gambling prevalence with a new casino in the Florence area, we would recommend that social gaming outlets and the casino help fund problem gambling treatment services in Lane County. This could be achieved by contributing a percentage of gaming proceeds through a community fund toward the Oregon Problem

---

<sup>3</sup> National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, Gemini Research, The Lewin Group, & Christiansen/Cummings Associates. (1999, April). *Gambling Impact and Behavior Study: Report to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission*. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATING PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG LOCAL PURVEYORS OF NON-LOTTERY GAMBLING

Gambling Services contracted treatment agency in Lane County (currently the Emergence Meridian Gambling Treatment Program).

## 2. **Protect vulnerable populations from gambling-related harm.**

Since gambling is highly available with increasing exposure, a special emphasis should be placed on prevention of problem gambling behavior. The prevention of problem gambling should be aimed simultaneously at the general public and at “vulnerable” populations, which research shows includes youths, college populations, older adults, and ethnic minority groups<sup>4, 5, 6</sup>.

Prevention offers potentially the most cost-effective approach to limiting gambling-related problems. Due to limitations in prevention staff time and resources, it is reasonable and socially responsible for new gambling establishments to help fund problem gambling prevention and/or outreach services in Lane County. Examples of prevention services in this setting could include, and should not be limited to: training for professionals, prevention education to youth, consumer education, specialized outreach services to vulnerable populations, and collaboration with a advisory committee on responsible gambling policies. Lane County Health & Human Services offers its partnership, information, and technical assistance to any such efforts.

## 3. **Limit harm to those already engaged in gambling behavior.**

Strategies should be made available to limit harm to people who are already involved in gambling. Services such as help-lines that provide information on problem gambling and other informative products should be visible in all gambling areas. Intervention training should be offered to gambling venue staff to help recognize signs of problem gambling. Other measures aimed at reducing the development of problem gambling should also be considered, such as the availability and locations of alcohol sales and voluntary self-exclusion policies for self-identified problem gamblers.

## 4. **Promote informed and balanced attitudes, behaviors and policies.**

It is the view of this program that, though a small percentage of persons who gamble develop a problem, disordered gambling is a significant public health

---

<sup>4</sup> Carlson, M.J., & Moore, T.L. (1998). *Adolescent Gambling in Oregon: A Report to the Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation*. Salem, OR: Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation.

<sup>5</sup> Moore, T., Jados, T. (2002). *The Etiology of Pathological Gambling: a Study to Enhance Understanding of Causal Pathways as a Step Towards Improving Prevention and Treatment*. Wilsonville, OR: Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> Moore, T., Jados, T., Carlson, M. (2000, May). *Findings and Recommendations for the Strategic Plan: Identification, Prevention, and Treatment of Disordered Gambling in Multnomah County*. Portland, OR: Behavioral Health Division, Multnomah County.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATING PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG LOCAL PURVEYORS OF NON-LOTTERY GAMBLING

issue that merits social responsibility among all, in addition to adequate attention and resources by gambling purveyors. We recommend an ongoing advisory committee on responsible gambling policy that is comprised of a variety of sectors, such as: local card houses, the tribes, casino representatives, public safety, problem gambling prevention and treatment, and other social services.

#### **4. Support continued monitoring and research.**

As a basis for informed policy decisions, an appropriate methodology needs to be developed for evaluating the costs and benefits of gambling activities. There is a need for regular monitoring and other data collection on gambling patterns and problems and for systematic development, testing and application of improvements in treatment and prevention modalities and policy initiatives. As information is developed, it should be made publicly available.

#### Consultants:

Jeffrey J. Marotta, Ph.D.  
Problem Gambling Services Manager  
Oregon Department of Human Services

Thomas L. Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation