

Survey Sponsored To Help Determine Problem Gambling Rate

Determining Missouri-specific problem gambling statistics is the goal behind adding three questions to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey that began this month. Members of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling are funding the addition of the problem gambling questions to the survey.

With assistance provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services conducts the BRFSS survey every year by randomly calling more than 4,500 Missouri residents during the year. The questions asked are related to health behaviors, screening, quality of life, mental health, impairment and access to health care and insurance.

The objective of the BRFSS gambling questions is to determine state-specific indicators of the presence of problem gambling. According to Keith Spare, chairman of the Alliance, data from the Missouri BRFSS survey, which is expected sometime during the summer of 2005, would be

the starting point for sound scientific research of the scope of problem gambling in Missouri.

From national studies, the anticipated prevalence rate of pathological gambling should be between .6 to 1.5 percent. If the Missouri BRFSS survey results demonstrate a variance that is significantly different from the national studies, Missouri's regulators and policy makers would have a basis for further research and for obtaining additional resources to address problem gambling in the state.

The data also is expected to provide additional information about problem gambling issues relative to demographics. The data should indicate if there are special problem sub-group populations that are outside the expected norms. This information, too, can be used to ensure problem gambling services and programs are available where needed.

Currently, only two other states – Iowa and Massachusetts – include problem gambling questions in their statewide BRFSS surveys.

University's Prevention Guru Launches Statewide Problem Gambling Program

Kim Dude's 21-year dedication to the well-being of college-aged students has never stopped evolving. Her commitment led to the establishment of the University of Missouri-Columbia's (UMC) Wellness Resource Center, a statewide partnership among public colleges and universities and now, a statewide study, training and the production of resources on problem gambling issues.

The former junior high speech and drama teacher said it didn't take long to realize that teaching wasn't for her. She did, although, have a desire to work with young adults. She eventually became the administrator for residential life on the UMC campus.

"My goal has always been to help students be successful and to help them make better choices," Dude said.

Through her work in residential life, Dude said she often saw students struggling with a variety of issues from alcohol abuse to eating disorders and felt more education about these issues was needed. After receiving permission from the University, Dude applied for and received a federal grant to establish the Wellness Resource Center, the main prevention office on campus. In addition to federal money, the Center now also receives funding from the University and the

Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA).

The Wellness Resource Center recently was recognized as being one of the top three prevention programs in the country and also is recognized as being a model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Education. This past November, Dude was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to the Field award by the U.S. Department of Education.

"Much of our time is spent on alcohol abuse prevention, but we also provide programs on a variety of different issues including eating disorders, self-esteem, illegal drugs, healthy relationships, stress, money management and body image," Dude said. "We train peer educators who volunteer their time to go out to classrooms, residence halls, Greek houses and local high schools to help educate students about these issues."

The Wellness Resource Center also sponsors major awareness events such as "Alcohol Responsibility Month," "Safe Spring Break" and "Safe Holiday Break." Dude said it was her work with students on money-management issues that made her aware of problem gambling among college students.

"As tuition goes up, more students are taking out significant student loans, and they have to deal with financial stresses and credit issues that they didn't have before," she said. "Gambling is adding to that stress for some of our students."



Kim Dude

Message From Alliance Chairman
Keith Spare

MISSOURI ALLIANCE
 TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

Since early in 2003, something special has been happening. Representatives from four states have been working together to plan the first Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse. Mark your calendars now for Aug. 11-13. By the way, that is Friday the 13! It would be unlucky for you not to attend. The conference will be at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City.

The conference opens with a forum including a panel of noted experts. They include: Howard Shaffer, director of the Division of Addictions at Harvard Medical School; Bo Bernhard, director of Gambling Research at the University of Las Vegas-Nevada; Deborah Haskins, director of Masters Field Education in Psychology for Loyola College in Maryland; Jeff Graber, director of surveillance at Harrah's Casino in Council Bluffs, Iowa; and Joanna Franklin, director of Network Development and Training at Trimeridian.

The panel and forum will discuss barriers to appropriate treatment, possible solutions and the anticipated future of problem gambling prevention and treatment relative to the mental health and substance abuse system. Whether you are a family member, concerned community representative, treatment professional, recovering gambler or a gambler who wants to be in-the-know, your participation in the forum is vital to getting at the issues and helping these noted experts tell us what we should and could be to curb problem gambling and substance abuse in our region.

And the good stuff doesn't stop there. Howard Shaffer, the keynote speaker on Aug. 12, will be addressing Problem Gambling and Co-occurring Disorders. On the morning of Aug. 13, the keynote speaker will be Bill Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at the University of Nevada-Reno. Other topics addressed throughout the conference are: African-American issues, rural issues, the casino industry's response to substance abuse and problem gambling, Native Americans and problem gambling, Hispanic and Latino issues, the lotteries' response to problem gambling, older adults, families and addictions and many others. All of the discussions focus on the conference theme and will be of interest to individuals who are concerned about problem and compulsive gambling and substance abuse.

This rich array of subjects and speakers began with the leadership provided by the Nebraska Council on Problem Gambling and the Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program. Tim Christensen and Jerry Bauerkemper, both of Nebraska, initiated the plans, and they quickly became an event that benefited from the commitment of four states and their leadership. The states are Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri.

An interesting note about the coalition is that we worked together as a team and submitted a funding proposal to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to receive funds through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant. The notice of funding has not yet been given, but the score from the review committee was 92 out of 100. A score of 90 to 100 is described as representing an outstanding proposal that was thorough, comprehensive and clear. The team is to be congratulated.

More about the conference will follow. Late in March, the entire finalized brochure will be on the www.888BETSOFF.com Web site. In the interim, questions can be directed to Melissa Stephens, problem gambling program administrator for the Missouri Gaming Commission, at (573) 526-4080.

Prevention Guru continued from page 1

While she believes some students, who are 21 years of age, are visiting the riverboat casinos, Dude said college students are more likely to be involved in illegal sports betting and gambling on the Internet.

This past fall, the Wellness Resource Center received a grant for \$19,920 from the Port Authority of Kansas City and the Missouri Gaming Commission to enable the center to provide training and coordinate a statewide problem gambling program for college students. The center will assist with the evaluation of problem gambling on campuses and provide resources for schools to use to educate students about problem gambling.

Dude, who is the founder and project director of Missouri Partners In Prevention (PIP), said PIP provides a partnership between all 12 of the state colleges and universities, which will be used to broaden the problem gambling program.

"Before I wrote the grant, I did a needs assessment with (other colleges and universities), and they all felt like it was a problem, but they didn't know to what extent," Dude said.

According to Dude, the PIP program will include three basic elements: determining the extent of problem gambling among college students through a health survey in February; completing a workshop and possibly providing training at the PIP "Meeting of the Minds" annual spring conference to train school personnel on how to address the issue; and creating a flier or brochure for college students on problem gambling.

"In comparison to alcohol, gambling isn't that big of a problem," she said. "But with this grant, we'll be able to establish the extent of the problem and create resources to help deal with it. We will be training peer educators on this, as well. My staff is excited about the grant because they want to learn more to better help students."

A day-long problem gambling training session is planned on March 5 for college and university prevention professionals from throughout the state.

Although she tends to "live and breathe" her work in the Wellness Resource Center, Dude, who is a wife and mother of a college-aged son and 12-year-old daughter, credits her staff and the prevention professionals at the other colleges and universities for the success of both the center and PIP.

"This all works because of the tremendous group of people that work with me at all the other colleges and my wonderful staff," she said. "We couldn't do it without the funding from ADA and our other sources."

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Six-Year Program Comparisons

	Bets Off Help Line	Voluntary Exclusion	Free Treatment
1998	871	356	54
1999	1,034	596	113
2000	1,738	1,093	186
2001	2,846	1,403	335
2002	2,889	1,290	373
2003	3,339	1,367	344



Possible Revision To The Exclusion Program Studied

A review of the lifetime ban for participants in the Missouri Gaming Commission's Voluntary Exclusion Program or List of Disassociated Persons (DAPs) is being conducted to determine whether additional time frames should be offered to individuals seeking to ban themselves from Missouri's casinos.

During a January meeting of the Missouri Legislature's Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering, Kevin Mullally, executive director of the Missouri Gaming Commission, said Commission employees are currently investigating a proposal to revise the ban-length option for the statewide Voluntary Exclusion Program.

"It is important to note that the Commission is not considering repealing the lifetime exclusion for individuals on the DAP list," Mullally said. "Rather, the Commission is investigating the feasibility and desirability of offering additional choices, in addition to a choice of a lifetime ban, to maximize the benefit of the program for problem gamblers."



Kevin Mullally

According to Mullally, the Commission continually monitors ongoing problem gambling research and the needs expressed by Missouri residents to the Commission. A revision to the program would only be proposed after the Commission has investigated the available research and evidence to determine whether the proposed revision would be in the best interest of the state's residents.

Mullally said a recent revision to the DAP program, which now allows DAP participants to access the casinos solely for job-

related purposes, allows these individuals to continue to work and participate in the exclusion program. Prior to this revision, problem gamblers were forced to choose between their livelihood and participating in a program that could help them recover.

The Commission's Problem Gambling Program administrator, Melissa Stephens, said since the program began in 1996, the Commission has received a number of requests from individuals seeking to ban themselves from all Missouri casinos for a limited period of time. These requests often come from individuals in recovery from another addiction/compulsive behavior, someone with a family history of addiction, or other predisposing risk factor.

"Typically these individuals are going through a traumatic life event — such as divorce, loss of a loved one, relocation or job loss — and know that they are vulnerable to gambling in a destructive manner during this critical time period," Stephens said. "Although these individuals may not meet the diagnostic criteria for a pathological gambler, they are concerned about their vulnerability to developing a problem with their gambling activity and would like to seek the use of a self-exclusion tool until they have regained balance in their life."

Stephens also explained that the Commission has received a number of inquiries from individuals who are concerned about their destructive gambling behavior, but who are not yet ready to commit to a lifetime ban. The availability of a time-limited ban may be very beneficial to these individuals as well.

"A time-limited ban may be a stepping-stone that helps the individual work a recovery program in a more effective manner," she said.

Mullally said the current research on problem gambling, recovery and self-exclusion programs indicates numerous benefits from offering a range of choices rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach. He said the Commission is continuing to review the research as it is released.

"We are also evaluating potential drawbacks, as well as the feasibility of offering a choice of pre-determined self-exclusion time frames," he added.

"There are no plans to terminate the lifetime ban," Mullally said. "The Commission is merely investigating whether it is possible to offer additional choices that may increase the usefulness of the program for individuals who may not yet be pathological gamblers, but who are concerned about their gambling behavior."

If a revision to the Voluntary Exclusion Plan is proposed by the Commission, at least one public hearing will be held, as well as a period for public comment. In addition to the public hearing, the Commission is seeking public input through a survey on the possible revised change to the exclusion program. Visit www.mgc.dps.mo.gov/frameaset.html for more information.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the Commission by e-mailing Melissa Stephens at mstephen@mail.state.mo.us or by calling (573) 526-4080.

2002/2003 1-888-Betsoff Help Line Calls

	2002	2003
January	254	269
February	211	305
March	241	270
April	273	268
May	133	309
June	270	262
July	182	310
August	255	227
September	229	236
October	261	314
November	306	242
December	274	327
TOTAL	2,889	3,339

Publications Now On Line

To streamline production costs, the *Bulletin* and the Alliance's 2003 Annual Report, "Working together To Build Awareness" are available through the Alliance's Web site, www.888betsoff.com. We are building an e-mail list of individuals who are interested in receiving notification when a new issue of the *Bulletin* is available at the Web site, so please forward your e-mail address to: perezs@molottery.com. If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the "Bulletin" through the regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

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

1-888-BETSOFF

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Upcoming Events

April 14–16 – 6th Annual Missouri Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference at the Adams Mark Hotel in St. Louis.

April 15–17 – Partners in Prevention Meeting of the Minds annual conference at the Airport Marriott in Kansas City.

May 19–21 – Missouri Department of Mental Health's Spring Training Institute.

June 17–19 – National Council on Problem Gambling annual conference in Phoenix, Ariz.

August is Missouri Responsible Gaming Education Month.

Aug. 5–8 – Statewide Prevention Conference at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis.

Aug. 11–13 – Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City.

Aug. 20–22 – 2004 Missouri Black Expo at the Americas Center in St. Louis.

Do you have a story idea for the next *Bulletin* or would you like to write a story for the next issue? There's a lot going on in Missouri concerning problem gambling, and we would like to include as much as possible in the *Bulletin* and on our Web site, so please be sure to pass on any ideas you may have. To suggest story ideas for the *Bulletin* or the Web site, contact the editor, Shelly Perez, at perezs@molottery.com or call (573) 526-7467.



Missouri Department of Mental Health



Missouri Council on Problem Gambling Concerns



Missouri Gaming Commission



Missouri Lottery



Missouri Riverboat Gaming Association



Port Authority of Kansas City, MO

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