

Midwest Conference Provides Opportunity to Gather with Experts

Nationally renowned experts will highlight the sixth annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse Aug. 12-14 at the Hilton Frontenac in St. Louis.

Hosted by the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, the conference is also being sponsored by organizations throughout the four-state region – Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska.

“We’re very excited about the approaching conference,” said Mike Winter, chairman of the Alliance. “This conference will present a great opportunity for people to become better informed about the significance of problem gambling and its impact on the community,” he continued.

The three-day conference will open on Aug. 12 with a keynote address from Dr. H. Westley Clark, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and conclude on Aug. 14 with post-conference training on ethics and clinical supervision.

Additional keynote speakers include Dr. Michael Flaherty, executive director for the Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions; Dr. Marc Potenza, problem gambling clinic director and associate professor at Yale University; and Ron Willis, mental health consultant and president of Green Porch Swing Productions.

In addition to informative and entertaining keynote speakers and programs on a variety of topics related to problem gambling and substance abuse, more than 12 continuing education credits will be offered. More information on continuing education credits will be made available in the coming weeks.

Additionally, an optional event, “Dinner and Music at the Magic House,” will take place on Aug. 13 from 6 to 10 p.m. in the new wing of the Magic House in St. Louis. With the help of sponsors, the cost of the optional event is \$25 per person through July 31, and \$50 if purchased after that date. The event includes roundtrip transportation, a buffet style dinner, a live band and museum exhibits. Additional tickets can be purchased for guests not attending the conference.

Registration for the conference is available through the Midwest Conference’s Web site at: http://www.888betsoff.org/links/midwest_conference.shtm.

The cost of attending the conference is \$150 for early bird registration, \$180 for regular registration and \$220 for onsite registration. The student rate for attending the conference is \$75 for early bird, \$90 for regular registration and \$110 for onsite registration.

Rooms are available at the Hilton Frontenac in St. Louis at a conference rate of \$109, plus tax, per night. Room reservations must be made by July 28 to receive this rate. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 1-800-325-7800. To receive the discounted room rate, please note that you are with the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse.

More information about the conference, along with registration information, can be found at www.888betsoff.com/links/midwest_conference.shtm, or you can contact Melissa Stephens at (573) 526-4080 or Melissa.Stephens@mgc.dps.mo.gov.

Message From Alliance Chairman Mike Winter

August is going to be an exciting month for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling. Not only is August Responsible Gaming Education Month, but it is also when the sixth annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse will take place. This year’s conference will be held Aug. 12-14 at the Hilton Frontenac in St. Louis. The planning committee has been working diligently all year to make this a very educational, interesting and exciting conference filled with great keynote speakers, breakout sessions, continuing education opportunities, networking and much more!

Please mark your calendars and plan to support this important and significant event through your participation. It is the culmination of awareness efforts in Missouri and our three sister states, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska.

Come and meet us, the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, as well as our regional and national friends, at the Midwest Conference. As always, feel free to share your ideas with us on ways we can continue to help problem gamblers. We hope to see you in St. Louis!



Michael Winter

Publication Available Online

The *Bets Off Bulletin* is available through the Alliance’s Web site, 888betsoff.org. If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the *Bulletin* through regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

If you received this edition via e-mail, 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 reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

New Youth Addiction Prevention Program to be Released in August

The award-winning "Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path" youth addiction prevention program, which was originally released in 2002 to more than 700 schools, will be re-released to more than 1,500 Missouri schools in August.

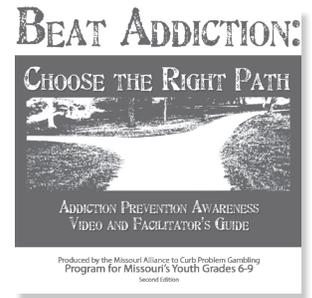
According to Frank Finley, video producer for the Missouri Lottery, the goal of the second version of "Beat Addiction" was not only to address the spectrum of addictive and compulsive behaviors, but to do so in a more realistic manner.

"Students that watched the first version of 'Beat Addiction' said they wanted to hear from people that were closer to their age. In the new version, we interviewed young addicts in recovery that were forced to overcome enormous obstacles," said Finley.

The new version of "Beat Addiction" is recommended for students in grades 6-12, and it features four testimonials and re-enactments about teens that have battled various addictions including: gambling, marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and alcohol. The revised edition also includes the original program from 2002, which focuses on one woman and her family's struggle with addiction.

The program was developed and produced by the Missouri Lottery for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The program was evaluated and approved by DESE as a resource that meets DESE-established Show Me Goals (SMG) and Guidance Grade Level Expectations (GLE) in the category of Personal Social Development.

For more information about the program, please contact Holly Koofer, responsible gaming coordinator for the Missouri Lottery, at (573) 526-7467.



Voluntary Exclusion Program Helps Gamblers Curb Addiction

The Missouri Gaming Commission administers a voluntary exclusion program from Missouri's casinos for problem gamblers.

This unique program, created in 1996, provides problem gamblers with a method to acknowledge that they have a gambling problem and take personal responsibility for it by agreeing to stop visiting casinos. The exclusion is for life.

Research indicates that problem gambling is a lifetime condition, and those who suffer from it are never "cured" but are constantly "recovering."

For more information about the program, call (573) 526-4080 or go to http://www.mgc.dps.mo.gov/prob_gambling/pg_vep.htm.

Congressman Pushes to Let Americans Gamble Online

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank recently introduced legislation to allow Americans to gamble online.

According to Frank, who chairs the House Committee on Financial Services, he plans to unveil a plan to allow licensed gambling operators to accept bets from people in the United States. Industry insiders said the bill is likely to include provisions to deter compulsive and underage gambling, money laundering, fraud and identity theft.

The Safe and Secure Internet Gambling Initiative, a group that advocates the legalization of online gambling, estimates that millions of Americans wager more than \$100 billion a year through offshore gambling sites, despite the fact that it's illegal under the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006.

Frank introduced a bill to legalize online gambling in 2007, but the measure stalled. Opponents argue that children and adults would be at risk of compulsive gambling, fraud and identity theft if allowed to gamble online.

The Safe and Secure Internet Gambling Initiative estimates that the United States could collect up to \$62.7 billion in tax revenue during the next 10 years if online gambling were legal. The group, other proponents and Frank argue that people will gamble on the Internet whether or not it's legal, and the government can better control activity and prevent related problems by legalizing online gambling.

The full article, provided by InformationWeek, can be accessed online at <http://www.informationweek.com/news/government/policy/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=217300198&subSection=All+Stories>.

Upcoming Alliance Events

June 25 - 27

National Council on Problem Gambling Annual Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Treatment, Responsible Gaming, Research and Recovery in Indianapolis, Ind.

August is Missouri Responsible Gaming Education Month.

August 12 - 14

Sixth Annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse in St. Louis

Have A Story Idea?

Do you have a story idea for the next *Betsoff 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, Holly Koofer, at betsoff@molottery.com, or call (573) 526-7467.

Member Activities

Bock Promoted to Clinical Director

Nora Bock, Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling governing member, was promoted to the position of clinical director for the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in April. Congratulations, Nora!

Alliance Welcomes New Participating Member

The Alliance recently welcomed a new member. David Tucker of Holts Summit was named a participating member of the Alliance in March. Tucker works as a clinical therapist at the Jefferson City Correctional Center in Jefferson City. Welcome, David!

Stephens Welcomes Twin Boys in January

Melissa and Greg Stephens welcomed twin boys, Jonathon and Benjamin, to the world on Jan. 27. They join their very proud big sister and big brothers, Elizabeth, William and Christian. Congratulations to the Stephens family!

Annual Report Available Online

The 2008 Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling annual report is available at <http://www.888betsoff.org/alliance/anreport.htm>. If you would like an original copy, please contact Holly Koofeh at (573) 526-7467 or koofeh@molottery.com.

Outstanding Contributor and Service Award Nominations Accepted Until June 30

Do you know of someone who goes above the call of duty to assist problem gamblers and their family members or is working hard to build awareness of problem gambling issues in Missouri? If so, then recommend that person or people for Missouri's Outstanding Contributor Award. This statewide award will be presented to an individual who has demonstrated superior achievement in addressing issues of problem and pathological gambling in Missouri.

The Outstanding Contributor Award will be presented to an individual, group, organization or company outside of the Missouri Alliance voting membership that has demonstrated superior achievement in addressing issues of problem and pathological gambling in Missouri.

Additionally, nominations are also being accepted for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling's Service Award. This award will be presented in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling during the course of the past year by an individual or representative of a member organization (voting or participating). Nominations for this award may be submitted by voting or participating members of the Alliance. The awardee will be selected by the voting and participating members of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling.

Nomination forms for both awards can be found online at http://www.888betsoff.org/links/midwest_conference.shtm. Nominations can be e-mailed to koofeh@molottery.com or sent by fax to (573) 751-5188. The deadline for both award nomination forms is June 30.

The award recipients will be selected from all of the nominations received. All nominations will be confidential. The award recipients will be announced at the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse in August.

Bets Off Web Site Directs Problem Gamblers to Help

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling-sponsored Bets Off Web site features a wealth of information about problem gambling including compulsive gambling warning signs. Exhibiting five or more of the following compulsive gambling symptoms may indicate a gambling problem:

- Frequent thoughts about past experiences, future plans or how to get money for gambling;
- Urges to increase spending in order to reach a high level of excitement;
- Failure to stop or control gambling;
- Restless and/or irritable feelings when attempting to cut back or stop gambling;
- Recurrent desires to "get even" after experiencing losses;
- Attempts to tell others lies about your gambling habits;
- Thoughts about engaging in illegal acts to finance gambling (or actual participation in illegal acts);
- Job, school or relationship problems due to gambling; and
- Tendency to rely on others for financial assistance.

If you have experienced any of the compulsive gambling symptoms or know anyone else who has, free problem gambling treatment is available. Information about treatment options in Missouri is accessible through the 24-hour toll-free problem gambling help line, 1-888-BETSOFF, or by visiting the Alliance's Web site at 888betsoff.org.

Speakers Bureau Educates, Raises Awareness About Problem Gambling

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state on topics ranging from the prevention of youth gambling to the warning signs of problem gambling. For more information about the speakers bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467. All presentations are free of charge.

Save the Date!

2009 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse: Roads to Recovery Aug. 12-14, 2009 Hilton Frontenac, St. Louis

The 2009 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse is approaching fast! You won't want to miss this unique and exciting opportunity to network, collaborate and learn from nationally recognized experts in the field of gambling treatment and substance abuse, discover new training tools and tips and much more!

Registering for the conference has never been easier, as registration forms are available for download online at http://www.888betsoff.org/links/midwest_conference.shtm.

Completed registration forms can be mailed to Katrina Wieberg/ACT MO, ATTN: 2009 Midwest Conference, 428 E. Capitol, 2nd Floor, Jefferson City, Mo., 65101. Registration forms can also be sent via fax to (573) 635-7257.

We hope you can join the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling at the upcoming conference, which is sure to enhance awareness and add to the growing field of problem gambling and substance abuse prevention.

For further information on registration, please contact Katrina Wieberg at (573) 635-6669 or kwieberg@actmissouri.org. Exhibition inquiries should be directed to Melissa Stephens at (573) 526-4080 or Melissa.Stephens@gmc.dps.mo.gov.

Thank you for your continued support!

Free Help Available to Problem Gamblers and Families

The first step to overcoming a compulsive gambling disorder is admitting there is a problem and recognizing that it won't go away without help.

Free counseling for compulsive gamblers and their family members is provided through agencies contracted through the Missouri Department of Mental Health. A list of these agencies, along with a complete list of certified compulsive gambling counselors in Missouri, can be found online at http://www.888betsoff.org/alliance/CCGC_providers.shtm.

In addition to the Web site, help is available over the phone by calling the toll-free program-gambling help line at 1-888-BETSOFF.

According to Sue Self, vice president of Telephonic Counseling and program manager for the problem gambling help line, callers can now set the appointment with a certified compulsive gambling counselor without having to make a second call.

"We want to increase the likelihood of the caller getting into services," explained Self. "Often times, the caller just doesn't make that second call to set up an appointment for counseling. We're hoping that, doing it during their initial call for help, it might encourage them to show up."

For more information about this program or to sign up to participate, contact Sue Self at (314) 446-2831 or call the problem-gambling help line at 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633).

1-888-BETSOFF

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MISSOURI ALLIANCE
TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

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 and treatment.

