

Problem Gambling Week Heightens Awareness

Problem gambling awareness in Missouri will be promoted through radio advertising prior to and during Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 9-15. The radio advertising to promote Missouri's problem-gambling help line, 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633), will highlight Missouri's participation in the sixth annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

To help build awareness during Problem Gambling Awareness Week, the Missouri Department of Mental Health teamed with MissouriNet to air radio advertisements. An ad also was placed in *Rural Missouri*, a monthly publication with a circulation of more than 490,000.

Started by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) six years ago, the awareness week is designed to educate the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and raise awareness about the help that is available both locally and nationally.

During the national awareness week, communities nationwide are working to increase the recognition of the consequences of problem gambling and the resources available for individuals whose gambling is causing disruption in their lives.

"Research shows that approximately 2 to 3 percent of the U.S. population has a gambling problem in any given year, but only a very small fraction of those individuals seek help, including treatment and self-help recovery programs," said Nora Bock, mental health manager with the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

According to Bock, Missouri offers free problem gambling counseling to Missouri residents, for both problem gamblers and their loved ones.

"I think it's tremendously important for people who are experiencing problems related to their gambling to seek treatment," Bock said. "Not everyone requires intensive or extensive treatment. However, seeking the support and counsel of a professional may help the person become more knowledgeable about the addiction, as well as, develop skills for managing life issues related to problem gambling. Professional counselors can also help the person find resources for ongoing support and offer therapeutic services to family members who are quite likely impacted by their loved ones' behaviors."

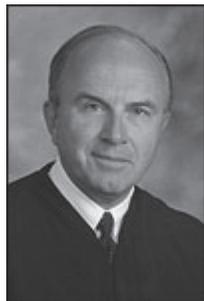
Alliance Chairman Gary Gonder said that Problem Gambling Awareness Week in March and Missouri's Responsible Gaming Awareness Month in August help to raise awareness about problem gambling and resources available to problem gamblers and their loved ones.

"Throughout the year, the Alliance promotes the availability of free treatment, but participating in the national effort this week provides us with an opportunity to further educate Missouri residents about problem-gambling issues and that help is just a phone call away," Gonder said.



Farrell, Clark To Highlight Midwest Conference

Judge Mark Farrell, founder of the nation's only Gambling Treatment Court, will highlight the presentations at the 2008 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse. Farrell, from Amherst, N.Y., along with Dr. Westley Clark from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have been confirmed as keynote presenters during the fifth annual conference, Aug. 13-15, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton.



Judge Mark Farrell

Although planning is still underway, Melissa Stephens, problem gambling program administrator for the Missouri Gaming Commission and a member of the conference's planning committee, said the variety and quality of presentations this year are coming together to create a conference no one should miss.

"We received a great number of quality proposals for presentations this year," Stephens said. "It's been hard to choose, but I think everyone will be pleased with the variety of topics that have been selected."

Stephens said that the program committee is working on the schedule to allow for some 90-minute workshops, in addition to the 60-minute presentations.

"Through feedback provided by our attendees, we've found that there are certain workshops and topics that just need more time to be discussed," she said. "We hope by providing these varied times that the presenters will have the time they need to fully present their information."

Stephens said that the Midwest Conference has garnered international attention and received several presentation proposals from outside of the Midwest region.

continued on page 3

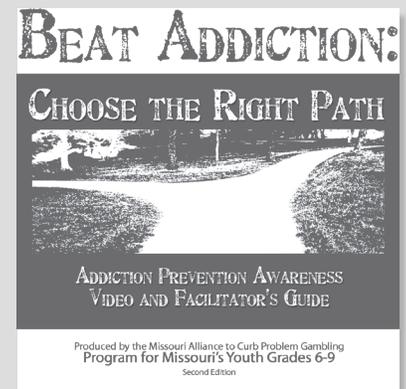
New Version Of 'Beat Addiction' To Be Released Soon

The award-winning "Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path" youth addiction prevention video is being revised and updated. The newer vision of the video is expected to be completed this spring and will be available to schools later this year.

The original "Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path" video and facilitator's guide, which were designed for students in grades 6-9, was introduced in 2003. The video kit was made available for free to all Missouri schools. More than 700 Missouri schools requested copies of the video kit. The video also was used and shown in several other states and countries throughout the world.

The newer video will include four personal stories of youth in recovery from various addictions, including gambling and substance abuse. The video also will include a very diverse cast.

The facilitator's guide, with assistance from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, is also being revised to incorporate the Missouri Show Me Standards, which are curriculum guides established in response to federal mandates.



E-Mail Offers Another Way To Reach Help

E-mailing the problem gambling help line offers problem gamblers and their loved ones another way to find the help they need. Calling the problem gambling help line – 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633) lets callers speak to trained counselors, and now those counselors are available through e-mail.

"The same services callers get by calling the help line are now available through e-mail," said Sue Self, help line program manager at Life Crisis Services, a St. Louis-based suicide prevention and crisis intervention hot line service. "Our counselors are able to provide counseling referrals and information about the various programs available to problem

gamblers and their family members."

Self said she believes they may be able to reach out to even more people through e-mail.

"Sometimes it's easier for people to communicate by e-mail than by making a phone call," she said. "They may feel it's more private, or they find it easier to write about their problems than talking about them. Either way they reach us, though, we can provide them with the guidance and tools they need."

To reach Missouri's problem gambling help line by e-mail, write to gamblingcounselor@lifecrisis.org. There is also a direct link to the e-mail address on the front page of www.888betsoff.org, the Web site for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling.

Counselors Needed For Appointment Program

Certified Compulsive Gambling counselors are being sought to participate in Life Crisis Services appointment program.

Counselors who choose to participate in the program can provide a few or more hours a week for Life Crisis counselors to fill with callers from the help line. When a caller contacts the help line, an appointment for counseling services will be offered if a participating counselor is available in the caller's area.

Sue Self, vice president of Telephonic Counseling and program manager for the problem gambling help line, said the program was created to help increase the likelihood of callers getting into counseling. She said Life Crisis will be flexible with their schedules to allow counselors more of an opportunity to participate.

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

Upcoming Alliance Events

March 9-16

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week

April 16-18

Missouri Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference in Osage Beach

May 14-16

Missouri Department of Mental Health's Spring Training Institute in Osage Beach

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, Shelly Perez, at betsoff@molottery.com, or call (573) 526-7467.

Farrell, Clark To Highlight Midwest Conference

continued from page 1

“It’s quite an honor to receive applications from some of the most renowned experts in the field,” she said. “I think it speaks well for the quality of the conference, as well as its attendees.”

A full-day pre-conference session on motivational interviewing is scheduled on Aug. 12 at the conference location. Cost of the full-day training is \$25 for early bird and \$50 for regular registration.

An optional event, “Blues at the Zoo,” is being planned again this year following the rave reviews from last year’s event. With the help of sponsors, event organizers are planning to keep the cost of the optional event at \$25 per person.

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

According to Stephens, cost of attending the two-and-a-half-day conference will be \$150 for early bird registration and \$180 for regular registration. The student rate for attending the conference is \$75 for early bird and \$90 for regular registration.

Registration, event schedules, presentation and keynote information, and additional details about the optional event will be posted on the Web site as they become available.



Dr. Westley Clark

St. Louis Professor Receives Outstanding Contributor Award

An associate professor who conducts award-winning epidemiologic and treatment research into pathological gambling and co-occurring disorders was presented the 2007 Outstanding Contributor Award from the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem. Renee Cunningham-Williams, St. Louis, received the award during the Alliance’s 10th anniversary event on Dec. 17, 2007, in St. Louis.



Renee Cunningham-Williams

Williams, an associate professor at George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, received the award for her work in problem gambling research in Missouri and her valuable contributions and insights in helping to design many of the Alliance’s programs and initiatives.

The Outstanding Contributor Award is presented annually to an individual outside of the Missouri Alliance voting membership who has demonstrated superior achievement in addressing issues of problem and pathological gambling.

“We’re very fortunate to have Dr. Williams in the state of Missouri,” said Gary Gonder, chairman of the Alliance. “Not only is she a nationally acclaimed problem gambling researcher, she’s also a valued contributor and consultant for the Alliance.

“She always makes herself available to us when we need an expert opinion or advice,” Gonder continued. “We’re grateful that she’s so willing to assist us in providing and improving our programs for problem gamblers and their families.”

Founding Member Of Alliance Recognized For Award-Winning Effort

The former executive director for the Missouri Gaming Association (MGA) was the recipient of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling’s 2007 Service Award. Mike Ryan, St. Louis, received the award during the Alliance’s 10th anniversary event on Dec. 17, 2007, in St. Louis.

Ryan, owner of Ryan and Associates of St. Louis, was instrumental in the creation of the Alliance. He guided the casinos in establishing the nation’s first statewide responsible gaming committee, which established the 1-888-BETS OFF help line. He led the effort to establish responsible gambling standards for Missouri casinos and a statewide college scholarship program.

The Alliance’s Service Award is presented annually to an individual or a representative of the Alliance who has made extraordinary contributions to the Alliance for the past year.

“Mike took chances that very few representatives of the casino industry had taken before and pressed for Missouri’s casinos to play an active role in problem gambling awareness,” said Gary Gonder, executive director of the

Alliance. “Through his leadership, the Missouri Gaming Association actively supported ground-breaking initiatives, including underage gambling prevention programs, participation in a statewide survey to help establish a state problem gambling prevalence rate and the creation and support of the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse.”



Mike Ryan

Ryan served as the chairman of the Alliance in 2002. In December 2006, he officially retired as the executive director of the Missouri Gaming Association, but he remains active on the MGA’s Responsible Gaming Committee. He served on the program committee for the 2007 National Council on Problem Gambling conference held in June 2007 in Kansas City, and he is currently serving on the program committee for the 2008 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse.

1-888-BETSOFF

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Awareness Materials Available Through Web Site

A variety of problem gambling awareness materials are available for free through the Missouri Alliance, including posters and brochures from the latest Alliance awareness campaign, "Hope for You and Yours."



Visit the Alliance's Web site for more information about items available to order for your business, school or office. All items available through the Alliance are free to Missouri residents and businesses.

Need A Speaker?

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state. For more information about the speakers bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467 or (573) 526-4080.
All presentations are free of charge.

Want To Receive The Bulletin?

In an attempt to streamline costs, the *Betsoff Bulletin* is available through the Alliance's Web site, www.888betsoff.org. We have an e-mail list of individuals who are interested in receiving notification when a new issue is available at the Web site, so please forward your e-mail address to betsoff@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 reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

Alliance news and event schedules are available on the Web at:

www.888betsoff.org



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.