



March 20, 2017

CONTACT: Keith Whyte
Phone: 205-547-9204, ext. 23
keithw@ncpgambling.org

Help For Those At Higher Risk For Problem Gambling *Veterans, minority groups and gaming employees all known to have higher rates of gambling problems*

While problem gambling may affect anyone veterans, racial/ethnic minority groups and gaming employees are known to be at higher risk, so during Problem Gambling Awareness Month in March the National Council urges those who work with these groups to make sure they have prevention and treatment resources specific to that population. NCPG also calls for additional research funding to learn more about the causes of these health disparities.

Veterans routinely report higher rates of gambling problems, and these problems often cluster with other addictions and disorders. The Boston Globe recently profiled a veteran with gambling problems who reported losing \$1,000 per week playing the lottery. Last week NCPG held a briefing on Capitol Hill featuring a Vietnam veteran who talked about how the uncertainty, anticipation, excitement and stress he felt while gambling was similar to combat. Both men are now in recovery but report seeing many others, especially younger veterans, who have problems and are not getting the help they need.

Surveys consistently find members of ethnic and racial minority communities have greater risk factors for gambling problems yet fewer dedicated prevention and treatment resources. Asian, African-American and Native Americans each have different risk and resiliency factors so it is important to develop culturally-appropriate and culturally-specific resources.

Gaming employees have been found to be an at-risk group for gambling problems. Employees exposed to gaming may be tempted to gamble, and people with gambling problems may seek out jobs in the gaming industry. Casino companies, lottery agencies, racetracks and even churches and charities who operate bingo should make sure their employees have responsible gaming education and training.

Regardless of risk, the most important message is that gambling addiction is preventable and treatable. Screening for gambling addiction in higher-risk groups is an important first step to minimize harm.

To get help for a gambling problem for you or a loved one, call or text 1-800-522-4700 or chat www.ncpgambling.org/chat. The service is free and confidential and available 24/7. For more information about problem gambling and how to #HaveTheConvo, go to www.ncpgambling.org/pgam.

About the National Council on Problem Gambling

The NCPG is a non-profit advocate for programs to help problem gamblers and their families. NCPG is neutral on legalized gambling and leads state and national stakeholders in the development of comprehensive policy and programs for all those affected by problem gambling. Their vision is to improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling.