



## National Conference Moves Online

*NCPG Services Adapt Amid New Demands of Field and Covid-19*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The **National Conference on Gambling Addiction and Responsible Gambling** remains a very **important part of the mission** of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) and its biggest event of the year. Now in its 34th iteration, it is the oldest and largest national conference that **brings together people from all facets** of behavioral health and counseling, research, government, and the many segments of the gambling industry.

As such, it serves as an important **incubator for collaboration and innovation**. Both are much needed to **support harm prevention and mitigation in the US**, especially with the increased speed of the expansion of gambling across the country - in particular that of sports betting.

Keith Whyte, Executive Director of NCPG, said, "The **familiar forms of in-person support** from both professionals and self-help groups for people and families affected by problem gambling have been **sharply curtailed this year**, and new needs and new ways have arisen. Opportunities to gamble have changed, with more online and less in-person gambling occurring, which poses some new problems."

Methods for counselors to meet the **changing needs of clients** have also adapted over the last six months, with both **new restrictions and new growth**. There are new opportunities in telehealth, but all participants need to be aware of the state and federal requirements that must be met to satisfy regulations from Medicare, Medicaid, HIPAA guidelines, state-specific licensing, and more. Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon are offering **new systems for self-help**, include meetings by phone and online. Everyone involved needs to be aware of the opportunities, special needs and new requirements involved.

As with almost all things in the US, NCPG has made many changes to **adapt to the constantly changing demands of life amid Covid-19**. Originally scheduled for July in Washington, DC, the conference was first split into two parts, with the two-day Pre-Conference Workshops replaced by a Digital Symposium online in July, which garnered record attendance and evaluations of 'good' or 'excellent' from 96 percent of respondents. The Main Conference and Master Classes were rescheduled for November, still in-person in Washington, DC. The subsequent operational changes outlined below, moving both to online only, are being taken in order to protect the health and safety of conference participants and follow local and national government and health guidelines, as well as respond to feedback from stakeholders about the training they need and the travel and financial restrictions they face.

The **Main Conference dates are now November 5 - 6 and 12 - 13** (Thurs. - Fri.), from 12pm to 4 pm EST, responding to the preferences of participants in time zones across the world. The **keynote speaker** will be Loreen Rugle, PhD, a nationally known counselor, trainer for professional counselors, and responsible gambling advisor

**Up to 16 CEUs** will be available to attendees of the Main Conference, a concentrated block of training available from few other sources. **Recordings** of the sessions will be available for approximately 30 days after these dates, further supporting **flexibility in learning**. There will be optional time for informal contacts from 4 to 5pm ET, which will offer opportunities for **networking**, exhibitors and sponsors that will allow participants to network and meet people – an important part of collaboration and innovation. Presenters and topics will cover a **wide range of information for all aspects and levels of the field**, including Treatment, Recovery, Prevention, Community, Military & Veterans, Tribal Matters, Responsible Gambling and Sports Gambling.

The new **Master Classes** have new dates also, from 1pm to 3pm EST on **December 2, 3 and 9** in order to accommodate holidays and many previously scheduled stakeholder events during November. These live workshops with nationally and international known experts will use a platform that allows for direct interaction, another unique advantage for participants of the event. Seats will be limited to allow for more interactive methods of work. Attendees will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis, and p to 6 CEUs will be available to attendees of the Master Classes.

NCPG thanked its **major conference sponsors** for their unwavering support amidst the constantly unfolding pandemic: **San Manuel Band of Mission Indians** (Presenting Partner); **MGM Resorts International** (Military and Veterans track sponsor); **Mohegan Sun**; **AGEM**; **Las Vegas Sands Corporation**; **Four Winds Casino Resort**; **TSG/The Stars Group** and **Virginia Lottery**.

“We've seen an increasingly wide expansion of online gambling in the last six months, including sports betting, iLottery, and social gambling, as well as various methods of cashless payment. We expect this to escalate as more state governments face budget shortfalls in the next two years. **Protecting consumers** who gamble, as well as their families, needs to be part of legislation, regulation and gambling company operations. Our conference is an important tool to **increase knowledge, conversation and action** on all these aspects, and thereby help mitigate harm,” said Whyte in closing.

### **About the National Council on Problem Gambling**

NCPG is the national advocate for people and families affected by problem gambling. NCPG is neutral on legalized gambling and works with all stakeholders to promote responsible gambling. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call or text the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network at 1-800-522-4700 or visit [www.ncpgambling.org/chat](http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat) for confidential help 24/7/365.

For information about the National Conference on Gambling Addiction and Responsible Gambling, visit the NCPG website at [www.ncpgambling.org/conference](http://www.ncpgambling.org/conference).

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on Gambling Addiction &  
Responsible Gambling**

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