

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - August, 2010

August was a busy month for the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey. Plans were finalized for our 28th annual conference to be held on October 7, 2010 in Princeton, New Jersey. We are very excited about this year's programs as we are bringing in nationally noted speakers in the fields of gambling among Asian Communities and Prevention. New Jersey's own Wanda Moore will speak on re-entry from the criminal justice system and a panel will discuss recruiting and retaining compulsive gamblers from diverse populations.

The Council has also been planning its 3rd free 30-hour training on compulsive gambling in 2010. It will be held on five Fridays beginning October 15, 2010 at Saint Barnabas Outpatient Center in Livingston, New Jersey.

In August we did oneclinical training for professionals, six presentations to at-risk populations, five presentations to seniors and two trainings for seniors and teachers.

One of the developing issues this month was the incidence of children being left alone in parking lots at Parx Casino. This generated a lot of interest and several interviews were given by the Council on this issue. Our position is that increasing the penalty does not work as it fails to address the problem. The adults need treatment, not incarceration, and there should be safety plans established to protect the children when the parent chooses to gamble.

The Council also participated in a press conference with the New Jersey Lottery on the "Not 18 Yet, No Bet" annual awareness campaign kickoff. Don Weinbaum, Executive Director of the Council also presented testimony at the Legislative Gambling Summit, stressing the importance of responsible gaming and making sure the compulsive gambler is not forgotten. A number of general interviews with newspapers and radio took place as well; gambling is certainly in the forefront of the news.

In August we received 1,554 calls to the 1-800-GAMBLER® helpline. Of these calls 106 were from individuals seeking help for themselves or a loved one. They were referred to Gamblers Anonymous and to Certified Compulsive Gambling Counselors. There were 61,689 hits on our website as well. One interesting call came from a gentleman who played the stock market on line and originally thought of it as a financial adventure but now realizes he needs help. Anecdotally it is noted that stockbrokers and attorneys appear to be overrepresented in Gambler's Anonymous; what they have in common is access to other people's money. A second interesting call came from a woman who had previously committed illegal acts to support her gambling. She was then put into a position where she handled money, and she returned to the bet. The access to money often develops into a causal relationship with gambling.