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PRESS RELEASE
March/14/2010

For Immediate Release
Contact:
Jeffrey Beck, Clinical Coordinator
Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, Inc.
phone: 609-588-5515
ccgnjjeff@aol.com

MARCH MADNESS: A Fun Activity with Potential for Danger

HAMILTON, NEW JERSEY - The big dance is here - March Madness. It is the most "bet on" sporting activity in the United States. It has been estimated that 2.5 billion dollars will be wagered on the three weeks of the tournament. Students and alumni of their participant school get to voice support. All games are now viewable in their entirety on television; the viewer now has the power to click back and forth from game to game.

It sounds like a fun activity and for most people it is just that. However, some people get introduced to gambling through March Madness and may develop a problem with gambling behavior. Others may see the tournament as a chance to get even for the season - a double or nothing proposition. Many of these people have already crossed the line from social gambling to problem gambling and may find themselves moving further along the gambling continuum towards compulsive or pathological gambling.

March Madness can also cause problems in the workplace. Games are streamed over the computer. March Madness office pools are often seen as boosting morale and camaraderie. However, there is general concern that productivity can suffer. Employers should transmit the message that participation in office pools should not interfere with work responsibilities. It has been reported that 63% of employers lack a written policy that addresses workplace gambling. There are usually policies as to drug and alcohol use and prohibition of illegal activities, but gambling seems to pass under the radar.

Jeff Beck, Clinical Coordinator at the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, is concerned that the growth of online sports betting may be fueling problem gambling and that the NCAA tournament provides an increased opportunity for gambling on line, an illegal activity in New Jersey. People can lose a fortune without leaving the comfort of their own home. This also caters to gambling while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which can act to increase impulsive behavior. Isolation and preoccupation with watching the games may be suggestive of a gambling problem. The Annenberg Study of Youth reported that in

2010 sixteen percent of college aged males gambled monthly on the Internet. March Madness may bring them all out of the closet.

The NCAA tournament can be lots of fun but there is potential for disruption of life for the individual or business. Caution should be exercised. If you or someone you love has a gambling problem confidential help is available. Call 1-800-GAMBLER® for help in overcoming this treatable issue. You owe it to yourself.

About The Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, Inc.:

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services for people affected by a gambling problem. The Council's mission is to educate the public to the fact that compulsive gambling is a treatable illness.

The Council's 1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline and website www.800gambler.org have been resources for thousands of people who are compulsive gamblers and recovering from compulsive gambling, as well as their friends and families.

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Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, Inc. | 3635 Quakerbridge Road | Suite 7 | Hamilton | NJ | 08619