

MARYLAND CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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***Table games have potential to increase risk of GAMBLING ADDICTION.
State funds helpline for problem gamblers and their families.***

For further press information please see www.mdproblemgamblingpress.com

Baltimore, MD — As Maryland’s casinos gear up to offer blackjack, roulette, poker, crap and other table games, Maryland’s problem gamblers are exposed to further risk. It is estimated there are approximately 150,000 problem gamblers in Maryland and with these new, more enticing, and potentially addictive gambling venues the numbers are projected to grow rapidly. National research shows that close proximity to a casino (50 miles or less) **may** double the rate of pathological gambling.*

“PROBLEM GAMBLING IS AN ADDICTION-- We Can Help”

To address this increase in problem gambling, the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (The Center) is launching a public awareness campaign to help problem gamblers and their families become familiar with the symptoms and how to get help. The multi-platform campaign will draw attention to The Center’s 24-hour helpline (1-800-522-4700) and newly developed public awareness website, www.mdproblemgambling.com.

The Center’s stark message highlights the newest developments in the study of gambling and addiction. This year, the American Psychiatric Association will reclassify pathological gambling into the category of addictions. This revision reflects recent research that has revolutionized the understanding of how addictive gambling is for some people. Placing gambling into the addiction category with alcoholism and drug dependency will allow mental health professionals to bring more resources to bear on a client’s care.

Problem gamblers often say they don’t “feel addicted,” but their behavior is often very similar to other addicts as they chase their next high. Problem gambling can not only lead to other addictions, such as alcohol/substance abuse, but also to emotional and physical illnesses as well as financial disaster and family devastation. It is estimated that the social cost of problem gambling is at least \$6 billion per year in the United States.

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling is supported by the Problem Gambling Fund, administered by the State of Maryland, through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and is housed at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry.

***Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: A Baseline Analysis** May 2011 By Judith Shinogle, Donald F. Norris & DoHwan Park. University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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