



February 4, 2013

OREGON COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

Chair

Carole Hardy
Member at Large

The Honorable Carolyn Tomei, Chair
And Committee Members
House Human Services and Housing Committee
Oregon State Legislature

Secretary

Jeffery Marotta, PhD
Member at Large

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Oregon Council on Problem Gambling I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to testify before the committee on issues related to problem gambling in Oregon. Additionally, I would like to thank Chair Tomei and Committee Members for bringing much needed attention to the needs of Oregonians who are, and may become, negatively affected by problem gambling.

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By way of a brief background: The current Council was established in 1996 by a group of citizens and stakeholders concerned that policies were being developed without the benefit of sound empirical data regarding the impact of gambling on Oregonians.

The founding membership included senior management representatives from gambling treatment including State program managers, community mental health providers, county government, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and the industry (including The Oregon Lottery, tribal gaming, and pari-mutuel gaming). The initial purpose of the Council was to provide a formal forum where representatives could openly discuss concerns and potential solutions to issues facing Oregonians brought on by current and increasing gambling opportunities.

The current Board has expanded so that today there are three members representing treatment, prevention, and the consumers' perspective; three members representing the gaming industry; two members representing research and policy development; and one representing the Counties' perspective.

The formal purpose of the Council is to promote the health of Oregonians by supporting efforts to minimize gambling related harm. To this end, the Council continues to strive to be the trusted and recognized resource for information and expertise on problem gambling; to continue to promote and support problem gambling treatment and prevention services; evidenced based best practices for responsible gambling; and, to promote public education.

Executive Director

Thomas L. Moore, PhD

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The Oregon Affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling

The Council sponsored six critical studies of problem gambling in Oregon. The first was a baseline study of the prevalence of problem and pathological gambling by adults in 1997.ⁱ This was followed in 1998ⁱⁱ by one of the first adolescent studies in the U.S. estimating the prevalence of disordered gambling among Oregon youth and the final baseline study in 2001ⁱⁱⁱ estimated the prevalence of disordered gambling in older adult Oregonians.

Also in 2001,^{iv, v} the first replication of the 1997 adult study was conducted to document any changes in the prevalence of disordered gambling and gambling behavior in the adult population since publication of that study. Again, in 2006^{vi} another replication adult prevalence study was commissioned. The timing of this study was driven by the fact that the State Lottery was adding line games to the existing video lottery terminals (VLTs) distributed throughout the state that were previously only offering video poker games.

Importantly, in 2002^{vii} the Council commissioned a pilot study, one of the first in the U.S., that investigated the potential causal implications relating to the onset of pathological gambling.

Findings from these studies indicated that the combined rate of pathological and problem gambling among adults in Oregon ranged from 3.3% in 1997 to 2.3% in 2001. The 2006 replication study found that rate had come back up to 2.7%. Using current adult population estimates for Oregon and the 2006 prevalence estimates^{viii} there are approximately 81,000 adults^{ix} in Oregon who might benefit from a treatment intervention. It is the Council's desire that everyone who has problems associated with gambling has the opportunity to receive timely, appropriate assistance.

Over the years there have been several occasions where funding to the Problem Gambling Services have been cut or seriously reduced. Each time, Board members have been instrumental in providing educational opportunities for legislators to defend, and re-instate, critical funding.

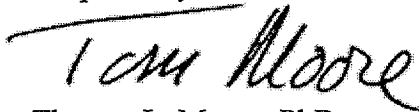
Council members regularly present their ongoing and planned activities to the Board for discussion. This includes treatment and prevention, responsible gambling, tribal, retailer, and Lottery activities.

Board members are reviewing the three pending House Bills (2163, 2166, and 2167) but have not engaged in a formal discussion of the bills. We appreciate that the discussion of problem gambling in Oregon has been elevated in the legislative process.

The Council remains highly concerned regarding: 1) the unknown impact on the prevalence of problem gambling related to the previous introduction of line games; 2) the national and state-level adoption of internet gambling and its impact on Oregonians; 3) implementation of evidence-based practices for responsible gambling, prevention, and treatment; and, 4) maintaining adequate levels of funding for Problem Gambling Services.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the House Human Services and Housing Committee.

Respectfully Submitted



Thomas L. Moore, PhD

ⁱ Volberg, R. (1997). Gambling and problem gambling in Oregon. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

ⁱⁱ Carlson, M. and Moore, T. (1998). Adolescent gambling in Oregon. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

ⁱⁱⁱ Moore, T. (2001). Older adult gambling in Oregon. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

^{iv} Volberg, R. (2001). Changes in gambling and problem gambling in Oregon: results from a replication study, 1997 to 2000. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

^v Moore, T. (2001). The prevalence of disordered gambling among adults in Oregon: a secondary analysis of data. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

^{vi} Moore, T., (2006). The prevalence of disordered gambling among adults in Oregon: a replication study. Salem: OR Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

^{vii} Moore, T., Jadlos, T. (2002). The etiology of pathological gambling: a study to enhance understanding of causal pathways as a set towards improving prevention and treatment. Wilsonville: OR. Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation

^{viii} The margin of error from the 2006 study was $\pm 0.7\%$.

^{ix} U.S. Census Bureau (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41000.html>) estimates the Oregon adult population (18 years and older) in 2012 at 3,029,797. With an estimated combined prevalence rate of problem and pathological gamblers at 2.7% the resultant figure is 81,804. However, with a margin of error in the study of $\pm 0.7\%$ the estimated range of adults