

First Phase Of Study Provides Valuable Data

By Kevin Mullally, Executive Director of the Missouri Gaming Commission

The first phase of Harvard University Medical School's study of the Missouri voluntary exclusion program for problem gamblers is complete. "Disordered Gambling in Missouri: Regional Differences in the Need for Treatment" is the first of two studies of disordered gambling in Missouri. The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, through a cooperative agreement between the Missouri Gaming Commission and the Kansas City Port Authority, is funding the studies.

The objective of Phase I of the study was to determine the relative prevalence of gambling disorders in Missouri's counties and the greater Kansas City area through analysis of the Commission's Disassociated Persons (DAP) database. The relative prevalence rates define county-level differences in the need for treatment and provide firm evidence upon which to base strategies designed to lessen the impact of disordered gambling on public health. This research will be extraordinarily helpful in allocating scarce state resources, so that we can both prevent and treat problem gambling behavior with greater efficiency.

Some of the more interesting findings in the study include:

- **Missouri disassociated persons (DAPs) are younger than the state's adult population: 83 percent of the DAPs are between 24 and 54 years of age, whereas 57 percent of Missouri's adult population is in that age range;**

- **The proportion of minorities is greater among DAPs than Missouri's adult population: 26 percent of DAPs who reported their race said they were non-Caucasian, whereas about 15 percent**

of Missouri's adult population is non-Caucasian;

- **Males and females are equally represented among Missouri DAPs;**
- **The finding that Missouri's statewide rate of problem gambling mirrors the national estimates of approximately 1 percent of the adult population demonstrates that the rate of self-excluders is a valid indicator of the prevalence of people experiencing gambling-related problems;**

- **92 percent of all Missouri DAPs were from the Western Planning Region (Kansas City area) or the Eastern Planning Region (St. Louis area);**

- **The consistency of disordered gambling prevalence rates during recent years is a function of declining prevalence rates in the epicenters and increasing prevalence rates in other areas, particularly in counties where casinos were introduced recently (Boonville and La Grange). This phenomenon illustrates two public health models: (1) recent exposure, which can contribute to increasing prevalence when communities experience new opportunities to gamble (e.g. novelty effects); and (2) adaptation, the tendency of individuals and communities to manage exposure to the no longer novel activities, over time, and avoid gambling's adverse consequences.**

During Phase II, information will be obtained directly from a representative sample of the self-excluders about their experiences in the program. Information from this follow-up study will be valuable for enhancing Missouri's program, as well as directing future self-exclusion programs around the world.

Missouri's self-exclusion program has been widely imitated, and thus, the results of the Phase II study are being followed with great interest.

Second Annual Outstanding Contributor Award

University Wellness Center Director Honored

Kim Dude, the director of the University of Missouri-Columbia Wellness Resource Center, recently was named the recipient of the second annual Outstanding Contributor Award presented by the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling. Dude was recognized by the Alliance for her efforts in helping to increase awareness of problem gambling issues at all of Missouri's public colleges and universities. She also is the founder and project director of Missouri Partners in Prevention (PIP), a partnership between all 12 of the state's public colleges and universities.

This statewide award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated superior achievement in addressing issues of problem and pathological gambling in Missouri.

Last year, Dude successfully applied for a grant from the Port Authority of Kansas City to expand the University's programs and PIP programs to include problem gambling awareness.

In March, using grant monies, the first training seminar was held in Columbia. Wellness Resource personnel from most of the state colleges and universities were in attendance.

In addition to the PIP training, the grant money also was used to determine the extent of gambling among Missouri's college students through the addition of a question to a health survey, and it also was used to create a brochure for college students on problem gambling.

According to Dude, the 2004 statewide health survey indicated that 49.9 percent of the college students surveyed participated in at least one gambling activity in



Kim Dude

the past year.

Keith Spare, outgoing chairman of the Alliance, said that due to Kim's commitment to Missouri's college students, the state now has problem gambling awareness on every public college campus.

Message From Alliance Chairman
KEVIN MULLALLY

MISSOURI ALLIANCE
TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

As we begin to close out 2004, the Alliance can take pride in another year of significant accomplishments. The Alliance continues to develop innovative public service announcements. The recent video produced



by Kansas City rhythm and blues band, Bloodstone, is getting an outstanding response. It joins previous PSAs performed by Crystal Gale and Wynonna Judd.

The Alliance also continues to provide excellent public education programs for youth. Its award-winning

video, "Choose the Right Path" has been shown in more than half of the middle schools in the state. In addition, the Alliance sponsors an interactive addiction awareness program for middle school children. The Second Chance Foundation produces "Addiction – the Game No One Wins." The 45-minute assembly, sponsored by members of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, presents facts about all addictions and the associated risk factors with an emphasis on gambling.

We know so much more about problem gambling today than we did 10 years ago, thanks to additional resources that have been devoted to research. The Alliance appreciates the critical importance of research and is sponsoring one of the most anticipated problem gambling research initiatives in the world. Harvard University School of Medicine's research project is studying Missouri's voluntary exclusion program. Its findings will provide excellent guidance to treatment professionals, regulators, the gaming industry and all those who are interested in combating problem gambling.

Finally, Alliance-sponsored public education programs made significant strides in 2004. About 200 people attended the first Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse on Aug. 11-13 in Kansas City, and more than 24 presenters shared their research, programs and expertise with conference attendees. Plans are underway for the 2005 conference, which will be held Aug. 24-26, 2005, in Kansas City.

You will find many other important Alliance initiatives in this edition of the *Bets Off Bulletin* and you will find even more in the 2004 annual report. However, now is not the time to rest on our laurels. Rick Pitino tells us, "Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer."

We cannot rest on past success. As long as there is a single Missourian with a gambling problem, we must reach out a helping hand. We must continue to build our public education program to reduce the incidence of problem gambling. We are making a difference. We are helping change people's lives. I offer my most sincere thanks for the work of all those who support our mission.

Midwest Conference A Success-Plans Underway For 2005

About 200 people attended the first Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse on Aug. 11-13 in Kansas City, and more than 24 presenters shared their research, programs and expertise with conference attendees.

Melissa Stephens, problem gambling program administrator for the Missouri Gaming Commission, who helped to organize the conference, said the response and evaluations from conference attendees was very positive.

"We had a great response to our first conference," Stephens said. "The caliber of speakers was comparable to any national problem gambling conference, and the wealth of information presented was incredible."

Most of the conference's presentations have been posted on the Alliance's Web site at 888Betsoff.com.

Plans are underway for the 2005 conference, which will be held Aug. 24-26, 2005, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City.

A Call for Papers for the 2005 conference will be issued soon. More information about next year's conference will be included in upcoming issues of the *Bets Off Bulletin* and will be posted on the 888Betsoff.com Web site.

MRGA Implements Code Of Conduct At All Missouri Casinos

A Responsible Gaming Code of Conduct has been implemented at all Missouri riverboat casino properties to assure Missouri's casinos' commitment to make responsible gaming an integral part of daily operations.

The Code of Conduct, which was created by the American Gaming Association, a national organization that represents the commercial casino entertainment industry, includes two multi-section pledges; one to casino employees and the other to the general public. The Missouri Riverboat Gaming Association (MRGA) announced the statewide implementation during Responsible Gaming Education Week, Aug. 2-6.

"MRGA sponsors community programs to encourage responsible gambling and to prevent underage gambling," said Keith Moss, chairman of the MRGA Responsible Gaming Committee and director of Guest Safety for Harrah's North Kansas City. "Although implementation of the AGA's code is not mandatory, we feel that being code-compliant is one of the many ways we can keep our promise to the citizens of Missouri to promote the responsible enjoyment of our state's gaming facilities."

To ensure that all 11 properties in Missouri have implemented the code, the MRGA Responsible Gaming Committee conducted a statewide survey of all Missouri casinos. The survey consisted of a self-review and the completion of a MRGA code-compliant form. The self-review was then followed up with an on-site walk-through with one of the MRGA Responsible Gaming Committee members, who used the review form and the AGA Code to ensure compliance.

"When the AGA released this code late last year, we realized that Missouri followed all of the tenets in the code," said Mike Ryan, executive director of MRGA. "We planned the review process in order to re-examine these priorities and make sure they are being given the full attention they deserve." For more information on the Code of Conduct, visit the AGA Web site at www.americangaming.org.

Wellness Director Honored continued from page 1

"This award was created to provide much-deserved recognition for our many treatment providers and other individuals working hard to promote problem gambling treatment and issues in Missouri," Spare said. "Kim's commitment to the health and well-being of Missouri's students is helping to provide an awareness of problem gambling to the future leaders of our state."

For A list of upcoming Alliance events, visit: www.888betsoff.com

Normal Looking As The Woman Next Door

A Letter From A Compulsive Gambler

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from a letter recently sent to the Missouri Gaming Commission from a compulsive gambler. The writer of the letter granted permission for its use in the "Bets Off Bulletin." This individual's personal story will soon be posted on the Alliance's Web site at 888betsoff.com.

Please also note that the Missouri Voluntary Exclusion Program is designed to act as a deterrent to aid a compulsive gambler in his/her recovery. The Missouri Gaming Commission strongly encourages individuals in the program to seek treatment and refrain from visiting Missouri casinos.

I placed myself on the Missouri Self Exclusion Program at your office inside (a Missouri casino). The officer spent a great deal of time with me explaining all that was involved including the possibility of being arrested for criminal trespassing. I remember all the feelings I had that night just as though it were yesterday. I was scared, embarrassed, angry, relieved and a whole host of other emotions I have yet to sort out. The main thing I felt was "safe" – safe from being allowed to enter any casino in the state of Missouri – safe that if I tried I WOULD be arrested!

Well, one day in May, I was feeling the urges so strongly, that I borrowed a card from a friend (who does not know of my compulsive gambling) on the pretense that I did not want to stand in a long line to get a card and was just meeting some friends for dinner. Of course, there was no such plan – but I did go to the casino – ate dinner and then proceeded to the entrance to the gaming room. I don't mind telling you that I was scared to death, but the urge was much stronger than even the thought of being arrested.

I handed the card to the person at the scan desk – she scanned my card – said have a good time "Sarah," and I walked right in. "Wow," I thought to myself. "That was easy!" The video poker machines that I liked to play were not where I had left them – did they take them out – did I do all this for NOTHING? I wandered through the casino and within about 15 minutes I found that "my" machines had not been taken away – only moved from the first to the second floor – whew, what a relief! I sat down, put my borrowed card and money into the machine that I knew all too well and began what was to be a nine-hour stay (at the casino). By the time I left, I was "up" \$1,300 and feeling pretty darn good about myself. I would now have the money to pay my rent, utility bills, the bank overdraft and go to the grocery store, too! Besides – I had "beat" not only the machines, but I had beat the system! Cool! I had boarded the boat at around 11:30 p.m. on a Saturday night and it was now 7:40 a.m. Sunday morning – so I left to go home to sleep.

I slept until about 9 p.m. on Sunday, did a few chores around the house and then – you guessed it – the urges came back to me, and I again went to Harrah's to win even more money. If I could win \$1,300 last night – think what I could win tonight! I

entered the casino just as easily as I had entered the night before – no questions, no other ID required – just that borrowed card. Before I even put the first dollar into my machine, good fortune hit. I saw that someone had left their card in the very machine I was getting ready to play; yep, I pocketed that card so I could return my friend's card and still be able to gain access to the casino.

But this night – I managed to lose the entire \$1,300, plus close to my entire paycheck. Despair, anger, hatred for myself were the emotions that I was all too familiar with. I drove home with empty pockets – not even enough to buy a cup of coffee! I was numb and exhausted, but strangely calm.

I fixed myself a pot of coffee, made myself comfortable on my sofa, opened all my medication bottles, poured all the medications in a small bowl and began taking them as if they were (candy). I did not want this feeling to ever come back. I felt this to be the only way to ensure that I would not give into my weaknesses and not disappoint the ones I loved the most. Needless to say, I was unsuccessful in my attempt, but if someone from work had not gotten worried about me, I would not be writing this letter. The doctors said that with the amount of drugs I ingested, another 30 minutes to an hour would have done the trick.

So, I got to spend the next week locked up in a mental facility that had no idea how to treat my compulsive gambling, and therefore I came out much the same as when I entered.

"... I am an ADDICT, just as much as if I were addicted to alcohol or drugs. This is a mental disorder and not one that is easily self-controlled by me and not easily detected by others. I show no outward signs of being an addict. I look as normal as the "woman next door."



Member Participation Forges A Strong Alliance

Keep informed about what's happening with problem gambling in Missouri and help develop Alliance programs by becoming a participating member of the Alliance.

Any individual or organization interested in promoting and furthering the Alliance's mission to educate Missouri residents on the potential characteristics and dangers of problem and compulsive gambling and promoting the availability of treatment can join the Missouri Alliance as a participating member.

Participating members are encouraged to:

- **Participate in Alliance meetings and events;**
- **Aid in the planning of awareness events; and**
- **Provide input to further expand the Alliance's programs.**

All memberships into the Alliance are free. For more information about becoming a participating member or to join, visit the Alliance's Web site at www.888BETSOFF.com or call (573) 522-1373.

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BETSOFF BULLETIN is produced by the Missouri Lottery for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Compulsive Gambling.
Editor: Shelly Perez, responsible gaming program coordinator for the Missouri Lottery
Designer: Paul Adams, art director for the Missouri Lottery
Printer: Missouri State Printing Services, Jefferson City, MO

Renowned Gambling Court Judge Featured In Iowa Event

“Gambling Court: An Innovative Idea” will be presented by Judge Mark G. Farrell, senior justice at the Amherst Court in Amherst, N.Y., on Nov. 17 in Des Moines, Iowa. The presentation, which is free, will be from 8 a.m. to noon at the Renaissance Savery Hotel, 401 Locust St. in Des Moines.

Ferrell implemented the first Gambling Treatment Court in the United States in August 2001. Using procedures in his drug treatment court and other drug and alcohol courts around the country, Ferrell applied the theories of therapeutic and restorative justice to compulsive and pathological gambling.

During the Nov. 17 event, Farrell will present information that led to the implementation of the gambling court and share the results of three years of operation.

Ferrell’s presentation is being sponsored by the Iowa Gambling Treatment Program in the Iowa Department of Public Health, the U.S. Attorney’s Office Southern District of Iowa and Training Resources, a division of the Iowa Substance Abuse Program Directors’ Association.

Number of calls to 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633)

	2003	2004
January	269	280
February	305	369
March	270	350
April	268	343
May	309	352
June	262	336
July	310	326
August	227	260
September	236	

The Bulletin is available through the Alliance’s Web site, www.888betsoff.com. We are building an e-mail list of individuals who are interested in receiving notification when a new issue is available at the Web site, so please forward your e-mail address to: perezs@molottery.com. If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the “Bulletin” through the regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

If you received notification by e-mail about this issue, you’re already on our e-mail list.



Missouri Department of Mental Health



Missouri Council on Problem Gambling Concerns



Missouri Gaming Commission



Missouri Lottery



Missouri Riverboat Gaming Association



Port Authority of Kansas City, MO

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling’s mission is to heighten public awareness for the dangers of problem gambling; develop prevention and education programs for gamblers of all ages; and direct problem gamblers and their families to the 1-888-BETSOFF help line