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NYSGC marks National Problem Gambling Awareness Month with series of actions

Commission introduces responsible gaming rules, plans to expand self-exclusion policy to all NY gaming

On the eve of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (March), the New York State Gaming Commission discussed ongoing measures to address the issue of problem gambling and announced plans to expand the current by-facility policy of allowing individuals who recognize they may have a gambling problem to bar themselves from that gaming facility to also be barred from every other gaming activity in the state, including the Lottery. The Commission today also formally proposed comprehensive regulations detailing problem gambling plans at newly-licensed commercial casinos in Upstate New York.

“Since its formation, the Commission has made a priority of establishing policies and procedures to provide access to help for those who need it,” said Commission Executive Director Robert Williams. “Our commitment to promote responsible gaming in New York is an integral part of our mission – not just in theory, but in practice.”

Expanding Existing Statewide Self-Exclusion Policies

Self-exclusion programs currently exist at all video lottery gaming facilities, all race tracks, all off-track betting corporations and each Indian gaming facility. In total, there currently are more than 2,800 individuals who have self-excluded from either video lottery facilities or racetracks in New York State. However, current statutes and rules place the obligation for exclusion on each licensed facility individually, which leaves a gap vulnerable for potential exploitation. This loophole makes it possible for a patron to self-exclude from one facility – only to continue wagering at another nearby facility or in a different format.

The Commission intends to plug this hole administratively by establishing a uniform self-exclusion policy across all licensed venues, cutting through the red tape that exists for a person looking to cumulatively exclude themselves from gambling opportunities.

Additionally, for the first time, the Commission is seeking to extend self-exclusion to traditional Lottery draw and instant games, where prizes of \$600 or more must be claimed at regional Lottery customer service centers. Upon implementation, any self-excluded individual who attempts to claim a lottery prize of \$600 or more would forfeit their prize.

Problem Gambling Rules for Upstate Casinos

The Commission today proposed rules that detail responsible gaming plans for newly licensed commercial casinos. The proposed rules:

- Require each facility to identify policies and procedures to combat problem gambling, including an employee training program
- Require each facility to provide quarterly and annual reports to the Commission regarding their problem gambling plan progress and results.
- Identify restrictions on advertising and signage, including the content and placement of gambling assistance messages.

The rules also establish a comprehensive self-exclusion policy for commercial casinos to be maintained by the Commission. Full text of the proposed rules may be found [here](#).

Public Service Announcement Focusing on Underage Gaming

Research suggests a link between early gambling behavior and the associated risk of developing problem gambling issues later in life. The Commission, as a member of the Responsible Play Partnership (including the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services and the New York Council on Problem Gambling) is producing a public service announcement aimed at helping parents speak with their children about gambling. An expanded version of the video will be made available to schools and parent-teacher organizations to jumpstart a conversation among teachers, parents and students. The Commission's previous PSAs on problem gambling may be found at its [YouTube page](#).

Problem Gambling Awareness Messaging

Each year, the Commission has highlighted Problem Gambling Awareness Month with a message printed on each draw game tickets and through messaging on electronic displays at sales terminals. This year, the Commission is participating in a poster campaign aimed at raising awareness of Problem Gambling Awareness Month and raising awareness of the referral services available through the OASAS toll-free HOPELINE (1-877-8-HOPENY). Posters are being distributed throughout the state, including the Commission's various divisions –video lottery gaming facilities, at racetracks and off-track betting corporations.

National Council on Problem Gambling's 30th Annual Conference in Tarrytown

For the first time in more than 30 years, the National Council on Problem Gambling's will hold its Annual Conference in New York State. This event, taking place July 15-16 in Tarrytown, will bring hundreds of problem gambling prevention and treatment professionals as well as gaming facility operators from across the country to the lower Hudson Valley to learn and share best practices.

The Commission will be represented at three different conference sessions, each highlighting a different aspect of New York's emergence as an industry leader in this area of social responsibility.

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