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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STATE HIGHLIGHTS EDUCATION, TREATMENT SERVICES**  
**DURING 'PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK'**

**HARRISBURG** – The state departments of Health, Agriculture, and Revenue – along with the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board – will highlight National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 1 – 7, by reminding citizens that counseling and treatment services are available to those affected by a gambling addiction.

“For most people, gambling is a fun and harmless form of entertainment. But for some, it can be a devastating addiction,” said Health Secretary Everette James. “We want to make sure people are aware of available resources and remind them this is not a battle they will have to fight

alone.”

The Department of Health has approved 42 problem gambling treatment providers across the state to provide counseling services to those in need.

Assistance is also available by calling the 24-hour Pennsylvania Gambling Addiction hotline at 1-877-565-2112. The call is confidential, anonymous and free.

Pennsylvania Lottery Executive Director Edward Trees stressed the Lottery’s commitment to responsible gaming. The Lottery is administered by the Department of Revenue.

“The Pennsylvania Lottery is committed to maximizing revenues to benefit vital programs for older Pennsylvanians through the responsible sale and marketing of its products,” Trees said. “The Lottery encourages players to have fun playing its games with discretionary dollars, but reminds players to always play responsibly.”

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on Compulsive Gambling, the Lottery also sponsors a toll-free gambling hotline, 1-800-848-1880. It is featured on the back of instant tickets, during live televised drawings and on the Lottery’s Web site at [www.palottery.com](http://www.palottery.com).

The Pennsylvania Horse and Harness Racing Commissions are committed to keeping pari-mutuel gaming a pleasurable activity. All six racetracks in the state have instituted policies that promote safe, responsible gambling and are reviewed by the Licensing and Enforcement Board to protect Pennsylvania citizens, according to Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff.

“We invite Pennsylvanians to enjoy the excitement of live thoroughbred and standardbred racing at any of our six racetracks,” said Secretary Wolff. “Visitors to the tracks are encouraged to wager responsibly, whether they are betting on who will win the next race or visiting the casino to play the slot machines.”

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board oversees the slots industry which was designed to produce tremendous benefits for Pennsylvania residents. However, for some residents, gambling is an addiction with serious implications.

“Problem gambling is an issue that can affect Pennsylvanians of any age, race and ethnic background and can have significant societal and economic costs,” said Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board Chairman Mary DiGiacomo Colins. “We recognized that early and the Board became only the

second jurisdiction in the nation to establish an Office of Compulsive and Problem Gambling to address these issues.”

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board requires each casino to establish and comply with an approved compulsive and problem gambling plan. In addition, it administers a casino self-exclusion program through which individuals may ban themselves from casinos in Pennsylvania. To apply for self-exclusion, visit [www.pgcb.state.pa.us](http://www.pgcb.state.pa.us) and choose the Compulsive and Problem Gambling link.

Problem gambling is defined as an urge to gamble despite harmful negative consequences or gambling despite an urge to stop. Research has shown that roughly 1-3 percent of Americans will develop a gambling problem sometime in life.

For more information on problem gambling, visit [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us)

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:** This is a partial list of some of the programs and activities in the state during National Problem Gambling Awareness Week:

### **Harrisburg**

March 2; 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Resources and information will be available in the Main Capitol Building, East Wing Rotunda in Harrisburg. The event is sponsored by the PGCB, Pennsylvania Lottery, Horse Racing Commission, Harness Racing Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP).

March 3; 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Resources and information will be available in Strawberry Square located at 11 N. 3rd St. in Harrisburg. The event is sponsored by the PGCB, Pennsylvania Lottery, Horse Racing Commission, Harness Racing Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP).

### **Philadelphia**

March 4; 5:30 p.m.: A community information session will take place at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, at 19 South 22nd Street. The event is sponsored by PhillyHealthInfo.org and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. To register online, visit [www.collegeofphysicians.org](http://www.collegeofphysicians.org).