National Council on Problem Gambling

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020
March 26, 2015

Ms. Maureen Greeley
President
National Council on Problem Gambling

Dear President Greeley:

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee of the National Council on Problem Gambling, it is my honor to present the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

This plan proposes five overarching goals for the Council for the next five years. These goals are:

• Broaden public awareness of problem gambling.
• Promote the accessibility, availability and affordability of a continuum of treatment and recovery services for those affected by problem gambling.
• Research, establish and promote prevention and responsible gambling standards.
• Improve the knowledge and skills of those working on behalf of people affected by problem gambling.
• Enhance organizational capability.

These goals, and the tasks that follow, were conceived following considerable debate and discussion over a two-year period. The committee sought out, and received, substantial input from a wide range of sources, including the Board of Directors, Council staff, affiliate, individual and organizational members of the National Council, and other interested and affected parties. We are grateful to all those who took the time to share their thoughts with us and hope that they are satisfied with the final result.

The work of strategic planning, however, does not stop here. We recommend that on an annual basis Council staff propose and with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors implement specific tactics in support of the goals of the strategic plan. We further recommend that this annual work plan be communicated to the membership and that on at least an annual basis a report made to the membership on the status of each of the five goals outlined in the plan. Finally, we recommend that the Board periodically review the strategic plan and not hesitate to revise the stated goals as circumstances warrant.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the Strategic Planning Committee for the dedication and long hours they have given to this task. They are named elsewhere in this report. I could not have asked for a better committee.

Sincerely,

Don Feeney
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee
National Council on Problem Gambling
OUR PURPOSE
To serve as the national advocate for programs and services to assist all affected by problem gambling.

OUR VISION
To improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling.

OUR MISSION
To lead state and national stakeholders in the development of comprehensive policy and programs for all affected by problem gambling.

OUR CORE VALUES

NEUTRALITY
We do not take a position for or against legalized gambling. We advocate solely for those affected by problem gambling.

COLLABORATION
We believe that our mission is best served by the collaborative action of a broad range of people and organizations.

RESPECT
We will treat all those affected by problem gambling and all stakeholders with respect.

CREDIBILITY
We will be an objective, accurate and reliable source of information for all those concerned with problem gambling.
2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

Nearly 80 percent of Americans report that they have gambled in the past year. The vast majority do so for entertainment and do not suffer significant consequences. But at least five million people will experience serious problems with their gambling. And the impact will be felt by their families, colleagues, and others in society. However, gambling addiction too often is not seen as a public policy issue, but rather as a personal or individual problem. New research has not only increased our understanding of this disorder, but has also revealed the extent of the costs of problem gambling to our society.

Problem gambling touches every corner of our society, afflicting inner cities, suburbs, and rural communities. No age, income or ethnic group is exempt. The vast majority of those dealing with problem gambling are employed. Some of the elderly suffer from addiction as do people in the prime of their lives. Gambling and problem gambling also occur among the young, often at rates exceeding that of adults.

Gambling addiction is a serious public health issue demanding a comprehensive solution involving not only federal programs but also efforts on the part of states, counties, cities, communities, families, civic groups, the gambling industry, the non-profit sector, professions such as medicine, law, and finance, and other organizations.

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) takes a long-term view of the effect of problem gambling on the nation’s public health. This Strategic Plan focuses on comprehensive prevention, education, treatment, enforcement, research, responsible gaming and recovery efforts as the means to reduce the harm from problem gambling. It is central to our work as the leader in the development of comprehensive policy and programs. Further, the plan is intended not only to direct the work of the NCPG, but to assist all who work on behalf of those affected by problem gambling.

“Problem gambling” means gambling behaviors that result in serious negative consequences to the gambler. It includes gambling disorders as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) of the American Psychiatric Association but also includes those who suffer negative consequences from their gambling without meeting the DSM-5 clinical criteria. Our ultimate goal is to improve public health by reducing the personal, social, and economic costs of problem gambling.
The Board of Directors of the National Council on Problem Gambling resolves:

- We believe the decision to gamble is an individual choice that should be made on an informed basis, and that those who choose to gamble should be provided specific information on the financial and health risks of gambling, guidelines for responsible gambling, signs of addiction and resources for help.

- We believe problem gambling is a national public health issue that negatively affects individuals, families, businesses and communities throughout the country. Programs to reduce the harm from gambling addiction have a positive impact on individuals, families, communities and society.

- We believe that gambling problems encompass more than a clinical diagnosis of a gambling disorder. They can affect people whose gambling is just beginning to move beyond simple recreation, those on the path to recovery, and many points in between. We further believe that problem gambling services must address all individuals at any point on this continuum.

- We believe the most ethical and effective way to address problem gambling is through comprehensive prevention, education, treatment, enforcement, research, responsible gambling and recovery programs.

- We believe problem gambling services must be available in every state, accessible to all in need and affordable for problem gamblers and their families.

- We believe Federal, state, tribal and local governments have a responsibility to provide adequate funding for programs to mitigate the costs of gambling addiction.

- We believe gambling operators, suppliers, and regulators play a critical role in successfully addressing problem gambling, including but not limited to adherence to responsible gambling standards, establishing partnerships with problem gambling organizations, and assisting with the funding of problem gambling-related programs.

- We believe that our mission can only be accomplished through the collaborative action of a broad range of people and organizations, including government at all levels, the gambling industry, social service agencies, those in recovery, those who have been affected by the gambling of a loved one, the medical community, the financial industry, and the legal and judicial systems.

Therefore we, the National Council on Problem Gambling, through its members, staff and Board of Directors, will work for these principles through the following goals and strategies.
GOAL
Broaden public awareness of problem gambling.

Why is this important?
Public opinion surveys conducted by NCPG clearly reveal a great lack of public knowledge about problem gambling, the problem gambler, and people affected by problem gambling. These misconceptions can discourage people from seeking services, result in inaccurate reporting on problem gambling issues, and increase the difficulty of establishing comprehensive and effective services.

STRATEGY
How will we accomplish this?

• **Key messages:** We will identify key messages, determine the needs of key stakeholder groups, and provide a comprehensive suite of public awareness programs with a consistent message and theme.

• **Dispel misconceptions:** We will work to overcome the stigma and misconceptions associated with problem gambling by identifying public misconceptions about problem gambling, developing messaging dispelling misconceptions, and developing communications material that highlights successful recovery.

• **Build organizational expertise:** We will acquire, maintain and disseminate comprehensive knowledge of worldwide developments in gambling and problem gambling.

• **Reach out to government and media:** We will conduct active outreach to the media, public officials, and others to increase awareness of problem gambling.
GOAL
Promote the accessibility, availability and affordability of a continuum of treatment and recovery services for those affected by problem gambling.

Why is this important?
Significant gaps exist in treatment services throughout the country. Many areas are underserved, while others have no services at all. Those services that are available are heavily oriented towards short-term treatment for those in crisis. Effective programs for early intervention, affected families, cultural minorities, those with problems that do not meet clinical thresholds, and continued services in support of recovery are both rare and critical.

STRATEGY
How will we accomplish this?

• **Standards**: We will work with treatment experts to develop standards for effective treatment and provide education and training to help care providers meet these standards.

• **Advocate for services and funding**: We will engage elected officials, federal agencies, private business, and the nonprofit sector.

• **Diversity**: We will develop culturally specific initiatives that acknowledge the differing needs of a wide range of demographic, ethnic, and cultural communities.
GOAL
Research, establish and promote prevention and responsible gambling standards.

Why is this important?
Prevention is the ultimate goal of any public health initiative, and the National Council on Problem Gambling is in a unique position of being able to assist public health officials, educators, the gambling industry and others with state-of-the-art addiction prevention and responsible gambling programs.

STRATEGY
How will we accomplish this?

• **Assess and disseminate best practices:** We will develop and provide material, work to evaluate best prevention practices, and collaborate with the gambling industry on prevention initiatives at gambling venues.

• **Advocate for prevention programs:** We will work with our affiliates and relevant national organizations to include effective prevention programs in schools, health care programs, social service programs, and other venues.

• **Encourage responsible gambling programs:** We will recognize and encourage responsible gambling practices through research, working in partnership with the gambling industry and developing best practices.
GOAL

Improve the knowledge and skills of those working on behalf of people affected by problem gambling.

Why is this important?
Over the past 20 years there has been an explosion of knowledge in problem gambling and related fields. Yet those who work in treatment, prevention, education, and regulation are often unaware of new developments with the potential to affect their work. The NCPG is well-positioned to help transfer knowledge and thereby ensure the highest level of service.

STRATEGY

How will we accomplish this?

• **Provide quality training and education:** We will use a variety of means, including the annual conference, regional conferences, webinars and publications, to enhance knowledge and skills.

• **Promote knowledge transfer:** We will encourage and enhance communication between researchers, policy makers, and those providing direct services.
GOAL
Enhance organizational capability.

Why is this important?
Achieving our mission requires a board, staff, and membership that have the ability to operate cooperatively, efficiently and effectively, as well as access to sufficient resources to accomplish the programmatic goals laid out in this strategic plan.

STRATEGY
How will we accomplish this?

• **Improve internal structures**: We will improve the capabilities of state affiliates, the Board of Directors, committees, and staff.

• **Increase member involvement**: We will ensure that all members and allies are aware of and have the opportunity to influence and participate in NCPG activities.

• **Increase financial strength**: We will identify prospects for membership campaigns, seek grants from a wide variety of sources, and identify products and services that can generate revenue.
## NCPG Strategic Planning Committee

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Don Feeney (Chair)</td>
<td>Minnesota State Lottery</td>
<td>Roseville, MN</td>
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<td>Oklahoma Association for Problem and Compulsive Gambling</td>
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The committee would like to acknowledge the contributions of former committee member Tammi Barlow of IGT; past and present NCPG staff, including Melissa Eckenrode, Amy Feinberg, Juan Lopez, and Jocelyn Wilcox; Van Denton, Debbie Hoffmann, Todd Maki and Kathy Scanlan for their review of various drafts of this report; and the many members and stakeholders who took the time to share their thoughts on the critical issues confronting the National Council on Problem Gambling.

## NCPG 2014-2015 Board of Directors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Maryland Center for Excellence on Problem Gambling</td>
<td>Columbia, MD</td>
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<td>Judge Mark Farrell, JD</td>
<td>Retired Senior Justice</td>
<td>Williamsville, NY</td>
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<td>Don Feeney</td>
<td>Minnesota State Lottery</td>
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<td>Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling</td>
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<td>Maureen Greeley, President</td>
<td>Evergreen Council</td>
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<td>Rose Gruber, Secretary</td>
<td>Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling</td>
<td>Green Bay, WI</td>
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The National Council on Problem Gambling has been the leader in the field of problem gambling since 1972.

PURPOSE
To serve as the national advocate for programs and services to assist all those affected by problem gambling.

VISION
To improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling.

MISSION
To lead state and national stakeholders in the development of comprehensive policy and programs for all affected by problem gambling.

National Problem Gambling Helpline
Call & Text: 1-800-522-4700   Chat: www.ncpgambling.org/chat

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