

Midwest Conference To Include Variety Of Topics On Addiction

Registration and schedule information for the 2006 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse are now available through the Missouri Alliance's Web site: www.888betsoff.org. The third annual conference will be Aug. 16-18 in Kansas City.

The conference will feature keynote addresses by: Dr. H. Westley Clark, director of CSAT under the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration in Rockville, Md.; Robert Ladouceur, professor of psychology at Université Laval in Quebec City; and Loreen Rugle, coordinator of the Gambling Treatment Program at the Louis Stokes Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Cleveland.

The Missouri Alliance and other members of the Midwest Consortium are sponsoring the conference, which features workshops and seminars for treatment professionals, gaming industry representatives, educators and the general public.

"To those Missouri clinicians specializing in the treatment of compulsive gambling, the Midwest Conference provides the type of training

opportunities formerly available only to those able to attend a national conference," said Nora Bock, program manager for the Missouri Department of Mental Health and a member of the conference planning committee. "This is right in our own backyard. I encourage all to make efforts to attend."

Bock said that while the Midwest Conference has shown a strong emphasis on compulsive gambling treatment, there are numerous sessions devoted to substance abuse, mental health and various other topics that would benefit all clinicians.

The conference also will include a variety of workshops that would be of interest to representatives of the gaming industry.

"We're very concerned that people use our products in the manner in which we intend – for entertainment," said Mike Ryan, executive director of the Missouri Gaming Association. "The industry knows that a small percentage of patrons abuse our product."

The conference will provide ideas and workshops to assist the industry in implementing the best practices for responsible gambling."



Mullally Resigns From Gaming Commission



Kevin Mullally

The designer of the first statewide self-exclusion program for problem gamblers recently resigned from the Missouri Gaming Commission to take an executive position with an independent gaming products and systems testing laboratory. Kevin Mullally, a former two-time chairman of the Missouri Alliance, authored the bill creating the Voluntary Exclusion Program, which is often considered a landmark innovation and is now imitated by governments throughout the world.

Missouri's program is now the largest of its kind in the world, with more than 9,000 problem gamblers.

While serving as general counsel to the late Sen. Harry Wiggins, Mullally was one of the principal drafters of the legislation that created the Gaming Commission in 1993. Prior to being named as the third executive director of the Missouri Gaming Commission in 2001, Mullally served as its deputy director for legal and legislative affairs. He was employed with the Gaming Commission for 12 years.

Mullally currently serves as the vice president of the North American Gaming Regulators Association, chairman of the multi-jurisdictional Internet Gambling Task Force and is the regulator representative on the Board of Directors of the National Center of Responsible Gaming.

"Kevin was instrumental in creating the Alliance," said Joanne Collins, current chairperson of the Alliance. "His leadership and guidance will be missed. We do wish him well in his new endeavors."

In his new position with Gaming Laboratories International, Mullally serves as the general counsel and the director of government affairs.

Got A Story Idea?

Do you have a story idea for the next *Betsoff Bulletin*, or would you like to write a story for the next issue? There's a lot going on in Missouri concerning problem gambling, and we would like to include as much as possible in the *Bulletin* and on our Web site, so please be sure to pass on any ideas you may have.

To suggest story ideas for the *Bulletin* or the Web site, contact the editor, Shelly Perez, at betsoff@molottery.com or call (573) 526-7467.

Youth Are Gambling With Their Future

Youth and gambling just aren't a good mix, but apparently information about this volatile combination hasn't gotten around yet. I've been disappointed to recently read about several Missouri high schools sponsoring casino nights and holding family poker games for fundraisers for Project Prom and Project Graduation. What kind of message are we sending to our children?

Project Prom and Project Graduation are wonderful social events for our high school students. While promoting an atmosphere that is drug and alcohol free, they provide a fun night of activities following these momentous events.

But, while promoting drug- and alcohol-free events, many of these activities are now promoting gambling among our teens.

Gambling is fast becoming a favorite activity for many teens and college-aged young people. Texas Hold 'Em and celebrity poker have captured the attention of a popular sports channel, which now regularly broadcasts tournaments. News about these tournaments also is often included in the sports sections of many of our local newspapers.

As a result of the rise in popularity of gambling and the acceptance of gambling activities among our parents, problem gambling is on the rise among our nation's teenagers.

Gambling can be a fun activity for adults, but it's an activity with risks. Due to normal adolescent risk-taking behaviors, our youth are more susceptible to

addictions and participating in a risky activity can have severe consequences.

According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, researchers believe that gambling is a gateway activity to riskier behaviors, such as binge drinking, smoking marijuana, gambling on the Internet and participating in unsafe sex. The latest estimates show that approximately 2.9 million young people between the ages of 14 and 22 are wagering on card games on a weekly basis. More than 80 percent of these youth are male.

In a 2005 study cited by the Council, monthly rates of gambling among youth went from 48.2 percent in 2004 to 57.1 percent in 2005. This same study noted that in 2004, 44.9 percent of the youth who gambled weekly reported that they had at least one symptom of problem gambling. In 2005, the percentage of youth reporting at least one symptom increased to 54.5 percent. Card players reported more problem gambling symptoms than other types of weekly gamblers.

While our youth may not be losing what many adults would classify as large sums of money, early and regular participation in gambling activities can lead to problem gambling behaviors such as stealing, lying, abuse of time and money and disregarding school, family and friends.

The Missouri Alliance, individuals in the problem gambling field and educators need to continue to expand our outreach to Missouri's students and parents to provide them with the knowledge they need to make smart decisions about gambling with their future.

Upcoming Alliance Events

June 16

Deadline for nominations for the 2006 Outstanding Contributor Award presented by the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling

June 22-24

National Council on Problem Gambling 20th Annual Conference on Prevention, Research & Treatment of Problem Gambling. The conference will take place in St. Paul, Minn. For more information, visit www.ncpgambling.org

July 20

Conference registration fees for the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse increase after this date. Visit www.888betsoff.org for more information

August

Missouri's Responsible Gambling Education Month

Aug. 16-18

Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City

Number Of Calls To 1-888-BETSOFF
(1-888-238-7633)

	2005	2006
January	197	N/A
February	217	213
March	239	214
April	226	156

Need A Speaker?

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state on topics ranging from the prevention of youth gambling to the warning signs of problem gambling. For more information about the speakers' bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467 or (573) 522-1373.

All presentations are free of charge.

Life Crisis Services Moves To Midtown St. Louis

Life Crisis Services is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2006 and is moving to a new home at Provident's Yalem Midtown Office Building, 2650 Olive St. in St. Louis.

The move is a result of the 2003 merger of Life Crisis Services with Provident. To make room for Life Crisis, Provident recently added an additional 2,500 square feet of new space to its headquarters, known as the Yalem Family Life Center.

Life Crisis rented its former location at 1423 S. Big Bend Blvd. in St. Louis for several years. Its new home will feature a more efficient Crisis Room, many call-center amenities and office and conference areas.

New Public Service Announcements Promote Help Line

New public service announcements (PSAs) to promote Missouri's problem-gambling help line, 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633), began airing during the fourth annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 6-12.

The new PSAs include:

- **"All In"** – a radio PSA focusing on underage gambling;
- **"Sports Fun"** – a radio PSA highlighting sports gambling;
- **"Numbers"** – a radio and television PSA that focuses on the help-line number; and
- **"Golden Years"** – a television PSA geared toward older adults.

The PSAs are being provided by the Missouri Alliance, which is comprised of the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA), the Missouri Lottery, the Missouri Gaming Commission, the Missouri Council on Problem Gambling Inc., the Missouri Gaming Association and the Port Authority of Kansas City.

"Awareness of the help line is essential in helping problem gamblers and their family members find the assistance they need," said Michael Couty, director of ADA. "Missouri is fortunate to have a network of certified compulsive gambling counselors. The first step toward getting help is to call the help line."

All of the Alliance's PSAs can be viewed or heard through the Alliance's Web site: www.888betsoff.org.



"Numbers" television PSA

Missouri Students' Awareness Efforts Rewarded With Scholarships

Six Missouri high school students won scholarships in the 10th annual Project 21 Scholarship Contest, sponsored by the Missouri Gaming Association (MGA), the professional organization representing casino operators in Missouri. The winners were announced in April 2006.

The scholarships included two \$1,500 and four \$1,000 scholarships and were awarded to Missouri high school seniors. The students competed for the scholarships by creating an article, poster or video that educated their peers about the dangers of underage gambling.

The winners were:

- **Tyson Sprick of Kansas City, a senior at Raytown South High School, received a \$1,500 scholarship;**
- **Kimberly LaVonne Luther of Waynesville, a senior at Waynesville High School, received a \$1,500 scholarship;**
- **Whitney Kertz of Huntsville, a senior at Westran R-I High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship;**
- **Daytona Barker of Auxvasse, a senior at N. Callaway R-I High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship;**
- **Trisha D. Nuelle of St. Louis, a senior at St. John the Baptist High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship; and**
- **Allison Skare of Kansas City, a senior at Oak Park High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship.**

"Students' entries continue to impress us, year after year," said Mike Ryan, executive director of the MGA.

Ryan said the MGA is strongly committed to promoting responsible gaming practices in Missouri. "We are pleased to see that students across Missouri are learning more about the dangers of underage gambling, and then taking on the challenge of informing their peers,"

said Ryan. "Plus, Project 21 provides students with the means and inspiration to seek a higher education. It's a wonderful and effective program."

The Project 21 Scholarship Contest is open to all Missouri high school seniors planning to attend an institution of higher education in the United States within four years of a winning entry. The students are asked to create an article, poster or video that will educate their peers about the dangers of underage gambling. The submitted article, poster or video must have appeared in the entrant's high school in some form (published, posted or viewed) in January or February of the contest year. The MGA announces the winners of two \$1,500 prizes and four \$1,000 prizes each spring and jointly issues checks to winners and the accredited institution of higher education of their choice.

"The casino industry in Missouri is committed to education, whether it be through the taxes paid to the state by each casino property, or through the allotment of funding for this particular program," said Ryan. "Project 21 is unique, though, because it deliberately draws attention to an issue we are constantly trying to address. It's a true opportunity to educate."

The Missouri Gaming Association (MGA) is the statewide trade association of the Missouri casino entertainment industry and related professionals. Formed in 1993, the MGA provides research and information to increase awareness of the economic benefits of Missouri's casinos. For more information, visit www.missouricasinos.org/.

Cunningham-Williams Named To Provident Board

Renee Cunningham-Williams, a participating member of the Missouri Alliance, recently was named to the Provident board of directors.

Cunningham-Williams is a visiting associate professor at George Warren Brown School of Social Work. She has served on the boards of three nonprofit organizations – Doorways, Raven and Vince House.

Congratulations To The Stephens Family

The Missouri Gaming Commission's Problem Gambling Program Administrator Melissa Stephens and her husband, Greg, added another member to their family with the birth of Christian Joseph on April 14. Christian weighed 10 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 22 inches long. He joins sister, Elizabeth, and brother, Will.

1-888-BETSOFF

BETSOFF BULLETIN is produced by the Missouri Lottery for the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling.
Editor: Shelly Perez, responsible gaming program coordinator for the Missouri Lottery
Designer: Sonja Bechel, multimedia designer for the Missouri Lottery
Printer: Missouri State Printing Services, Jefferson City, MO

Membership Is Key To 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.org or call (573) 526-4080.

Want To Receive The *Bulletin*?

In an attempt to streamline costs, the *Betsoff Bulletin* is available through the Alliance's Web site, www.888betsoff.org. We have 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: betsoff@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, but remember to send us updates on any e-mail address changes. In addition, please feel free to forward the link for the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested in reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

Alliance news and event schedules are available on the Web at:

www.888betsoff.org



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 and treatment.