



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 28, 2022**

## **PA Gaming Control Board Recognized March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

**HARRISBURG** -- The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB) is recognizing March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in order to promote resources intended to help individuals with a gambling problem.

At its February 23, 2022 public meeting, the Board approved a resolution memorializing the importance of Problem Gambling Awareness Month. A copy of that resolution can be found at this link: [https://responsibleplay.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022\\_PGCB\\_Problem\\_Gambling\\_Resolution.pdf](https://responsibleplay.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022_PGCB_Problem_Gambling_Resolution.pdf)

On Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 11:30 a.m., representatives of the PGCB's Office of Compulsive and Problem Gambling will participate in a virtual kickoff of Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The PGCB will be joined by the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, the Pennsylvania Lottery, the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania and other organizations in a joint effort to educate Pennsylvanians about the effects of gambling disorders, raise awareness of tools necessary to identify this addiction and to recognize available services that help minimize the consequences of disordered gambling. The event can be viewed live at this link: <https://pacast.com/live/ddap>. To attend online, please email [stdugan@pa.gov](mailto:stdugan@pa.gov) and share the reporter's name and media outlet who wishes to attend the event.

Elizabeth Lanza, Director of the PGCB's Office of Compulsive and Problem Gambling, explains, "The goal of Problem Gambling Awareness Month is to bring recognition to gambling disorder by educating the public on the warning signs of the addiction and on treatment options and recovery tools available to those who suffer from the disease."

Lanza adds that there is one resource in particular that will link Pennsylvanians to gambling disorder resources. "I urge Pennsylvanians who are seeking help for a gambling disorder to contact the PA problem gambling helpline by calling 1-800-GAMBLER," Lanza says. "Trained specialists will direct callers to treatment options available locally and statewide."

The Board's Office of Compulsive and Problem Gambling works with both state and national problem gambling organizations, and with gaming licensees in Pennsylvania, to ensure its ability to provide useful methods and resources to deal with issues surrounding gambling addiction are available.

Kevin O'Toole, PGCB Executive Director, says the Board and the PA gaming industry recognizes the importance of problem gambling outreach.

"While most Pennsylvanians can gamble responsibly, we must not forget about the 2%-4% of the population that will develop a gambling disorder within their lifetime," O'Toole says. "Although the Board requires licensees to have safeguards in place, several licensees have expanded their outreach by partnering with national, state, and local organizations to sponsor trainings and outreach events and to provide even more problem gambling resources. We applaud those who make the extra effort."

O'Toole adds that the PGCB has worked on expanding and enhancing tools for problem gambling as additional forms of gaming have been added throughout the Commonwealth and online.

"Pennsylvania's self-exclusion programs for casinos, internet gaming and video gaming terminals have aided thousands of individuals who, by enrolling in one or more of the programs, have effectively banned themselves from engaging in legalized gambling activities," O'Toole says. "In fact, since 2006, enrollments have collectively eclipsed 20,000 in the Board's self-exclusion programs."

In addition to the self-exclusion programs, below are additional resources the PGCB has made available:

- [www.ResponsiblePlay.pa.gov](http://www.ResponsiblePlay.pa.gov), a website dedicated to problem gambling, which provides information and links to assist persons in identifying a potential gambling problem and finding help;
- PlayPause which allows for individuals to ban themselves from online iGaming sites in other gambling jurisdictions that also participate in the program. Pennsylvania is the first U.S. gaming jurisdiction to adopt PlayPause; and,
- Options for participants to limit their online play or spend in fantasy contests, online casino games, online poker, and/or online sports wagering.

As Pennsylvania's gambling industry continues to grow, it is important for the PGCB to continue to raise awareness, through events such as Problem Gambling Awareness Month, Lanza concludes that, "It is vital that we bring awareness to the fact that problem gambling is a disorder that is both preventable and treatable. Gambling disorder is not a sign of weakness or failure, it is an addiction and it should be treated as such."

### **About the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board**

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board is tasked to oversee all aspects of gambling involving 16 land-based casinos, online casino games, retail and online sports wagering, and Video Gaming Terminals (VGTs) at qualified truck stops, along with the regulation of online fantasy sports contests.

The land-based casino industry in Pennsylvania consists of six racetrack (Category 1) casinos, five stand-alone (Category 2) casinos, two resort (Category 3) casinos and three mini-casinos (Category 4). Casino expansion will continue over the next couple of years with the anticipated openings of up to two additional Category 4 casinos. A significant job generator in the Commonwealth, casinos and the other types of Board-regulated gaming is expected to generate over \$2 billion in tax revenue during the 2021/2022 State Fiscal Year.

Additional information about both the PGCB's gaming regulatory efforts and Pennsylvania's gaming industry can be found at <https://gamingcontrolboard.pa.gov>. You can also follow the agency on Twitter by choosing [@PAGamingControl](https://twitter.com/PAGamingControl).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Doug Harbach or Richard McGarvey - (717) 346-8321

###