



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK -- MARCH 7-13

### *2010 Campaign Promotes "Real Addiction, Real Recovery"*

**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS** –The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling announced today that it will host a community forum and breakfast event in Lawrence next Friday as part of Problem Gambling Awareness Week. The goal of the week-long campaign is to inform the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling, and to raise awareness about the help that is available both locally and nationally. Problem Gambling Awareness Week is set to launch on March 7, 2010 as debate continues in Massachusetts about whether to expand gambling. A bill that would legalize expanded gaming in the Commonwealth is expected to be released later this month.

In recognition of Problem Gambling Awareness Week, Governor Patrick has issued a proclamation in advance of, which in part reads, "Problem gambling is a public health issue affecting Americans of all ages, race, ethnic backgrounds in all communities; and intervention & treatment are effective in minimizing the harm to both individuals and society as a whole."

Problem Gambling Awareness Week is spearheaded by the National Council on Problem Gambling. The theme for this year's grassroots public awareness and outreach campaign is "*Real Addiction, Real Recovery*." The premise of the initiative is to highlight personal accounts from individuals who struggled with gambling disorders and found help and hope in recovery. Some of those stories, including a video from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, can be viewed on YouTube. (<http://www.youtube.com/NPGAW2009>).

The Mass Council on Compulsive Gambling's Awareness Week Community Forum and Breakfast event will take place at the Psychological Center in Lawrence on Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, from 8 to 9 a.m. Elected officials and community leaders from the Lawrence and Lowell communities are invited to learn about "*Real Addiction, Real Recovery*" from problem gambling treatment providers and recovering problem gamblers. Services at The Psychological Center in Lawrence and The Lowell House in Lowell, will also be highlighted during the breakfast event.

"Research finds that only 10 percent of people experiencing a problem with compulsive gambling will seek out services such as treatment and self-help recovery programs," said Marlene Warner, Program Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. "We hope that the personal testimonials shared on YouTube will encourage people who may have a problem to contact the Council for support and information about programs and services available for help."

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling has said that any legislation authorizing casinos or slot machines in Massachusetts must also include appropriate funds to prevent, intervene with, and treat gambling problems. An estimated 1 to 3 percent of the population has trouble with gambling at some point in their lives, according to a Harvard Medical School research study. In a recent national survey of funding for problem gambling services in the United States, Massachusetts ranked 18th in per capita expenditures to address problem gambling.

Please visit the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's website at [www.masscompulsivegambling.org](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org) or call the organization's toll-free, confidential Helpline 24/7 (1-800-GAM-1234).

*Founded in 1983, the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit public health agency dedicated to providing leadership to reduce the social, financial, and emotional costs of problem gambling and to promote a continuum of [prevention](#) and intervention strategies including: [information and public awareness](#), [community education and professional training](#), [advocacy](#), and [helpline / referral services](#) for problem gamblers, their loved ones and the greater community.*

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**Please go to our website to view our upcoming trainings!**

***We understand the problem. We can help.***