

Problem and Underage Gambling Symposium

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On August 17 and 18, 1995, the UNLV International Gaming Institute hosted the "Problem and Underage Gambling Symposium." The Symposium was funded by a grant from the ITT Sheraton Corporation's Gaming Division. The symposium was intended to achieve three primary goals: (a) bring Nevada casino operators together to focus on the scope, extent, causes, and consequences of problem gambling as it relates to customers, employees, and underage gamblers, (b) dispel a number of myths or inaccurate information typically associated with problem gambling, and (c) focus on multiple solutions or proactive steps that can be taken by gaming operators to address problem gambling.

The symposium was held on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and addressed the following topics:

- 1) What is problem gambling and who are problem gamblers?
- 2) Prevalence studies and what they tell us.
- 3) Problem gamblers in Las Vegas: treatment alternatives.
- 4) What the Ohio Lottery has done re: problem gamblers and treatment of problem gamblers and the impact on the family.
- 5) The impact of the introduction of gaming on a Midwestern culture and its impact on problem gambling in that culture: establishing treatment services.
- 6) The underage gambler.
- 7) What the state of Washington requires of gaming licensees concerning problem gambling.
- 8) A regulatory overview as it relates to problem gambling.
- 9) Academic perspectives on problem gambling.
- 10) What some casino companies are doing about problem gamblers as it impacts both employees and customers.
- 11) Workshop for attendees: designing an implementation program.

The panelists included national and local experts on problem gambling, casino industry operators and regulators who have created programs to address problem gambling, and consultants to the gaming industry on the topic. Included as panelist and speakers were Jean Falzon, former Executive Director of the National Council on Problem Gambling; Dr. Rena Nora, Chief of Psychiatric Services, Department of Veteran Affairs, Las Vegas office; William Curran, Chairman of the State of Nevada Gaming Commission and the featured luncheon speaker; Terrance Toohig, President of the Ohio Council on Problem Gambling; Mary

Ubinas, President of the Iowa Council on Compulsive Gambling; Betty George, former Executive Director of the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling; Frank Miller, Director/Commissioner of the Special Operations Division of the Washington State Gambling Commission; Dr. Shannon L. Bybee, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Michael D. Rose Distinguished Faculty Chair and Program Moderator; Dr. William Eadington, Ph.D., Director, Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming, University of Nevada, Reno; Dr. Frederick Preston, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Thomas Brosig, Executive Vice President, Grand Casinos; James Hippler, Senior Vice President of Administration, Boyd Gaming Group; and Carol O'Hare, Industry Consultants.

Perhaps the most fascinating portion of the program involved a workshop for seminar participants designed to create a checklist for an implementation program. This highly interactive session produced a series of recommendations and suggestions to include posting on the gaming property toll-free numbers of state and national councils that address problem gambling; inclusion of problem treatment in employee assistance programs; radio, television, and newspaper advertisements addressing compulsive gambling paid for by the gaming industry; and proactive awareness programs implemented in elementary and secondary schools.

The UNLV International Gaming Institute is producing a videotape of the Symposium which will be available by November, 1995. Interested parties may secure more information about the video by contacting the UNLV International Gaming Institute, William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-6037.