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03-3-12-1

## AGENDA COVER MEMO

AGENDA DATE: March 12, 2003  
TO: Board of County Commissioners  
DEPARTMENT: Health & Human Services  
PRESENTED BY: Rob Rockstroh



AGENDA TITLE: IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THE WEEK OF MARCH 10, 2003 AS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK IN LANE COUNTY

### I. MOTION

TO PROCLAIM THE WEEK OF MARCH 10, 2003 AS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK IN LANE COUNTY

### II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

To educate the public that problem gambling is a serious public health issue facing Lane County, and to highlight that treatment is free, confidential, and effective for problem gamblers and their significant others.

### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. Background / Analysis

The popularity of gambling in our state is without question; access to gambling in Oregon has grown remarkably in the past decade, and Oregon currently provides more gambling opportunities than any other state except Nevada. In fact, a casino is now Oregon's top visitor attraction (Associated Press, April 10, 1999). Yet while the majority of people gamble with few or no consequences, greater access to gambling in our state has certainly contributed to an increase in problem gambling. This issue affects families, worker productivity, communities, and the end result is compromised public health.

The National Council on Problem Gambling defines problem gambling as a "gambling behavior which causes disruptions in any major area of life." Pathological gambling, also known as compulsive gambling, is a more serious form of problem gambling that is a mental health disorder and often classified as an addiction. In Oregon, over 60,000 adults (2.3%) and 10,000 youth, ages 13-17 (4%), meet the criteria for problem or pathological gambling (Moore, 2001). In Lane County, an estimated 6,000 adults and 1,000 youth are problem or

pathological gamblers. Problem and pathological gambling has only recently become recognized as a significant public health concern due to its effects on individuals, families, and society at large. The following issues are just a few examples that help illustrate why problem gambling has such destructive potential:

- Research consistently shows higher rates of pathological gambling in teens whose parents gamble too much (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Jacobs, 2000; Wallisch & Liu, 1996; Winters, Stinchfield & Fulkerson, 1993).
- "Children of compulsive gamblers are often prone to suffer abuse, as well as neglect, as a result of parental problem or pathological gambling" (NORC, 1999).
- Many pathological gamblers report having started gambling at an early age—approximately age 10 (Gupta & Derevensky, 2001; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Wynne, Smith, & Jacobs, 1996).
- Up to 90% of pathological gamblers in treatment have considered suicide; about 20% of those in treatment have actually attempted suicide (Setness, 1997).
- Problem drinkers are twenty-three times more likely to have a gambling problem than persons without a drinking problem (Welte, Barnes, Wieczorek, Tidwell, & Parker, 2001).
- Individuals with concurrent mental health issues display much higher rates of disordered gambling than those without concurrent mental health issues (Shaffer, Hall, & Vanderbilt, 1997).
- About two-thirds of pathological gamblers commit crimes in order to pay off debts or to continue gambling (Brown, 1987).

Effective prevention and treatment programs present the most significant opportunities to reduce the burden of problem gambling. Oregon has been addressing problem gambling with the development of Oregon Problem Gambling Services, which are funded through the Oregon Lottery and guided by a public health paradigm. This public health approach to gambling involves prevention, outreach, harm reduction, and multiple levels of treatment. Emphasis of this continuum of care is placed on quality of life issues for the gambler, families, and communities. In Lane County, the continuum of care for gambling services is provided through the County's Gambling Awareness and Prevention Program (GAPP), and through the Addiction Counseling and Education Services (ACES) Meridian Gambling Treatment Center.

This year will mark the first-annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week and Oregon Problem Gambling Awareness Week, both to be celebrated the week of March 10, 2003. Efforts in Lane County will include gambling awareness poster contest awards, green and white ribbon week, public service announcements and transit ads targeting the Latino community, a news conference, and support of statewide media efforts.

**B. Alternatives / Options**

1. To declare the week of March 10, 2003 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.
2. Not to declare the week of March 10, 2003 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

**C. Recommendation**

That the Board of County Commissioners declares the week of March 10, 2003 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

**D. Timing**

Upon Board approval, the week of March 10, 2003 will be declared Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation will be completed as stated above.

**V. ATTACHMENT**

Board Order

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**RESOLUTION:** ) IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THE WEEK OF MARCH 10,  
                  ) 2003 AS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK IN LANE  
                  ) COUNTY.

**Proclamation on Problem Gambling Awareness Week**

WHEREAS, the week of March 10, 2003 is celebrated across the country as the first-annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week; and

WHEREAS, the week of March 10, 2003 is celebrated across the state as the first-annual Oregon Problem Gambling Awareness Week; and

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a significant public health problem that affects thousands of Lane County residents of all ages and backgrounds in all communities, and which has significant personal, social, health and financial costs; and

WHEREAS, Oregon is dedicated to reduce the negative effects of gambling for all Oregonians through its nationally awarded problem gambling services system of prevention, outreach and treatment for citizens throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of Lane County citizens have successfully sought treatment, are in recovery along with their families, and have benefited from the expertise of professionals in the treatment field who have dedicated their lives to helping people recover from problem gambling.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Lane County Board of County Commissioners proclaim the week of March 10, 2003 as **Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County** and encourage all citizens that choose to gamble to make responsible decisions and to support men, women and youth who are working to improve their lives through problem gambling treatment and recovery efforts.

DATED this \_\_\_\_ of March, 2003.

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Peter Sorenson, Chair  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
Date 2/28/03 Lane County  
Shoukhan  
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL