

# Newest Casino State Builds on Others' Experience to Create Responsible Gaming Programs

**A**lthough casinos in Kansas, the latest state to legalize commercial casino gaming, won't open their doors for at least another year, state gaming regulators already have been hard at work developing responsible gaming regulations to govern activities at the four anticipated state-owned properties. The regulations, finalized this August, are part of a growing trend requiring casino developers to put thorough, state-approved responsible gaming plans in place long before the first guests even enter the building.

"Responsible gaming is a huge priority for us here in Kansas, and we wanted to make sure that our casino operators understand that, too," said Mike Deines, director of responsible gaming for the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission. "Through these regulations, we have taken a proactive approach to promoting responsible gaming and dealing with the issue of problem gambling in the state's new casinos."

In a recent interview, Deines described the process for writing the regulations, during which the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission hired expert consultants on responsible gaming and problem gambling regulations and studied other states' regulations to identify successful programs. This yielded a set of regulations with two main components: a self-exclusion list and a responsible gaming plan that is required of each company managing one of the casinos.

According to Deines, Kansas's self-exclusion list will allow for individuals to voluntarily exclude themselves from gaming facilities, pari-mutuel licensee locations and fair association race meets throughout the state. Those wishing to be placed on the list will be able to do so at any of the aforementioned locations, at the Topeka office of the Racing and Gaming Commission, or by calling the commission directly to make arrangements. Facility managers will be required to have a plan to remove self-excluded persons from mailing lists and deny access to check cashing and other cash access privileges, special club programs and the issuance of credit.

Placement on the self-exclusion list will last for a



minimum of two years, and an individual will only be eligible to petition for removal if he or she has undergone a problem gambling assessment with a compulsive gambling counselor certified by the state department of social and rehabilitative services.

He or she also must complete a commission-approved education program on healthy lifestyle choices and problem gambling awareness.

In addition to the self-exclusion program, the Kansas regulations mandate the creation of a state Office of Responsible Gaming and require facility managers to craft a responsible gaming plan that addresses the property-level implementation of the state's self-exclusion program; procedures for creating and disseminating educational information about problem gambling and problem gambling treatment services, including signs, brochures and other media; details about employee responsible gaming training; procedures to prevent underage gambling and any other efforts designed to prevent problem gambling and encourage responsible gaming.

The responsible gaming plans must be approved by the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission at least 90 days prior to the opening of a facility. The commission is currently working to set guidelines for evaluating the plans and consulting with other states that require similar plans, such as Pennsylvania, to establish a template for a "model plan."

Kansas looked to its neighbor and fellow commercial casino state, Missouri, for the inspiration in developing the Kansas Responsible Gaming Alliance. Modeled after the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, the Kansas Alliance brings together key responsible gaming and disordered gambling stakeholders from both the public and private sectors with the mission of coordinating responsible gaming resources and messages.

Currently, the Alliance is made up of representatives from the Kansas Coalition on Problem Gambling, the Kansas Department of Corrections, the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services, the

*Continued on page 10*

## Newest Casino *Continued from page 9*

Kansas Lottery, and the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission. There are two open voting positions in the Alliance. One will be filled by a community member representing a Community Advisory Board that the Alliance plans to create. A representative of the four facilities managers will fill the final seat.

"For its members, we view the Alliance as a place where we can keep each other informed about what is going on in our agencies," said Deines, who is the member of the Alliance representing the Kansas Racing and

Gaming Commission. "For the public, we hope that the Alliance will allow us to form a united front in terms of marketing responsible gaming information and will serve as a primary resource for Kansans looking for information on problem gambling and responsible gaming."

The state of Kansas has placed a great deal of importance on creating the most effective responsible gaming programs and policies as soon as possible, and it got a head start by turning to the experience of other states that have been through the process.

## NCRG Encourages Parents and Mentors to Talk to Kids About Gambling

To date, popular discourse has framed problem gambling as an issue that primarily affects adults. Perhaps surprisingly, however, research shows that young people – despite having little or no access to casinos – are at a higher risk for developing gambling disorders than adults. In an effort to protect this particularly vulnerable segment of the population and continue raising awareness about responsible gaming, the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) has released a new brochure, "Talking with Children about Gambling."

This useful resource provides research-based guidelines for parents and others who mentor youth on how to talk with young people about the risks of gambling and help them avoid other potentially destructive activities. "Talking with Children about Gambling" was formally released in August during Responsible Gambling Education Week, the American Gaming Association's annual effort to increase national awareness of disordered gambling among gaming industry employees and patrons.

"We think this is an incredibly valuable resource for gaming industry representatives and members of the treatment community," said NCRG Chairman Phil Satre. "Together, we can take an active role in promoting responsible behavior from an early age and possibly prevent future problems by facilitating open dialogues

between parents and children."

In addition to guidelines for parents, the brochure includes statistics about the prevalence of gambling among young people, outlines some of the ways young people gamble and provides tips on how to recognize problem gambling warning signs. The brochure was developed by the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders, and it reflects an extensive evaluation of peer-reviewed research on youth gambling and adolescent behavior.

Visitors to the NCRG's Web site, [www.ncrg.org](http://www.ncrg.org), can download a copy of "Talking with Children about Gambling" free of charge. The NCRG encourages others to link to the brochure from their Web sites; linking instructions and guidelines also are posted on the NCRG's Web site.

In addition, the NCRG is actively seeking national and local partners to ensure that the resource is widely distributed and used. If you are interested in working with the NCRG to raise awareness about this critical issue, please contact Veronica Brown at [vbrown@ncrg.org](mailto:vbrown@ncrg.org).

