



Nebraska State Committee on Problem Gambling
County Inn & Suites – 5353 North 27th Street, Lincoln, NE 68521
August 21, 2009 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes



B

Purpose & Duration:

Quarterly Meeting of the Nebraska State Committee on Problem Gambling. The Executive Committee Meeting takes place one hour before the regular meeting starts.

Committee Members Attending:

John Bekins, Carmen Engelhardt, Janet French, Sherrie Geier, Ed Hoffman, Steve Jung, Steve Sloup, Kenneth Timmerman.

Committee Members Absent:

Carol Berglund, Dennis Buckley, John Hill, Dennis McNeilly

DHHS-Division of Behavioral Health Staff Attending:

Scot Adams, Willard Bouwens, Lori Dawes, Maya Chilese, Karen Harker, Eric Hunsberger, Iliana Martin, Daniela Myers.

Public Attendees:

Jerry Bauerkemper, Deb Hammond, Jolene Johns-Beckstrom, Lynn Nagorski, Kate Speck, Wanda Swanson.

Agenda Items:

I. **Meeting Called to Order:**

Steve Jung, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:00am. After Roll Call, it was determined that a quorum was present. New member, Ed Hoffman, was introduced and welcomed (Attachment A).

II. **Approval of Minutes:**

The Meeting Minutes for June 5, 2009 were approved by general consent (Attachment B).

III. **Approval of Agenda:**

The Agenda for August 21, 2009 was approved by general consent (Attachment C).

IV. **Procedural Recommendations & Clinical Standards – Maya Chilese:**

- a. GAP requirements for Providers, and the role of funding are changing (Attachment D). GAP funds the administration of the Compulsive Gambling Counselor Certification Advisory Board, which reviews applications, recommends testing and renewals, and provides input in the development of standards for CCGC Clinicians. The Certification requirements are changing and other BH professionals can provide treatment. If GAP wants to purchase services from non CCGC, it can do so.
 1. As standards are increased with changes in Regulations, who does GAP want to buy services from? CCGC Clinicians who have a certain core of experience? There are only about thirty (30) such in the state of Nebraska. If looking to other licensed professionals, how to recruit and how would you know if they can truly provide the services that Problem Gambling treatment requires?
 2. What does GAP want to require of non CCGC Clinicians? LMHP, Psychiatrists already have credentials, do you want to add requirements to other clinicians such as a set number of hours specifically dealing with Problem Gambling-specific core education? Perhaps want to contract for one year while these other professionals seek predetermined core hours.
 3. How do we look at Contracts for Providers? It's a small field and providers are known. Set

parameters and if they are not met, cannot contract with them. Regulations speak to requirement of CCGC status. GAP interests may be further outlined in the Provider Manual and indicate that providers must keep up with Regulations and the GAP requirements or GAP will not contract with them.

- Hiring non CCGC is good since there are geographic treatment “holes” across the state such as in McCook-North Platte area. The reason why you would not want to hire non CCGCs is because they may not have the specialized training they would need for GAP.
 - Because of non CCGC group, want to add additional training requirement. If they do not do the extra training within the first contract year, will not re-contract.
 - Nebraska has 93 counties and 86 have a psychiatrist shortage. Thirteen counties have nothing-no LMHPs, etc. In some parts like Chadron, there are contracts with LMHP providers working on getting their CCGC because services were needed in that area.
 - Licensed MH Practitioners are the most common – Masters with 4,000 hours of classroom/experience. CCGC requires HS or GED and 72 hours classroom and 200 hours experience which may be from self, family, etc. Looking at qualitative vs. quantitative.
 - Problem Gambling specific coursework such as counseling theory, screening tools will count towards the continuing education requirement, of non CCGCs but would have to be approved.
 - Unspoken but assured policy of becoming a counselor, starting the process, and completing it is being questioned due to one individual who has not completed the requirements and has asked for more funding. Not having that extra licensing might be the one factor used to exclude those who do not get the specialized training from more funding.
 - If you want to attract more people, you have to add a policy that is clear.
 - Might offer an eighteen hour crash course on Problem Gambling for LMHPs that specifies screening, assessment, money & legal, then six ongoing, which would also satisfy the thirty-two hours an LHMP would need to maintain licensure status.
 - Online training, national conferences, core training workshops sponsored by GAP and other entities are available now and ongoing.
- b. The Committee needs to endorse a policy that allows non CCGC professionals to contract so they understand Problem Gambling specific issues. Before the motion is made, the Committee will agree to grandfather in those who meet the initial requirement (would not have to re-take the crash course but will have to take some hours during each year to maintain status). The policy would not reduce the number of counselors as they all have CEU requirements. The issue is to have a certain GAP-specific level and improved quality.
- c. Motion made for GAP to have a procedure for individuals seeking education with courses or in future earn certificate of completion. Have training but with the stipulation that the training will be enhanced with course work in GAP, the number of hours to be determined by DHHS and provide ongoing continuing education for these other licenses.

Action: Motion passed. DHHS will come back with a policy recommendation next meeting for approval. The current policy will be revised by the Division.

V. Policy Recommendations – Funding Requests Beyond Funding Period – Eric Hunsberger:

- a. Requests for additional funding (Attachment E) were sent in by ReNew Counseling, Choices Treatment Center and CrossRoads Resources, whose request was for travel, not services. Is a policy needed?
- b. There is a policy already addressing the issue and contract language on services beyond the contract period, especially services already delivered by June 30 2009. The Committee can amend retroactively contracts to pay for these services. Otherwise, the current contracts for ReNew and Choices would be amended.
- c. CrossRoads used funds tagged for conference attendance for direct services and went over contract. However, their request is for mileage reimbursement for attending an SCPG meeting.

- d. Both ReNew and Choices made request in March 2009 and were partially awarded, struggling with not going into cash reserves. Funds were re-allocated as to need. In June, the Committee was not sure it had the funding authority to meet the requests and deferred the decision until this time when there was information on providers not using the full contracted funds. Now can re-assess and re-allocate what was not used.
- e. Karen Harker pointed out that allowing requests for additional funds may establish a precedent that may not be best practice. Sherrie Geier noted that providers give their best guess and use historical data for their guesstimate, assessing the levels of funds and need in March and placing requests as needed. With new providers, sooner or later may run into the possibility of going over available funds. If that happens, the Committee can approach the Legislature (as was done in 2005) for additional funds. Maya Chilese also pointed out that providers can always request funding, but may not necessarily get it - what it comes down to is for consumers to get treatment.
- f. There is not actual policy for reimbursement for providers to attend SCPG for public comment. State employees or any other public members are not reimbursed for attending this meeting. The Committee members made a motion to vote on these requests individually. Willard Bouwens verified that \$70,000 of 2009 funds was still not used. If accepted, the Division would work with Willard Bouwens to add the appropriate contract amendments to address these funds.

Action: The Committee voted individually on each of the three funding requests. The motions were passed on the following:

- Motion for \$1772.25 - ReNew – Yes
- Motion for \$18,500 - Choices – Yes
- Motion for \$1,596 - CrossRoads – No

VI. Program Financial Status & FY10 Administrative Budget – Willard Bouwens, Lori Dawes, Eric Hunsberger, Daniela Myers:

- a. Eric Hunsberger noted on *GAP Program 38 Projections for FY10* (Attachment H) that the total FY10 GAP Budget would be \$1,295,000. Healthcare Cash allocated to the largest contracts - Choices, Heartland, First Step and Spence Counseling would assure that those funds would be spent first and would be in no danger of being taken back if unused. \$215,000 was budgeted to NE Council on Compulsive Gambling for educational coursework, helpline and outreach. Attachment I shows the breakdown by Quarter per contract, which is one of the tools used for the allocation process.
- b. Eric noted that the \$10,000 budgeted for Magellan has not been collected and is subject to the Division being satisfied with the contract. Magellan is the database manager for the three Divisions of the Department. The Committee will be updated when all the billing for 2009 has been paid.
- c. As requested by the Committee, Attachment J shows the Administrative Budget breakdown. The main revenue sources are the Lottery, Education/Prevention/Awareness, and Health Care Cash funds. Up to 10% of total revenue by statute may be authorized for administration. The breakdown provided in this attachment provides answers to the Committee's request on how the 10% is used and for what. This attachment should be kept as a model that can be reviewed at the beginning of each Fiscal Year.

VII. GAP Program Report - Maya Chilese, Eric Hunsberger & Kate Speck:

- a. Preventions Strategies - Maya Chilese stated that as per Attachment K, three options are available regarding Odds Are (Lancaster County) and GLW: GAP recommends Option B – partial funding of current programs. Recommendation for partially funding current programs in order to utilize opportunity to further evaluate youth gambling prevention strategies; identify prevention system opportunities and next best steps for further youth gambling prevention implementation.
 - 1. Programs need up to 5 years to establish, document and evaluate significant evidence of effectiveness.
 - 2. Few specific activities of current programs incomplete.
 - 3. Programs had only a solid year and a half for program implementation after a year and a half of design and development.
 - 4. The Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Survey that measures youth behavior was postponed

- for a year, delaying ability to detect statewide and localized change in youth gambling behavior; including any correlation to current programs.
5. Division's statewide prevention system utilizing FY10 for strategic planning and not beginning new initiatives until further analysis.
 6. SPF SIG model of prevention planning highly recommended for youth gambling prevention.
 7. Many substance abuse prevention coalitions and agencies prime vendors for integrating gambling prevention.

Break for Lunch

- b. Kate Speck explained how GLW and Lancaster County were chosen. Proposals were written and re-written. Then GLW and Lancaster County were the only ones to apply and offer viable options. Training facilitators to get up to speed about prevention and gambling was not thought a good option.
- c. Maya Chilese noted that GLW had been facilitating drug and alcohol prevention to coalitions and doing a decent job. The second time around they had a better plan, but still lacked knowledge on gambling issues and this was seen as a problem. Lancaster had pilot programs and was working towards integrating them into the Public School System. A good option would be to buy the pilot program and take it across the state. If GLW could offer this option, might go with them, but they do not seem to have the right audience base for the school trials. Could start over but if you let GLW and Lancaster lose all that they have done, it would be a waste; Lancaster has great ideas and GLW can put the curriculum into effect.
- d. An option would be to require a three region county to link up with Lancaster and tie the funding to results and performance indicators to:
 1. Implement the program.
 2. Test the management.
 3. Demonstrate implementation.
 4. Actively coordinate to evaluate and monitor the process.
- e. It was pointed out that GLW does not really have the number of schools/population to do the above option alone. How many places/sites can this be used/piloted? More counties would be needed?
- f. It was suggested that each of the two organizations provide the Committee with presentation or provide reports to see if GLW and Lancaster are really doing what the Committee wants to see done. Lancaster will be finalizing the curriculum and developing piloting. GLW would pilot what Lancaster has developed.
- g. Maya Chilese recommended that the Committee fund Lancaster with specific deliverables, pilot, construction of tool kit, maintenance of web site and continue the contract up to \$35,000 and fund GLW partially with piloting (the number of schools being a factor) up to \$30,000 or cap at \$20,000 and pay only reimbursable deliverables and reports (GLW would bill by activity).
- h. Maya Chilese was charged with seeing if GWL and Lancaster would be interested in the discussed arrangement and volunteered to monitor progress and send out reports or extend evaluations.
- i. Additionally, Lancaster would be asked to bill more often. Currently they bill on activity, but this has been a stumbling block when there has been lag due to lack of completion on activities.
- j. The Committee opted to vote on each vendor separately. If not used, these funds can roll over.

Action: The Committee voted individually on each vendor. The motions were passed on the following:

Motion for \$35,000 – Odds Are – Yes

Motion for \$30,000 – GLW – Yes, based upon determined opportunity and ability to perform the tasks desired.

VIII. GAP Annual Report, Provider Manual & Strategic Planning - Maya Chilese & Eric Hunsberger:

- a. Annual Report - will be published to the DHHS website and copies will be sent to the Governor, Legislature and Committee Members. Under revised statutes, the Annual Report is due 60 days after the end of the fiscal year. Data from the Public Policy Center (PPC) was included in the

report, and the narrative is a combination of the last report and the efforts of the Committee members who volunteered to address and oversee the content.

- b. Provider Manual - will be published on the DHHS website and will include the *Funding Request Form*.
- c. Strategic Planning – Eric Hunsberger proposed a review of the existing plan in the SCPG binders over the next couple of months and the creation of a new plan in 2011. It was suggested that instead of revising the existing document, it should be scrapped and the Committee should start over since the original seems to lack continuity and cohesion. Eric suggested a voluntary committee to re-assess the process of Strategic Planning by next meeting and nominated Sherrie Geier to spearhead the process. She agreed and will be sent a draft before the next meeting.
- d. Part of Strategic Planning, are events like the Legislative Breakfast that has been offered for the past two years with a decent turnout. It functions to maintain a continued presence in the Legislature, to educate and make contacts with new members especially. Eric suggested that the Legislative Breakfast tie in with the National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

IX. Public Policy Center (PPC) Update – Kate Speck:

- a. On behalf of Juan Ramirez, who has been working closely with Eric Hunsberger and Maya Chilese, Kate Speck touched on the information in the Annual Report that focuses on the data on treatment and National Outcome Measures (NOMs), as a way to “get in line” with Federal funding.
- b. Magellan data is being collected per region for cluster analysis.
- c. Geo-mapping in 2010 will reflect where services are offered vs. where the clients are and will help with strategic planning, getting to people in the field where they are, getting providers where and when they are needed, using zip codes to map.
- d. Integrations of Quality Assurance on the effectiveness of treatment, looking at data, measures, goals and objectives for strategic plan. The date will follow up on the current status of those who used the programs. They are working with the University of Nevada to look at consumer surveys, see where they are, how they are faring and follow up on their general status.
- e. Also working with Juan Ramirez is the Evaluation Team, made up of volunteer providers – Jerry Bauerkemper, Dennis McNeilly, Deb Hammond, Wanda Swanson and Harlan Vogel.

X. Licensure Application Update – Maya Chilese:

- a. Provider Mike Sullivan facilitated the 407 Review of the licensure application for problem gambling treatment providers. (Attachment K1).
- b. Sherrie Geier suggested that it might be premature to prepare a bill without at least attempting to respond to Dr. Schaefer's recommendations.
 - 1. The initial review said “yes,” it meets the criteria, so it went to the next level, the Board of Health and then on to Dr. Joan Schaefer, M.D., Director, Division of Public Health, DHHS, whose comments can be seen in (Attachment K2).
 - 2. Dr. Schaefer approves of two out of the four criterion and her recommendations carry a great deal of weight and convey the value of growth to this field.
 - 3. Dr. Schaefer said she does not see that the public would be harmed, and there is no evidence for certified vs. licensed counselors.
 - 4. Due to Dr. Schaefer's response, a bill could still be introduced. There are many things in the fields at the Federal level and being proactive would be of service. Need to continue to gather data and continue conversations with LADC, etc.
 - 5. Sherrie Geier suggested that it might be premature to prepare a bill without at least three questions in agreement. She proposed that alternative or modified process be pursued in the coming year, and to invite LADCs to see if they would come to the table and help create more umbrella licensure. There is no curriculum in higher education that addresses this, so it is wise to follow Dr. Schaefer's lead and get more data. The Certification Board needs to take the lead on what to do next and report back to the Committee and see if they can offer a plan or recommendations, possibly see if Federal funding and other questions in licensure for this field might help insure the industry to offer help with this as was done with Mental Health.
- c. Citizenship Requirement - Eric Hunsberger informed the Committee of the new LB403 requirement for all providers and non-emergency consumers, to have U.S. citizenship. This is due October 1, 2009. Legal is working on specific language to verify recipients of care and staff of non-

emergency/crisis consumers.

XI. Legislative Updates – Sherrie Geier:

- a. Attachment L – Article in Journal Star for videogame Bank Shot, and its legality.
- b. Brian Pick's Charity Poker bid encouraging senators to introduce a bill making this a crusade to make charitable poker a new form of legalized gambling in Nebraska.
- c. Senator Friend resigned. New committee member might have a different view of gambling, but the issue remains to be seen.

XII. Next Committee Meeting: November 13, 2009. Agenda items will include setting the next four meeting dates, CEU policy, strategic planning, contracts and amendments, specifically contracts with Lancaster and GLW, elections of new officers, provider presentations (who the Committee would like to see and hear from in person), billboards (Super Bowl and March Madness).

XIII. Public Comment/Discussion:

- Jolene Johns introduced Lynn Nagorski, new colleague at First Step. She commented on extra courses required for CCGC as being a barrier to providing services. She also questioned why the bulk of the Health Care Cash was seemingly being allocated to the four biggest contracts. Also, she stated that taking time off from her practice to attend additional classes to be able to treat gambling addiction clients was a hardship.
- Steve Jung responded that the four contractors indicated (Attachment H) use the most treatment dollars, so they were allocated more Health Care Cash and less Lottery funds to expend the Health Care funds first so that it does not get taken back if not used.
- Jolene also said First Step is willing to do more public education/prevention projects, but didn't want to interfere with State projects. Said private providers would have more success in programming and getting results.
- Steve commented that if First Step met the criteria, they would probably be able to do it.
- Ed Hoffman asked Jolene how many years she had been in MH, and she said two. He also asked how many hours of CEU's she would need. She stated she would need 32.
- Steve stated that she would need no additional hours, just a percentage of those 32 to be able to do gambling, but that at least 6 of those hours would have to be financial/legal; that was still not decided yet.
- Maya Chilese stated that Licensure sets the standards for CEU's and she would have to apply to the CCGC Board. She also stated that she has not approved on-line courses and tele-health video conferencing, but CCGC only has so much funding.
- Jolene countered that there were not enough classes being offered in western Nebraska for CCGC – classes should be available on-line; NATI offers on-line courses.
- Maya stated that core education is a different process than CEU, and Sherrie contributed that years ago, Jerry Bauerkemper was contracted to travel all over Nebraska and offer classes and there would be no attendance, so this was discontinued. Also, there is a point beyond which one should not be willing to compromise the level of training for gambling treatment and have responsibility for maintaining the integrity of programs.
- Jolene argued that LMHPs already meet that requirement under the scope of work, so some have let their CCGC expire.
- Ed added that there need to be an educational requirement and that is has to be affordable and on-going requirements are useable for LMHP and GAP.
- Eric Hunsberger stated that there is a need to address education conditions that need to be outlined. This process has already started.

- Wanda Swanson, on behalf of Deb Hammond, who had to leave, thanked the Committee for the amendment to the FY09 Contract. She also added that she has CCGC and no other credentials, and that it is a lot of work, but that everyone understands that their practice is not a nine-to-five job. She also thanked everyone else for all their work.
- Jerry Bauerkemper had some comments on HR2906, the Federal Grant, which is coming in September and has 71 million for gambling. This is the internet gambling legalization bill which would allocate

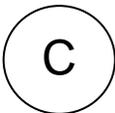
funds for treatment, awareness and education to each state if passed.

- Jerry also stated that education requirements for certification will increase in January, and NCCG will have to hurry to look at revamping the training program. The entire scope of work may change with the advent of more Federal requests for documenting - requesting NOMs (defined in page 5) which have been adopted by states and are being tweaked. Nevada, California and other states are working closely to innovate programs with these new process requirements.

XIV. **Meeting Adjourned:** Meeting concluded at 3:31 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Iliana Martin, Staff Assistant II, Division of Behavioral Health, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Minutes are intended to provide only a general summary of the Committees proceedings.

NEBRASKA STATE COMMITTEE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING
DRAFT MEETING AGENDA: August 21, 9:00AM-3:00PM
County Inn & Suites
5353 North 27th Street, Lincoln, NE



Time	Agenda Item	Individual	Supporting Binder Documents	Action Required
8:00-9:00AM	Executive Meeting (Executive Officers and DHHS Staff only)	Executive Officers & DHHS Staff	NE Revised Statutes §71-816-817 Bylaws	Review Meeting Objectives, Priorities
9:00-9:30AM	Welcome and Introductions	Steve Jung	Revised Committee Roster to Include New Member Ed Hoffman (A)	Call to Order
	Attendance – Determination of Quorum	DHHS Staff		Roll Call
	Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	Steve Jung	June 5, 2009 Minutes (B)	General Consent
	Review and Approval of Today's Meeting Agenda	Steve Jung	August 21, 2009 Agenda (C)	General Consent
OLD BUSINESS				
9:30-10:15AM	Procedural Recommendations (Clinical Standards)	Maya Chilese	Procedural Recommendations Draft Documents (D)	Inform/ ACTION
	Policy Recommendations (Funding Request beyond Contract Period)	Eric Hunsberger Willard Bouwens	Request Letters for Emergency Funding (E)	Inform/ ACTION
NEW BUSINESS				
10:15AM-12:00PM	Program Financial Status FY10 Administrative Budget Report	Willard Bouwens, Lori Dawes, & Daniela Myers Eric Hunsberger	FY10 General Ledger (F, G, H & I) DRAFT - Administrative Budget Form (J)	Inform/ ACTION Inform/QA
12:00PM-12:30PM	WORKING LUNCH and NEW BUSINESS continued (Lunch provided for all Committee members and Division staff)			
12:30PM-1:45PM	GAP Program Report (<i>Initial Topics</i>) 1. Prevention Strategies FY10 2. Provider Funding Requests 3. Annual Report Requirements 4. Provider Manual Updates 5. Strategic Planning 6. Licensure Application Update 7. Public Policy Center	Maya Chilese Eric Hunsberger Eric Hunsberger Maya Chilese Eric Hunsberger Maya Chilese Kate Speck	1. Prevention Strategies FY10 (K) 2. DRAFT - Annual Report (TBP) 3. DRAFT - FY10 Provider Manual (TBP) 4. Current Strategic Plan (Binder)	Inform/QA/ ACTION
1:45PM-2:00PM	Legislative Updates	Sherrie Geier	LR 230 & General Affairs Committee Communication (L)	Inform/QA
2:00PM-2:15PM	Confirm Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items for Next Meeting	Steve Jung		Inform/QA
2:15-3:00PM	Public Comment (Please see below for suggested procedure).			
	<i>Each individual wishing to speak during the Public Comment portion of today's meeting is encouraged to indicate so on the Public Comment Sign-in List.</i>			
	<i>Each individual who signs the Public Comment Sign-in List will be invited to speak in the order in which their name appears on the list. Please attempt to keep your comments brief, so that all may have an opportunity to speak before the committee and those gathered for today's meeting.</i>			
	<i>Public comments not provided in person today may be sent to the Division of Behavioral Health Science, Attention Eric Hunsberger, at the following mail address: PO Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026 or via electronic mail at Eric.Hunsberger@nebraska.gov.</i>			
3:00PM	ADJOURN			General Consent

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Behavioral Health
Community Based Services

DIVISION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Effective Date:

Page No.

Revision Date:

Approved:

Scot Adams, Director
DHHS Division of Behavioral Health

Subject: Continuing education requirements for Certified Compulsive Gambling Counselors.

Purpose: To ensure contractors delivering treatment services addressing gambling addictions maintain educational requirements defined in regulations under this Division and/or the Division of Public Health.

Rationale: Maintain clinical educational standards defined by this Division and/or Division of Public Health expected of those providing services endorsed by the State Committee on Problem Gambling.

Policy: Gamblers Assistance Program contractors providing treatment services will comply with the following requirements:

Under the Division of Behavioral Health:

1. Continuing educational requirements related to the knowledge and skills of compulsive gambling counseling in accordance with current certification regulations (Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC) Title 201 effective 06/30/01). <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/reg/t201.htm>
2. Continuing educational requirements related to compulsive gambling in accordance with regulations effective January 1, 2010 (NAC Title 206, Chapter 7). <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/beh/2008-pre-pub-hrg-regs-comment.htm>

or Under the Division of Public Health:

3. Continuing educational requirements defined under regulations effective July 28, 2004 (NAC Title 174, Chapter 94) Licensure of Mental Health Practitioners and the Certification of Marriage and Family Therapists, Profession Counselors, and Social Workers.
http://www.sos.state.ne.us/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Health_and_Human_Services_System/Title-172/Chapter-94.pdf



ReNew Counseling PC
710 Grey Street
Scottsbluff, NE. 69361
308-632-2525

August 4, 2009

Eric Hunsberger M.S.
Division of Behavioral Health Services
P.O. Box 98925
Lincoln, NE. 68509-8925

Re: GAP Funding

Dear Eric,

Here is the letter you requested. Our GAP billing for June 2009 was \$2,160.00. We received as payment for that June billing \$387.75. There is a difference of \$1,772.25 that we did not receive.

It was our understanding that the expenses for a GAP meeting in Lincoln in July of 2008 would be funded. However, there was no mention that the funding would be coming out of the GAP client monies. Recently I checked with the GAP office and questioned if the money for the meeting would be counted against the funds and I was told that it would not be included.

We have worked very hard with our GAP clients even working on our days off to accommodate those that work out of town. That being said, we would certainly be receptive to receiving additional funds to cover this shortage for the therapy already provided to our gambling clients and their families. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Landrigan for Richard Landrigan MA, LMHP, IMHP, CPC, CCGC
ReNew Counseling PC

Renew

From: <eric.hunsberger@dhhs.ne.gov>
To: "Renew" <renew@charterinternet.net>
Cc: <nancy.heller@dhhs.ne.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2008 6:02 AM
Subject: Re: Workshop

Linda,

Funding will be available - we are looking at Lincoln given the overall cost and the availability of trainers.

Thanks for your patience on this. Call me if you have specific questions. Contract to follow.

Sincerely,
Eric

Eric Hunsberger

Gamblers Assistance Program
Division of Behavioral Health
Department of Health and Human Services
PO Box 98925
Lincoln, NE 68509

Ph. 402.471-7822

Fx. 402.471-7859

e-mail: eric.hunsberger@dhhs.ne.gov

"Renew" <renew@charterinternet.net>

06/17/2008 05:35 PM

To <eric.hunsberger@dhss.ne.gov>

cc

Subject: Workshop

Eric, Needing information about the July workshop. First of all is the date still July 14th. Is the town still Grand Island. Is this a mandatory workshop for the GAP providers? Is any funding available for travel and motel?

Hope all is well with you.

Linda Landrigan
ReNew Counseling PC

07/23/2009

August 4, 2009

DHHS
301 Centennial Mall
PO Box 95026
Lincoln, NE

Dear Eric, Maya and President of State GAP Advisory Committee,

Request for additional funds for FY09

Provider Agency Name: Choices Treatment Center, Inc.
Address: 2737 N. 49th Street, Lincoln, NE 68504

Current FY09 Contract Amount: \$180,000.00
Direct Client Care: \$132,000.00
Education: \$5,000.00
Indirect Evaluation Data Entry Services: \$43,000.00

Amended March, 2009 \$14,000.00 (Direct Client Care)

Current capacity number served: 35

Choices, Inc. has completed:

46 evaluations
1,383.5 hours of Individual Therapy
330 hours of Family Therapy
231 hours of Group Therapy
97.5 hours of Non-admit Crisis Therapy

Program Narrative:

Choices, Inc. continues to document significant increases in criminal activity, debt, dual diagnosis, jeopardized or lost significant relationships, job and educational opportunities because of problem gambling. Clients' needs are greater when a combination of problems exist. Clients are at higher risk of relapse therefore the need for continued care.

- **Describe program to be funded:** Treatment for direct client care.

Requested funding increase: \$18,580.00 for May and June 2009 services (reason for this amount is FY09 contract specified that \$43,000.00 of the \$180,000 contract was for 1/12 payments of \$3,583.33. In May 2009 a transfer of funding occurred without prior notification that the above referenced amount was transferred to direct client service hours to pay May invoice for services, (short \$889.17) according to our records. On July 16, 2009 Choices received a letter from GAP Program Manager stating Choices would receive \$416.66 for educational services provided in June 2009. (see copy of attached letter)

Submitted by: Choices, Inc. by Deb Hammond, Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deb Hammond', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Submission date: August 4, 2009.

See attached summary of Choices, Inc. FY09 Scope of Work

See attachment of May 7, 2009 request for additional funding

Cc: Maya Chilese, Steve Jung

FY09 Year end Summary Report

Scope of Work FY 09

Goal (I): To Reduce the morbidity of problem and pathological gambling within Region V in the state of Nebraska, by providing quality treatment services to consumers, family members and others addressing the effects of problem and pathological gambling.

Objective Ia: Assess, diagnose, and counsel consumers, family members and others of the effects of problem/pathological gambling. A minimum of 55 consumers will report a reduction in gambling behaviors and consequences from intake to discharge by June 30, 2009. Summary June 30, 2009-100 consumers were served in FY09. 40 were remained in treatment from the beginning of the contract year, 46 assessments were completed and 14 consumers were seen for crisis intervention as nonadmits.

- Activities:
1. Determine diagnosis and treatment plan for consumers and family members identified.
 2. Utilize motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, a 12 Step Program and appropriate therapeutic interventions (evidence based) to assist consumers in decreasing gambling behaviors.
 3. Offer individual and group therapy services to identified consumers, family members and others identified.

Evaluation Operations:

1. Report consumer gambling behavior at intake, during, and date of last service (Magellan).
 - a. 80% of all intake and discharge data records contain valid gambling behavior data
2. Document significant challenges and successes of individual consumer treatment plans (GAP Reviewed). Report number of family care, individual and or groups implemented throughout service year (GAP Reviewed).
3. 95% of consumers will receive a referral to at least one community support (Magellan).

Objective Ib: Provide crisis support to 25 individuals needing assistance regarding problem and pathological gambling by June 30, 2009. Summary June 30, 2009- 33 individuals were seen for crisis support. 17 were referred on to other services and 16 were admitted.

- Activities:
1. Access individuals needing immediate care addressing problem/pathological gambling issues.
 2. Link individuals to treatment/health services as necessary to include problem/pathological gambling services.

Evaluation Operations:

1. Documentation of case management notes for crisis services provided (Magellan and GAP reviewed)
Intake Form, Assessment, HIPPA/Release of Information (minimum documentation- GAP reviewed)
2. 95% of assessment sessions initiated within 24 hours of referral (GAP Reviewed)

Objective Ic: Establish a minimum of (3) community supports that are accessible and will assist in decreasing gambling behavior by June 30, 2009.

- Activities:
1. Maintain an appropriate list of community resources that are accessible to consumers to assist in achieving treatment goals.

Evaluation Operations:

1. Consumers will receive a referral to at least one community support at date of last service (Magellan) Consumers will report utilizing community supports during the course of treatment (GAP Reviewed).

Goal (II): Educate identified populations on risk and protective factors associated with gambling. Focus and point of contact to center around Faith, Financial, Legal, and Educational organizations in Region V, and to continue maintaining our past and current relationships. Summary June 30, 2009-see attached listing of educational services and where applicable surveys were obtained.

Objective IIa: Provide a minimum of 2 presentations educating 75 people within the faith communities defining risk and protective factors of gambling by June 30, 2009.

- Activities:
1. Develop and provide educational packets on problem/pathological gambling.
 2. Provide screening and referral processes where needed.

Evaluation Operations: Choices, Inc. will utilize the survey provided by HHS.

1. 50% of participants in attendance will complete a survey.
 - a. Surveys available at http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/beh/gam/GAPTrain_Res.htm
 - b. Provide screening and referral processes as needed.

Objective IIb: Deliver a minimum of 10 packets of educational information to financial facilities to increase awareness of problem/pathological gambling by June 30, 2009.

- Activities:
1. Seek new contacts by visiting a variety of financial institutions, to bring awareness of the risks and consequences associated with problem gambling.

Evaluation Operations: Choices, Inc. will utilize the survey provided by HHS.

1. Document the distribution of the educational packets.
2. E-mails regarding our gambling services and basic facts that apply to the financial population will be sent to 10 agencies.

Objective IIc: Deliver a minimum of 20 packets of educational information to city, county, district, state and federal judicial offices by June 30, 2009.

- Activities:
1. Bring awareness to Drug Court and probation systems in Region V in Nebraska that compulsive gambling is prevalent in our state and can be detected simply with substance abuse screening.
 2. Communicate with contacts via telephone and e-mail to introduce gambling services available.
 3. Request screening (ex: Lie Bet Scale or SOGS, G-Sass) of residential substance abuse individuals to establish a baseline for future goals.
 4. Choices, Inc. will host a forum inviting 15 guests that are affiliated with community agencies on problem gambling.
 5. Educate committee members and community leaders by addressing youth and adult problem gambling issues and its' correlation to criminal behavior.

Evaluation Operations: Choices, Inc. will utilize the survey provided by HHS.

1. 20% district, state and federal probation offices within Region V will receive information regarding problem gambling and how it relates to illegal behaviors.

2. Maintain documentation defining those professional partnerships resulting in educational sessions (GAP Reviewed)¹.
3. Document attendance of individuals at forum. Choices, Inc. will utilize the survey provided by HHS.

Key of terms:

1. **Magellan – Data system defining the minimum consumer variables that is inputted through the service year.**
2. **GAP Reviewed – required contract to keep information on record for performance or clinical audit.**
3. **Educational organizations – i.e. public and private schools, colleges and universities.**

¹ Letters of endorsements or partnerships with community based agencies will be required for federal/state proposal application purposes.



Choices Treatment Center, Inc.

2737 N 49th St
Lincoln, NE 68504
www.choicesreatmentcenter.com
Phone: 402-476-2300
Fax: 402-476-2337
E-mail: choices934@alltel.net

May 7, 2009

DHHS
301 Centennial Mall
PO Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Maya and Nancy,

Request for additional funds.

Provider Agency Name: Choices Treatment Center, Inc
Address: 2737 N. 49th Street
Lincoln, NE 68504

Current FY ⁰⁹ contract amount:	\$180,000.00
Direct Client Care:	132,000.00
Education:	5,000.00
Indirect Evaluation Data Entry Services:	43,000.00

Amended: March, 2009 14,000.00 (Direct Client Care)

Current Capacity Number Served: 31

Choices, Inc. has completed:
38 Evaluations
1,155.5 hours of Individual Therapy
291 hours of Family Therapy
182.5 hours of Group Therapy
77 hours of Non-admit Crisis Therapy

Program Narrative:

Choices, Inc. continues to document significant increases in criminal activity, debt, dual diagnosis, jeopardized or lost significant relationships, job and educational

Helping People Make Positive Choices

opportunities because of problem gambling. Clients' needs are greater when a combination of problems exist. Clients are at higher risk of relapse therefore the need for continued care.

- Describe program to be funded: Treatment for direct client care.

As of May 7, 2009, 2 additional evaluations have been completed with another scheduled for May 15, 2009 or sooner if clients schedule permits.

Choices, Inc. continues to employ dually credentialed counselors who appropriately serve our clients needs. By serving individuals on a multi dimensional level we reduce the risk of relapse, therefore saving the state and agency money in the long term.

On January 29, 2009 Choices, Inc. requested an increase in current contract year of \$28,000.00. Choices, Inc. was anticipating a need of approximately \$35,000.00 at that time; requesting \$28,000.00 from the state and fundraising the \$7,000.00 balance. At the last state GAP committee meeting March 13, 2009 the committee awarded a \$14,000.00 amendment. At that time John Hill stated, "It appears Choices, Inc. should be requesting more funding." No further discussion on his statement except for agreeing to award \$14,000.00.

Requested funding increase: \$15,000.00

Submitted by Choices, Inc. by Deb Hammond, Director

Submission Date: May 7, 2009



Handwritten signature of Deb Hammond, Director, with the name "Deb Hammond" written in cursive below the signature.

CrossRoads Resources, LLC
Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Gambling Treatment Services

651 West 4th Street

PO Box 1299

Phone: 308-432-3920

Chadron, NE 69337

Fax: 308-432-4003

July 31, 2009

Eric Hunsberger, GAP
 Division of Behavioral Health Services
 P. O. Box 98925
 Lincoln, NE 68509

Eric,

Per GAP request, the following is a list for reimbursement for travel and expenses that occurred on June 4-5, 2009 for the Gamblers Assistance Program State meeting for CrossRoads Resources, LLC.

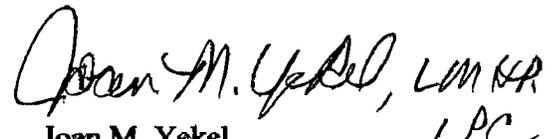
Meeting time:	
June 4, 2009	
8 hours x \$20.00 (Cari and Joan)	\$160.00
Travel time:	
June 4 and 5, 2009 (Cari)	
14 hours (round trip) x \$12.00	\$168.00
June 4 and 5, 2009 (Joan)	
14 hours (round trip) x \$12.00	\$168.00
Mileage 1000 miles x \$.55(Cari)	\$550.00
Mileage 1000 miles x \$.55(Joan)	<u>\$550.00</u>
Total reimbursement for CrossRoads Resources, LLC	\$1596.00

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 308-432-3920.

Sincerely,



Cari R. Brunner
 MA, PLADC



Joan M. Yekel, LMHP
 MA, LMHP, LPC

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009
Expenditures and Revenues
As of June 30, 2009**

Percent of Time Elapsed **100.00%**
Percent Elapsed- Bi-weekly Admin **100.00%**

Expenditures

	<u>Administration</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Lottery</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Prevention Education Awareness</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Health Care Cash</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>	<u>% Expend</u>
Budget	\$75,000		\$709,620		\$198,000		\$225,000		\$1,207,620	
Expenditures YTD	\$62,183	82.91%	\$606,651	85.49%	\$153,431	77.49%	\$207,807	92.36%	\$1,030,071	85.30%
Unexpended	\$12,817		\$102,969		\$44,569		\$17,193		\$177,549	

Revenues

	<u>Administration Fund 21750 and Fund 22640</u>	<u>Lottery Revenue (Fund 21750)</u>	<u>Prevention Education Awareness (Fund 21750)</u>	<u>Health Care Cash (Fund 22640)</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
Beginning Balance	112,040	225,318	92,854	10,253	\$440,466
Receipts YTD	75,885	797,451	273,295	225,000	\$1,371,631
Interest	1,264	19,808	6,788	0	\$27,860
Total Available	189,189	1,042,577	372,937	235,253	\$1,839,957
Expenditures	\$62,183	\$606,651	\$153,431	\$207,807	\$1,030,071
Ending Balance	\$127,006	\$435,926	\$219,507	\$27,446	\$809,886

DRAFT
Fiscal Year 2009-2010
GAP Expenditures Budget

Percent of Time Elapsed
Percent Elapsed- Bi-weekly Admin

Expenditures

	<u>Administration</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Lottery</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Prevention Education Awareness</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Health Care Cash</u>	<u>% Expend</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>	<u>038 Only</u>
NIS Budget	\$75,000		\$973,620		\$184,000		\$225,000		\$1,457,620	\$1,382,620
Eric Budget	\$75,000		\$811,000		\$184,000		\$225,000		\$1,295,000	\$1,220,000
Unexpended	\$0		\$162,620		\$0		\$0		\$162,620	\$162,620

GAP Program 38 DRAFT Projections for FY10
As of July 15, 2009

H

	Contract Specifics	Total FY10 Contract Amt	Lottery Revenue Amended	Education Amended	Healthcare Cash Amended
Fund Number			21750	21750	22640
BU Number			??????	??????	??????
AGENCIES		FY10 Amt			
CrossRoads	TX 21,000 Ed 4,000	25,000	21,000	4,000	
First Step	TX 124,500 Ed 4,000	128,500	114,500	4,000	10,000
Choices	TX 224,000 Ed 4,000	228,000	124,000	4,000	100,000
Spence Counseling	Tx 160,000 Ed 4,000	164,000	145,000	4,000	15,000
Heartland Family Services	TX 176,000 Ed 4,000	180,000	76,000	4,000	100,000
TOTAL AGENCIES		725,500	480,500	20,000	225,000
NE Council on Compulsive Gambling		215,000	155,000.00	60,000.00	
PRIVATE PROVIDERS	Contract Specifics	FY10 Amt	Lottery	Education	Healthcare Cash
Robert Walton		4,000	4,000		
Michael Sullivan		43,000	43,000		
Richard Landrigan	TX 30,000 Ed 2,000	32,000	30,000	2000	
Betty Hampton	TX 5,000 Ed 1,000	6,000	4,000	2000	
Wanda Swanson	TX 11,500 Ed 1,500	13,000	13,000		
Lisa Johnson	TX 9,500 Ed 500	10,000	10,000		
Rebecca Green	TX 6,000 Ed 500	6,500	6,500.00		
TOTAL PROVIDERS		114,500	110,500	4,000	0
PREVENTION CONTRACTS	Contract Specifics	FY10 Amt	Lottery	Education	Healthcare Cash
Garfield Wheeler Loop		?			
Lancaster County		?			
TOTAL PREVENTION		75,000		75,000	
EDUCATION CONTRACTS					
Ayres Kayler				20,000	
Public Education Matierals (Internal)				5,000	
TOTAL EDUCATION		25000		25,000	
EVALUATION CONTRACTS	Contract Specifics	FY10 Amt	Lottery	Education	Healthcare Cash
University Policy Center		50,000	50,000		
Magellan		10,000	10,000		
TOTAL EVALUATION		60,000	60,000	0	0
LICENSURE APP - MIKE SULLIVAN		5,000	5000		
TOTAL CONTRACTS		1,220,000	811,000	184,000	225,000
Central GAP Admin (268)		75,000	50,000		25,000
TOTAL GAP BUDGET		1,295,000	861,000	184,000	250,000

Gamblers' Assistance Program Statement of Contracts
As of June 3, 2009
Including April of 4th Quarter

DRAFT	Total Contract	1st Qtr July - Sept	2nd Qtr Oct - Dec	3rd Qtr Jan - Mar	4th Qtr Apr-June	Total Paid Out	Total % Used	Fund Sources
Agencies								
Lutheran Family Services	\$3,000	474.99	166.66	829.99	924.99	2,396.63	79.89%	Lottery, Healthcare
First Step	\$123,000	29,161.23	25,699.98	26,802.48	28,257.48	109,921.17	89.37%	Lottery, Healthcare
Choices	\$189,000	42,497.49	54,019.99	58,017.49	34,462.05	188,997.02	100.00%	Lottery, Healthcare
Spence Counseling	\$140,000	32,856.00	34,401.00	36,298.50	33,036.00	136,591.50	97.57%	Lottery, Healthcare
Heartland Family Services	\$163,000	42,750.42	34,285.40	38,451.81	42,815.97	158,303.60	97.12%	Lottery, Healthcare
CrossRoads	\$27,000	5,192.76	4,177.50	6,642.50	5,685.00	21,697.76	80.36%	Lottery, Healthcare
Total Agencies	\$645,000	152,932.89	152,750.53	167,042.77	145,181.49	617,907.68	95.80%	
Private Providers								
Michael Sullivan	\$43,000	7,928.55	12,725.00	11,387.50	9,257.50	41,298.55	96.04%	Lottery, Healthcare
Robert Walton	\$8,000	1,640.02	2,062.50	1,935.00	900.00	6,537.52	81.72%	Lottery, Healthcare
Richard Landrigan	\$16,600	5,737.25	4,125.00	3,355.00	3,382.75	16,600.00	100.00%	Lottery, Healthcare
Wanda Swanson	\$13,500	1,165.00	1,850.00	5,385.00	4,057.50	12,457.50	92.28%	Lottery, Healthcare
Betty Hampton	\$6,000	1,712.18	1,280.00	712.50	1,147.50	4,852.18	80.87%	Lottery, Healthcare
Lisa Johnson	\$11,000	2,425.00	2,190.00	1,725.00	3,000.00	9,340.00	84.91%	Lottery, Healthcare
Rebecca Green	\$6,000	235.95	440.00	1,290.00	635.00	2,600.95	43.35%	Lottery, Healthcare
Total Private Providers	\$104,100	20,843.95	24,672.50	25,790.00	22,380.25	93,686.70	90.00%	
NCCG	\$190,000	43,749.99	55,279.74	43,750.00	43,749.99	186,529.72	98.17%	Lottery, Education
Prevention/ Education Contracts								
Lutheran Family Services	\$1,000	55.00	110.00	0.00	220.00	385.00	38.50%	Education
First Step	\$12,000	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	12,000.00	100.00%	Education
Choices	\$5,000	1,249.98	1,249.98	1,249.98	1,249.98	4,999.92	100.00%	Education
Heartland Family Services	\$9,000	1,980.00	1,608.75	4,468.75	942.50	9,000.00	100.00%	Education
CrossRoads	\$2,000	1,815.00	185.00			2,000.00	100.00%	Education
Betty Hampton	\$1,000	110.00	890.00			1,000.00	100.00%	Education
GWL	\$50,000	6,508.09	6,749.99	6,261.54	25,841.13	45,360.75	90.72%	Education
Lancaster-Odds	\$50,000	1,779.00	10,604.64	7,604.98	4,368.37	24,356.99	48.71%	Education
Total Prevention	\$130,000	16,497.07	24,398.36	22,585.25	35,621.98	99,102.66	76.23%	
Evaluation Contracts								
Michael Sullivan- Licensing	\$10,000	3,431.23	1,644.21	2,278.51		7,353.95	73.54%	Health Admin
University Public Policy Center	\$70,000		29,851.74	17,236.20	21,758.81	68,846.75	98.35%	Healthcare, Health Admin
Magellan- Two Years	\$10,000					0.00	0.00%	Healthcare
Total Evaluation	\$90,000	\$3,431.23	\$31,495.95	\$19,514.71	\$21,758.81	\$76,200.70	84.67%	
Total Contracts	\$1,159,100	\$237,455.13	\$288,597.08	\$278,682.73	\$268,692.52	\$1,073,427.46	92.61%	

DRAFT FY2009-2010 GAP Administrative Budget	
FY2009-10 Revenue Sources	
FY2009 Revenue Sources	
Lottery (including Charitable Gaming/Receipts \$50,885)	\$848,336
Education/Prevention/Awareness	\$273,295
Health Care Cash	\$250,000
Total FY2009 Revenue	\$1,371,631
Up to 10% of total revenue	
Total Administrative Funds Authorized	\$137,163

(Up to 10% of total revenue authorized for administration by NE Rev. Statutes §71-817)

Personnel Services	
Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$35,000
Employer Expenses	\$10,000
Total Personnel Services	\$45,000
Operating Expenses	
Overhead	\$2,500
Dues & Subscription Exp	\$1,500
Temp Personnel Services	\$5,000
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,500
Total Operating Expenses	\$10,500
Committee/Cert Committee Expenses	
Board and Lodging	\$2,000
Per diem	\$1,000
Food Expenses	\$2,000
Personal Vehicle Mileage	\$1,500
Guest Speaker - Travel Exp	\$1,000
Other Committee Expenses	\$2,000
Total Travel Expenses	\$9,500
Travel Expenses (Employee)	
Conference Registration	\$1,000
Board and Lodging	\$3,000
Per Diem	\$2,000
Personal Vehicle Mileage	\$1,000
Other Travel Expense	\$3,000
Total Travel Expenses	\$10,000
Total Administrative Expenditures	\$75,000

Administrative Expenditures Covered by the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund (NE Rev. Statutes §71-817)

Additional Administrative Expenditures	
Personal Services (Annual Costs)	
Temp Personnel Services	\$5,000
Management	\$23,243
Support Services (Finance, Legal, HR, IT)	\$119,435
Administrative Expenditures Covered	\$147,678
<i>by the DHHS Division of Behavioral Health</i>	
Total Administrative Expenses	\$222,678

GAP FY10 Prevention Options

A	Odds Are	\$50,000
	GLW	\$50,000
	Fully funded	Continued activities with expanded deliverables and evaluation

B	Odds Are	\$35,000
	GLW	\$35,000
	Partial funding, both programs	Continued activities with specific deliverables AND evaluation

C	Odds Are	\$0
	GLW	\$0
1	New RFP	\$75,000
2	Pilot Odds Are –new location	\$40,000
	Education and technical assistance to Regional prevention coalitions	\$30,000

GAP FY10 Prevention Recommendations

Option B: Partial funding of current programs

- Programs need up to 5 years to establish, document and evaluate significant evidence of effectiveness.
- Few specific activities of current programs incomplete.
- Programs had only a solid year and a half for program implementation after a year and a half of design and development.
- The Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Survey that measures youth behavior was postponed for a year, delaying ability to detect statewide and localized change in youth gambling behavior; including any correlation to current programs.
- Division's statewide prevention system utilizing FY10 for strategic planning and not beginning new initiatives until further analysis.
- SPF SIG model of prevention planning highly recommended for youth gambling prevention.
- Many substance abuse prevention coalitions and agencies prime vendors for integrating gambling prevention.

= Recommendation for partially funding current programs in order to utilize opportunity to further evaluate youth gambling prevention strategies; identify prevention system opportunities and next best steps for further youth gambling prevention implementation



ONE HUNDRED FIRST LEGISLATURE

FyJ

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 230

2009 Interim Study

Introduced by Dierks, 40.

*Per OWH article from 7/29/09, LR 230
will probably have a hearing this fall.*

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to examine matchup or lineup video gaming devices that award monetary prizes, in which two or more numerals, symbols, letters, icons, or other objects align to form a winning combination on one or more lines vertically, horizontally, diagonally, or otherwise, with or without assistance by the player. The study shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the estimated number of devices thought to be in operation in Nebraska and the projected number of future devices, a determination of how revenue generated from the devices is allocated, a determination of the amount of taxes and fees collected on the devices, an analysis of the current and future projected impact such devices are having on legal forms of gaming in Nebraska, including the revenue impact on local governments and nonprofit organizations, and an analysis of any other issues deemed relevant by the committee. The committee shall determine whether any legislation addressing such video gaming devices is necessary.

*Bank Slot
video games.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the General Affairs Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the

purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.

 the quad-city times

State leaders can't answer whether bar game is legal

By NANCY HICKS / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Tuesday, July 28, 2009 11:55 pm

Is Bank Shot, the new video game available in almost 400 bars across the state, a legal game of skill or an illegal game of chance?

Jim Ritzman with the nonprofit Sowers Club wants to know.

His group, which gives \$100,000 a year to charities from pickle card profits, is losing money as people pick the glitzy Bank Shot game over pickle cards, he said.

And state Sen. Russ Karpisek, chairman of the legislative committee that deals with gambling, also wants to know.

If it's a legal game, maybe the state should look at getting a few more tax dollars from it, he said.

But no state leader or agency involved in gambling issues will answer the question.

In fact, this week no one will even talk about the Bank Shot game.

Not the Nebraska State Patrol, not the attorney general's office and not the Department of Revenue, which oversees gaming operations.

"We are not going to talk about it. It is considered an ongoing investigation," said Deb Collins on behalf of Col. Bryan Tuma, head of the Nebraska State Patrol.

Said Leah Bucco-White, on behalf of Attorney General Jon Bruning: "We are currently investigating the situation. I don't have any further information to provide at this time."

And this from Kim Conroy, deputy commissioner of revenue: "All I can say is that I don't have any comment."

The patrol and revenue department spokespersons said they expect the Legislature to find answers.

"We're just letting the legislative process take place," Conroy said, referring to a legislative resolution to study the issue. LR230

Except senators don't provide legal opinions, Sen. Karpisek said.

The committee needs an answer on whether the game is legal from experts, he said.

"The question is - are they legal or are they not legal? The attorney general answers that, in my opinion," said Karpisek, who is planning to hold a public hearing on the issue this fall.

The game's designer, John Fox, thinks he knows the answer.

His game is legal, and the state can't find evidence it is not, said Fox, president of American Amusements Inc. of Bellevue.

Ritzman agrees.

"I don't think they (state leaders) are for it. But they don't know how to get rid of it," he said.

Even if no state official will talk about the game this week, there's plenty of evidence the patrol and state gaming agency have been looking at the Bank Shot game for at least six months.

The patrol confiscated two games from Grand Island's Fonner Park keno in January so they could be tested, according to news reports.

The machines are back in play at Fonner Keno, a fact that Fox said further supports his contention the game is legal.

State leaders can't answer whether bar game is legal

Several companies have examined the fast-paced game - which requires players to pick out winning patterns.

The companies came to different conclusions, patrol representatives have told reporters in the past few weeks.

Lincoln police are interested in getting an answer to the question now that Bank Shot games are moving into Lincoln bars.

Lincoln, the last town to get the games, now has them in 23 bars, said Lincoln Police Investigator Russ Fosler.

Fosler said he will meet today with representatives from the county attorney's office and the Department of Revenue to talk about Bank Shot.

The company has built a small element of skill into the game, said Fosler, who lost \$10 trying out the game.

The question seems to be how much skill is required to make the game legal, he said.

And Ritzman is frustrated by the lack of a decision.

"We can't get anyone to make a decision," he said. "Just call it legal or illegal, but don't ride the fence."

Reach Nancy Hicks at 473-7250 or nhicks@journalstar.com.

BIG MONEY, BIG QUESTIONS

Video game stokes debate over skill vs. chance

The

■ **Nebraska Legislature will be asked to give direction on the legality of Bank Shot machines.**

BY R OBYNN T YSVER

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

In bars and taverns across Nebraska, players are pumping money into a video game that looks like a slot machine, sounds like a slot machine and promises thousand-dollar jackpots like a slot machine.

But the flashy game known as Bank Shot is not a slot machine.

Upon that everyone can agree.

Beyond that lie confusion and consternation.

Opponents of the machine say it violates the spirit of Nebraska's **gambling** laws and unfairly competes with existing games, such as pickle cards and keno.

Law enforcement officials say an investigation into the machines proved inconclusive, as two experts disagreed about their legality.

The makers of the machine counter that it is a game of skill that is no different from a game of Trivial Pursuit or a dart tournament sponsored by a bar or tavern. They also argue that the video game was carefully constructed to comply with Nebraska law.

"It's a puzzle game. It's not a relaxing, hit a button and wait for something to happen game," said John Fox, president of the game *See Video: Page 2*

Powered by TECNAVIA

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Video: Bank Shot machines proliferate in taverns across state

Continued from Page 1

developer, American Amusements Inc. in Bellevue.

Players are allowed to wager up to \$4 a game, which can be played in seconds. The game offers a progressive jackpot. (All the games are tied together, and the jackpot is based upon how many games are played statewide.) As of Friday, the game's biggest jackpot was \$17,000.

At issue is state law. Games of skill that are played for money in Nebraska are OK. But games of chance are prohibited unless expressly approved by the Nebraska Constitution.

The difficulty for law enforcement is in determining when a game requires more chance than skill, or more skill than chance.

Two different testing companies came to two different conclusions about Bank Shot after being asked to evaluate the game by the Nebraska State Patrol.

"We even have a debate among some of our people who have been working this for a long time," said Maj. Mark Funkhouser, head of the State Patrol's investigative services.

Funkhouser and others hope a legislative resolution to study the matter this fall will provide clarity. "We're looking for some direction from the Legislature in how they want the current statutes to be interpreted and enforced," said Funkhouser.

Nebraska has long resisted casino-style gambling. Voters and state lawmakers have repeatedly rejected efforts to bring slot machines and video poker machines into the state.

Only a few forms of gambling are legal, including keno, horse racing, bingo and pickle cards.

Funkhouser said Bank Shot is not the only video gambling device on the market that bills itself as a game of skill. There are others, but Bank Shot has attracted the most attention in recent months.

The game has grown considerably in the past year. There are currently 390 machines deployed across the state.

Jim Ritzman of the nonprofit Sowers Club thinks the game is biting into the club's pickle card sales. The club is a business organization that sells pickle cards to boost its charitable contributions in the community.

Ritzman has complained about the machines to the Nebraska Lottery and Charitable Gaming Division. He has asked the division to rule on the legality of the machines, but a state official said they are waiting for the conclusion of the legislative study.

In the meantime, Ritzman said, he must compete with a game that pays no gambling tax.

"They're letting these games proliferate throughout Nebraska. In the last two weeks, there have been probably 20 machines come into Lincoln," said Ritzman. "We're afraid that if these machines take off, it will decimate the pickle cards and the nonprofits."

The game centers on nine pool balls arranged in a grid formation. The player pushes a button that starts the balls flashing quickly in various formations. The player then pushes "stop" on a particular pattern, which helps to determine whether or not a player wins.

There are 30,000 patterns of pool balls built into the game. About 27 patterns flash in a given minute.

Fox maintains that players become more skillful at spotting the winning patterns after playing the game for a period of time. Then, after players select a puzzle, they are then asked to use a "wild" ball to obtain one or more tic-tac-toe patterns within the puzzle.

Players can wager from 25 cents to \$4 on a single game.

"A player can quickly develop skills to discern which puzzle to choose to win," Fox said.

He argued that this was a game of skill similar to the "claw and grab" games that can be found in many arcades.

Fox also said American Amusements had the game tested in 2007 by an independent testing company before putting it on the market. Eclipse Compliance Testing determined that the game was based upon a player's skill, Fox said.

Eclipse Compliance Testing was one of the companies used by the State Patrol when it conducted its tests this spring.

Fox said he has agreed to cooperate with any additional tests requested by the state. He said he simply wants all questions about the machine to be resolved.

"This game has had more tests, more scrutiny by third parties than all other coin-operated machines in this state together," said Fox.

Contact the writer:

444-1309, robynn.tysver@owh.com



ALYSSA SCHUKAR/THE WORLD-HERALD

A new video game gaining popularity in bars across Nebraska gives players a chance to win thousands of dollars if they can correctly line up images of pool balls on a touch screen.

Powered by TECNAVIA

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Bank Shot takes skill, and all of your cash

Before exploring this issue of games of chance versus games of skill, I needed to do my own bit of skillful **gambling**.

"I need 40 bucks," I told Jane, keeper of the newspaper's petty cash stash.

"Seems like 20 would do," she said back.

Oh, no, not even close, I explained. Bank Shot, the controversial new game showing up in Nebraska bars and taverns, allegedly is a game of "skill" (which makes it legal in this nongambling state). In games of skill, there's a learning curve, and learning curves can be expensive.

Maybe I'd only need 20 bucks to figure out games in Iowa. But I'll need at least \$40 to do the same in Nebraska.

With \$40 and my first win of the day in hand, I headed out brimming with confidence to tackle Bank Shot, which opponents claim is nothing more than a naughty Iowa-esque slot machine in sheep's clothing.

What it is, for sure, is confusing. Is it a pool game? Is it tick-tack-toe? Do I use the button or hit the screen to place the "wild" ball?

After losing \$5, I discovered I wasn't even placing the "wild" ball in time to create the winning tick-tack-toe pattern.

After \$10 was gone, I figured out that when it said I had just won, it could mean I just won back one penny of the 25 cents I bet.

After losing \$20, which equates to 2,000 points, I had won back five points.

I had won five cents while losing \$20.

"I hate this game!" I yelled to the bartender at the Tavern on Q.

"I do too!" He yelled back.

"It's a waste of space," Chad Conrad told me. "I know they're popular some places, but our customers

Robert Nelson

don't touch the thing. It eats your money."

Or, maybe it really does have a learning curve.

Sure enough, after I had dumped \$28, I won my first 25¢ pot. After dumping two more dollars, I hit my biggest jackpot of the day — \$2.50.

I did this by quickly picking a set of balls with the fewest dud numbers and then quickly placing my wild card to make a string of valuable balls. My quickness earned me extra money, which I didn't realize until more than half the money was gone.

Then, within 30 seconds, my earnings were lost again.

About this time I began wondering if Russian roulette was legal.

"Having fun yet?" Conrad asked.

"Nope," I told him. "Just watching money disappear."

The tavern's other bartender, Cammie Palmer, chimed in.

"Kudos to the makers of that game, eh?" she said. "They've got a lot of your money before you even begin to understand what's happening to you."

Palmer said she's seen Bank Shot played heavily at a bar in Elkhorn and a few other places. But at other bars, like the Tavern on Q in southwest Omaha, the game goes mostly untouched.

"It's something certain people at certain bars seem to get attached to," she said. "But the people here like the real games more. Darts, pool, that kind of thing."

Well, I'm definitely with them. By the time I inserted my last five-dollar bill, I wanted to throw



See Nelson: Page 2

Geier, Sherrie

From: Eickmeier, Joshua
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 11:13 AM
To: Leg. Senators; Leg. Senators Staff
Subject: Clarification of Letter from Sen. Karpisek regarding new Keno display

Fyd.

Bank Slot videogames

Dear Senators and staff,

attached

In light of recent articles about a different gaming device, I would like to clarify the letter that you received from Senator Karpisek last week (attached). In the letter, Senator Karpisek was referring to a new display for Keno games only. This Keno display is different than the device that was mentioned in recent Omaha World Herald and Associated Press articles. The latter device is commonly referred to as Bankshot and the General Affairs Committee has an Interim Study introduced by Senator Dierks to address concerns regarding this device. These Bankshot devices involve a touch screen display on which the player arranges pool balls in a particular way. Players may then receive payouts based on how they play the game. Bankshot is not Keno. I hope this clarifies any confusion. I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding either the new Keno display or the Bankshot device.

Sincerely,

Josh



Keno letter
FINAL.doc (32 KB)

Joshua Eickmeier
Legal Counsel
General Affairs Committee
Sen. Russ Karpisek, Chair
(402) 471-2711
jeickmeier@leg.ne.gov

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to let you know about a new way to display Keno results that has been developed in Nebraska, but has yet to enter the marketplace. I was recently contacted by Trent Nowka on behalf of Paul Schumacher with Community Lottery Services, one of his clients and invited, along with my Legal Counsel, Josh Eickmeier, to see a demonstration of this new display. Unlike the machines that print the paper keno tickets, draw the winning numbers, which are highly regulated and licensed, keno displays do not impact the game and are not considered lottery equipment. Thus, there is wide latitude in how keno results may be displayed.

Keno display systems typically show the winning numbers on a monitor and players then watch to see whether they have the same numbers to determine what, if anything, they have won. Showing the numbers on the monitor is merely for show since the winning numbers are instantly known by the licensed Keno machine.

The new Keno display, called the Selective Lottery Output Terminal System (SLOTS), is a made in Nebraska invention and allows the player to view the results of a keno bet in the typical fashion or be informed of winnings through a "slot machine"- looking display. As is the case in all keno games, the licensed Keno machine knows how much, if anything, the player's paper ticket has won after each five minute game and makes it immediately available for payout to a player through licensed personnel. A player selecting to use the "slot machine" display simply opts to see the winnings gradually revealed over time on a screen that looks like a "slot machine".

For example, a player pays \$50 for 15 Keno games and perhaps wins \$60. The new display system detects that the player won \$60. The player then presses a button to trigger the "slot machine" and the device gradually informs the player that he/she has won \$60. It does so incrementally with each trigger of the "slot machine." Again, the "slot machine" display is for show and does not impact whether the player wins or loses or the operation of the licensed lottery equipment. The display system does not take any bets, determine any winnings, or pay any prizes.

I wanted to provide you with a heads up about this new display and to let you know your office may be contacted by Trent Nowka regarding how the device works and whether you would like to make arrangements to see it in action. Due to the "slot machine" appearance of this Keno display, it is likely that your office will get inquiries from constituents if/when it enters the marketplace.

Thank you and feel free to contact Josh in my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sen. Russ Karpisek

Geier, Sherrie

From: Brian Pick [guppick@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 1:18 PM
To: Sen. Pankonin, Dave
Subject: proposed bill that would help charities in Nebraska

*FYI -
Generic approach to
all state senators. One or more
may respond by introducing a bill.*

Hi Mr. Pankonin:

My name is Brian Pick. Attached is a letter I'd like you to review with the hopes that charity poker may be considered in the next legislative session. I realize there may be strong opposition to poker because of the potential for a person to be addicted to it but at least with poker, the amount of losses could be regulated unlike keno, pickle cards and the lottery (all are 100% games of chance which are legal) where a person could spend hundreds of dollars (or more) daily. Poker isn't the type of game where someone is normally addicted to since it's not a quick buck and a lot of money isn't waged at one time in poker. Poker is more of a social game and other states have already legalized charity poker or are considering it.

Here are a couple articles for you to review relating to charity poker: <http://michigancardplayer.com/charities-all-in-for-poker/>

<http://www.houghtonlakeresorter.com/news/2008/0925/news/069.html>

Thank you for considering this change to the gambling laws in Nebraska. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Brian Pick
402-650-0310

My name is Brian Pick. I live just outside of Gretna. The reason I'm contacting you is that I am requesting the State of Nebraska to consider a law that legalizes poker if the event is played as a fundraiser for 501(c)(3) tax exempt organizations or a similar type charitable event that has been approved by the state to sponsor a poker fundraiser (e.g. – fundraiser for a person battling cancer). This type of law would benefit many people, businesses and philanthropies.

As our economy struggles, so do charitable organizations. Many organizations have seen a substantial decrease in donations over the last two years, rising costs, increased demand for their services and the loss of government funding. These charities are forced to reduce the services they provide and the people they can serve if they're not able to make up the difference in other fundraising activities. Many struggling families are being asked to support more fundraising programs for their church, schools, clubs, team sports and other activities. This includes having car washes, selling magazines, candy and cookie dough, collecting recyclable cans and simply donating more money personally to the charity or organization. Donations are often considered a discretionary expense in the family budget and with questionable job security and the rising cost of *their* basic necessities; these donations are often eliminated or at a minimum reduced. In addition to added financial expectations, these activities require a large amount of time and effort in order to make the fundraisers successful.

What is the solution? I'd like to propose that poker is made legal in Nebraska **but only if a certain percentage of the proceeds or net proceeds go to a charitable organization.** With the correct structure in place, poker can be a good source of revenue for charities which would require a minimal amount of volunteer time and would not put pressure on its members to purchase something the charity is selling. In addition, charity poker would have the added benefit of generating revenue for the state and city, creates new jobs and supports local businesses.

I'm not suggesting we allow casinos in Nebraska or allow games of chance such as black jack, craps or roulette. What I'd like to see is for the state to simply allow **charitable poker tournaments and cash games.** Each charity would have to apply for a permit to host a poker fundraiser, which would have to be approved by the state and require a fee. The poker event could be held at locations such as a golf course club house, bowling alley, VFW hall, etc. The company managing or running the charity tournament would have to apply for a license in order to manage these poker events too.

Poker events in some states raise on average \$500 to \$1000 per day for the charity depending on the structure of the event. Some have even made as much as \$2,500 in one day. Several states including Michigan, Illinois, and New Hampshire have already legalized charitable poker events or 'millionaire parties' and many more including California, South Dakota, South Carolina, Virginia and Texas have introduced bills to legalize and regulate charity poker events. Michigan charges \$50 per day for these licenses so in addition to the charities generating much needed revenue; the state too has added a new source of income. In 2008, Michigan issued 2,800 permits which generated over \$4,000,000 in revenue from the permits alone. I would suggest requiring an additional \$1 fee that a player pays every time they play at a fundraiser and that fee goes to the city.

Currently the State of Nebraska uses three elements to determine if an activity is to be considered illegal gambling (28-1101 – 4 & 6): 1) Consideration 2) Chance 3) Reward.

Charitable poker events would fall into these areas because you would have to pay an entry fee for the poker event, there will be some chance since the cards do influence the results almost half the time and there would be a reward to those players that do well in a tournament or cash game. When I inquired about this law, the state's strongest argument against poker is that poker is a game of chance. The mindset that poker is purely a game of chance is debatable with several states ruling that poker is more a game of skill than a game of chance. Information defending the 'skill' argument can be provided to the state for review if requested. Even if the state considers poker a game of chance, poker should be added to the current 'exceptions list' to that law along with keno, lotto, bingo, and pickle cards. Unlike keno, lotto and pickle cards, charitable poker events can directly benefit charities, businesses and the state.

In summary, legalized poker events for fundraising can offer many benefits to the people in the state of Nebraska. Charities will be able to more easily meet their financial goals so they can continue to provide their services. Charity poker events will provide much needed tax revenue for the city and state. These events will benefit restaurants and gas stations. Lastly, it will allow new jobs to be created for those that will manage these tournaments.

Thank you for considering this request. If you'd like to discuss this further in person, I would be happy to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian Pick
17113 Merion Drive
Omaha, NE 68136
402-650-0310

Poker Room sweetening the pot for area charities

With poker becoming a spectator sport through its broadcast on cable television and the Internet and more and more people playing the game at casinos and on-line, a new twist on licensing is allowing charities in Michigan to cash in.



IN THE CHIPS (Above) ARK volunteer Jim Jackson (standing) delivers chips to one of the cash tables during a recent Friday night session at the West Branch Poker Room. (Right) Texas hold'em players pay close attention as dealer Adam Gordon (left) turns a card. The cash table uses \$5 (red) and \$1 (white) valued chips.

Thursday through Sunday, the Poker Room offers cash and limit tables for Texas Hold'em as well as blackjack games. There are also Texas Hold'em tournaments each night beginning at 7 p.m.

"It sure beats selling hotdogs," said Association to Rescue Kritters volunteer Jim Jackson of Prudenville. He said the Roscommon County based charity, which rescues and rehabilitates wildlife from all over northern Michigan, brought in considerably more money during their nights at the Poker Room than they do at their usual fundraising events.

"There's very few fund-raisers we can do where we can make this kind of money four-day period," said Ruth Fruehauf, executive director of ARK. She said ARK made around \$2,200 during its first four-day stint at the Poker Room in August and around \$2,200 during its second in September. The fee for a "millionaire party" gambling license, obtained from the Michigan State Lottery, is \$50 per day.

Fruehauf said state regulations allow non-profit organizations to obtain the license for periods up to four consecutive days, four times per year. She said the ARK is scheduled to have its license gambling at the Poker Room Oct. 2-5 and Nov. 13-16.

One of the state's newest charity gaming rooms, the West Branch Poker Room, opened its doors in July and has provided non-profit organizations in Roscommon and Ogemaw Counties with a big boost to their fund-raising efforts.

"It's the new bingo," said Poker Room owner Kirk Gorham of West Branch, who runs the establishment with Gaming Manager Doug Dameron. He said that since opening at 2355 South M-33 (just south of M-55) near West Branch, business has increased at the rate of 20% each week.

Open from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.



Any charity with 501C3 status and qualified with the Bureau of Michigan Lottery Gaming Division is eligible to apply for a "millionaire party license" and then use an evening at the Poker Room. The house charges a 10% rake up to \$5, which the license-holding charity.

Gorham said that along with the ARK, charities that have sponsored nights at the Room include the Moose Lodges of Skidway Lake and West Branch, the Emergency Assistance Program, Ogemaw County Christmas for Kids, the Ogemaw Heights School Falcon Site Development and football program and the West Branch Lit

Gorham said in addition to obtaining the gambling license, each charity must have two volunteers at the facility during its hours of operation. "With just two members put really good money back into the community," he said.

The West Branch Poker Room is one of over 50 charity gaming rooms in operation in Michigan and is the most northerly located according to Tom Reich, gaming director of the Michigan Lottery's Charitable Gaming Division.

Gorham and Dameron will also start operating the Ledge Meadows Poker Room at the Ledge in October.

Reich said that before Texas Hold'em became legal under the millionaire party license two and a half years ago, his division issued a little over 600 licenses per year. He said that in 2007, over 3,000 licenses were issued and that it is anticipated that over 4,000 will be issued in 2008.

Information and application forms for licenses are available online at www.michiganlottery.com. Non-profit organizations wishing to participate in poker nights at the West Branch Poker Room can contact Gorham by calling (989) 345-5637.

Charities All In For Poker : Michigan Card Player

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April 9, 2009 by [Joe Abfalter](#)

Filed under [State of Michigan Poker News](#)

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By Lansing State Journal

Fed up with bake sales, knocked out by door-to-door fundraising sales and even bored with bingo, Lansing-area nonprofits are increasingly turning to a new way to raise money. Poker.

Michigan nonprofits are taking advantage of state rules that allow them to host up to 16 nights of poker games per year. Last year, state nonprofits earned \$8.3 million from the games.

Groups as diverse as the Girl Scouts of Michigan, the Domestic Violence Coalition and Advent House Ministries are turning to the so-called "millionaire parties."

That, in turn, is spawning a new industry for those who deal cards and run poker rooms that have sprung up to serve the poker-playing public.

"It's getting harder and harder to raise money, but people like to play cards," said Barry Chapman, a member of the Masonic Center in Mason, a nonprofit organization that recently hosted a poker tournament.

The state has strict rules for running the card games. According to the Michigan Lottery, only representatives of the nonprofit groups can handle money, though they can turn to outside companies known as suppliers to assist the charity and supply the events with tables, chips and other equipment.

Suppliers are prohibited from handling cards or chips, though dealers can be hired.

"Many charities have indicated this is a lifesaver for their charity with the state of the economy the way it is," said Andi Brancato, spokeswoman for the Michigan Lottery.

And the poker games seem to be gaining favor over other forms of charity gambling. Between 2004 and 2008, funds raised from Texas Hold 'em poker have increased more than sixfold.

At the same time, money raised through bingo games skidded 69.3 percent to \$3.5 million.

Part of the reason for that increase is a rise in the popularity of Texas Hold 'em style poker, the game played in the televised World Series of Poker.

"It's what's going on right now," said Tim Helm, agent for Hold 'Em Enterprises, a new Lansing-based business that is helping nonprofits stage their own charity games.

Some area poker rooms, such as the one inside Tripper's in the Frandor Shopping Center, operate daily. While other venues, such as Champions pub in Holt, host games from time to time.

Champions owner Nick Fata said allowing poker tournaments at his pub is a smart business move.

"We see a lot more people come in when there's poker, especially during the days on Saturday and Sunday. Those are normally pretty mediocre times," Fata said.

The nearly 3-year-old poker room at Tripper's also has been a success, General Manager Steve Tripp said. Games are held there every night of the week.

"It's definitely getting more popular, partly because of the consistency of the events being held," he said. "We're the one room in town that has the most charities."

A moneymaker

But new venues are starting to spring up around town.

Hold 'Em Enterprises was founded by four partners who wanted to provide an alternative venue.

"We wanted to try for a more comfortable and friendly atmosphere, like playing poker in a friend's home," Hold 'Em room manager Jon Parker said.

Hold 'Em helps charities through the licensing process and teams with Champions pub in Holt, which hosts the events. In a typical four-day event, as many as 150 people might participate in a charity game there.

Players buy chips from the charity in order to play. The "house" – in this case, the charity – keeps a percentage of what is bet in each hand. This "rake" varies from venue to venue. At Champions, it's 10 percent of money bet per hand up to a maximum of \$5 per hand.

At the end of a four-day event, the rake from cash tables goes to the charity. At events supplied by Hold 'Em, charities keep at least 50 percent of the gross receipts.

Hold 'Em keeps a portion once costs, including dealer fees, location rental and licensing fees are subtracted.

The remaining money goes to the winner of the hand. Pots can range from a paltry amount at a beginners' game to more than \$1,000 when high rollers get involved.

A livelihood

And to some, the poker tournaments aren't just games. It's a way to make a living.

Ryan Pham of Lansing plays poker professionally. He spends three to five days a week at the area's poker rooms.

"For me, it's like everyday work," said Pham, who participated recently in a tournament to benefit the Mason Masonic Center.

He prefers Lansing poker rooms to casino tables in Mount Pleasant or Detroit. Local rooms are more convenient, the 32-year-old said. Plus, the local games benefit charities.

“I’m having fun and making some money to go to charity,” he said. “The more hands I play, the more the charity gets.”



Published Aug 6, 2009

Published Thursday August 6, 2009

Poker called 'the new bingo'

By Paul Hammel

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

WORLD-HERALD EXCLUSIVE

LINCOLN — Up at the Holy Name Bingo Hall in north Omaha, manager Ron Nevriy is pining for the old days.

That's when 300 to 400 people a night would cram into the hall to the rhythmic chants of “Beeee 12” and “Nnnnn 33,” and the church would make \$200,000 a year in profits.

But the arrival of the riverboat casinos in Council Bluffs in 1996 and a lot of other diversions have cut those crowds in half.

As a result, Holy Name made only about \$78,000 last year, about 20 percent less than the previous year.

Statewide in Nebraska, wagering on bingo games is a bit more than half what it was a decade ago.

“It isn't like it used to be,” Nevriy said.

But there's a long-shot proposal saddling up to rescue the churches, youth athletic programs and other nonprofit groups that rely on charitable gambling and other fundraisers to operate.

A Gretna man, citing the experiences of states such as Michigan and Illinois, says that Nebraska should go all in and legalize poker tournaments for charities.

Brian Pick, a 39-year-old poker lover and married father of two, has launched a one-man campaign to urge Nebraska lawmakers to legalize such gambling.

In letters and follow-up emails to all 49 Nebraska state senators, he points to Michigan, where players last year wagered nearly \$75 million in tournaments held at special “poker rooms.”

Michigan charities — such as Habitat for Humanity, the local humane society, high school booster clubs and the United Way — took away almost \$10.5 million in proceeds, records indicate, and they needed little volunteer time and labor to do it.

“This would be a great fundraiser for charity. It's the new bingo,” said Pick, a sales manager for a software firm who builds and sells customized poker tables on the side.

Pick readily acknowledges that he could benefit personally from legalized poker. But he thinks the big winner would be the charities that have seen proceeds from their forms of legalized gambling — bingo, pickle cards and raffle tickets — tumble in recent years.

In Owosso, Mich., a rural town of 17,000, the commander of the local American Legion Post calls legalized poker a “lifesaver” for groups such as his.

Jim Carrothers, a 62-year-old Vietnam veteran, said his Legion post's members used to sell raffle tickets, hold fundraising steak fries and spaghetti feeds, and man a bingo hall to make ends meet.

Now, he assigns a couple of members a night to sell chips at a privately run poker room in town that provides the dealers, the equipment and the atmosphere for four-day tournaments that attract 20 to 50 players a night.

The Legion post made about \$25,000 on poker tournaments with very little effort, Carrothers said.

“We'd be lucky to make \$1,000 on a steak fry, and now I can book a four-day event at a poker room and make \$3,000 to \$4,000 using only two or three people a night,” he said.

“How can you compare that?”

Delaware, Maine and Oregon are among the states that have legalized charity poker in recent years, and Texas and South Carolina considered bills this spring.

But so far in Nebraska, Pick's pitch has generated a cool response from state legislators. The idea would require their approval and ultimately approval of a constitutional amendment by the state's voters.

Nebraska voters twice in the past five years have rejected measures to expand legalized gambling in the state.

"Folks have spoken on this many times," said State Sen. Tony Fulton of Lincoln. "Nebraskans don't want expanded gambling."

Another state senator, who saw his proposal to allow slot machines at Thoroughbred racetracks defeated this past spring, was less pessimistic.

But Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber, a longtime supporter of casino gambling, still put long odds on the poker idea.

"It's a pretty hot potato," Karpisek said. "But if it was something for the charities, maybe people would feel differently about it."

Pick said Nebraska organizations have held "Texas hold 'em" tournaments as fundraisers. Taverns also hold them to attract business and sell more drinks.

To be legal in Nebraska, the tournaments cannot charge an entry fee or provide prizes, limiting their appeal, Pick said.

He said the economy has been tough on charities, and plenty of bowling alleys, bars and restaurants have a spare room that would work as a "poker room."

In Michigan, only members of the charities sell the poker chips and handle the prize money. The poker room runs the game and profits from the sale of drinks and food.

Organizations can sell no more than \$15,000 worth of chips a night. Players pay \$20 to get into a game, and bets are typically no higher than \$10 to \$50, according to Jim Johnston, who operates four poker rooms in Saginaw, Mich.

Charities in Michigan are limited to offering poker four consecutive nights, four times a year.

The biggest individual wins and losses that Johnston has seen have been around \$1,000 to \$1,500 a night. It's a social activity, he said, and big bettors can go to a tribal casino an hour away.

Pick's state senator, Scott Price of Bellevue, said Pick's "heart is in the right place," but Price is passing on introducing poker legislation because of the high social costs of expanded gambling.

Pick is undaunted. Poker tournaments, he said, are popular, and poker is a game of skill played in households across the country.

Nevrivy, at the Holy Name hall, said state lawmakers could have helped bingo by allowing larger prizes but didn't. Maybe poker is something to look at, he said.

Pick thinks so.

"Sure, you'll have people who are against it," he said, "but if they see how easy it is to raise the money and who it benefits, they'll embrace it."