

FINAL REPORT

NORTH AMERICAN THINK TANK ON YOUTH GAMBLING ISSUES: *A Blueprint for Responsible Public Policy in the Management of Compulsive Gambling*

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The Minnesota Council and Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions reports are working documents and are provided to stimulate thought and discussion. They should not be considered final.

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THE NORTH AMERICAN THINK TANK ON YOUTH GAMBLING ISSUES

Executive Summary

The North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues was convened April 6-8, 1995 at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. Co-sponsored by the Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, and the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling, with assistance from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, the event brought together key leaders from throughout the United States and Canada who represented diverse fields including government, education, the gambling industry, finance, law enforcement, the judiciary, health care and research.

The purpose of the North American Think Tank was to develop a blueprint for responsible public policy to address the issues associated with youth gambling. It was intended to remain gambling neutral, neither supporting nor opposing gambling. The event was funded by donations from private business and tribal governments.

The Think Tank process was a highly structured and tightly managed format incorporating both small and large group discussion as well as presentations by various experts on the topic of gambling and youth.

Recommendations

North American Think Tank participants developed recommendations in seven key areas of concern. They are:

POLICY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. and Canada create a binational task force to coordinate the development of a North American response to youth gambling and solicit the funds necessary to pay for needed programs.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force be structured as a not-for-profit organization to attract funding from public and private sector sources.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The gambling industry establish industry standards for enforcement of underage gambling prohibitions, support tougher penalties against vendors who fail to enforce legal gambling age limits, and aggressively promote policies that prohibit payment of prizes to minors gambling illegally.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

An international research effort be undertaken to determine the prevalence of youth gambling and the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs, findings to be disseminated via an electronic "information superhighway" through a national or international clearinghouse.

TREATMENT AND TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Treatment methods in North America be inventoried and evaluated for clinical efficacy, and that professional training for youth gambling treatment providers be tailored to meet training needs.

EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Curriculums and programs be developed to educate children, parents and teachers about the issue of youth gambling.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

The public and policy makers be educated about youth gambling through the media and various other strategies, and that the gambling industry develop and promote a voluntary standards program to discourage the targeting of gambling advertising to young consumers.

Participants recommended that an interim task force be established to draft a plan for establishment of a permanent binational organization. The Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, and the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling were asked to serve as convenors of that interim task force. With the completion of this final report, that process is ready to begin.

It should be emphasized that the North American Think Tank was only the first step in what must be a long-term effort to respond to the issue of youth gambling. While additional approaches may surface, or details of implementation may change, Think Tank participants, with this report, have helped to create an outline - a blueprint - from which to proceed.

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid expansion of gambling over the past ten years, 48 states in the U.S. and all Canadian provinces offer some forms of privately owned and/or government-sponsored gambling. While gambling generates obvious and important economic benefits, there is no question that it also carries certain costs, one of which is pathological gambling. While most forms of gambling are illegal for underage youth, there is compelling evidence that, in fact, youngsters are gambling in unprecedented numbers.¹ According to recent studies, card playing, sports betting and games of personal skill are, in order of preference, particularly popular among juvenile gamblers. Lottery, bingo, pulltabs and video machines are popular in those states and provinces where they are legal.

Recent scientific studies repeatedly have suggested that children and adolescents may be at higher risk than adults of becoming pathological gamblers and suffering the tragic consequences of this powerful disorder. Studies in the U.S. and Canada have revealed that between 9.9% and 14.2% of adolescents are experiencing some symptoms of problem gambling, and between 4.4% and 7.4% meet the criteria for pathological gambling.² Moreover, the prevalence rates for pathological gambling among adolescents consistently have been found to be twice those found for adults. For this reason, the issue of youth gambling is becoming a major concern for North American communities, policy makers and the general public.

To address this issue, the North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues was convened on April 6-8 at Harvard Medical School in Boston. The mission of the Think Tank was to develop a blueprint for responsible public policy in addressing the issues associated with youth gambling. The event was intended to remain gambling neutral, neither supporting nor opposing gambling. It was convened and jointly sponsored by the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling and the Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, with assistance from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

The Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. is a national leader in the field of problem gambling education, training and prevention. In 1993, the Council hosted the first Minnesota Public Policy Think Tank on Compulsive Gambling, a two-day event which served as the prototype for the North American Think Tank. In recent years, the Minnesota Council has placed particular emphasis on youth gambling issues, developing public education and prevention models for state and national distribution. One pilot program focused on prevention of youth gambling, designed by the Council in cooperation with high school students from Northern Minnesota, has received national attention.

¹ Howard J. Shaffer and Matthew N. Hall, "Estimating the Prevalence of Adolescent Gambling Disorders: A Quantitative Synthesis and Guide Toward Standard Gambling Nomenclature, In Press," *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1995, p.3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

The Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, was established to foster education, discovery and communication in the field of substance abuse and addiction, including gambling addiction. The work of the Division on Addictions has centered on improving health care practitioners' ability to identify and treat addicted individuals; attracting talented researchers and scientists into the field of addiction to study risk factors, the effects of certain drugs, and the efficacy of various treatment methods; developing effective education and prevention programs; and integrating discussion of addictions into ongoing health care and drug policy deliberations at the national level.

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling was established in 1983, and has served as a national model for effective programming in education and community awareness. In collaboration with the Harvard Medical School, it convened the nation's first Think Tank on Compulsive Gambling in 1988. The Massachusetts Council developed the Massachusetts Gambling Screen (MAGS) for use in screening adolescents for gambling problems, and in 1994 attracted national attention when it conducted and published research on prevalence and problems associated with adolescent gambling.

Development of the Think Tank

Participants in the North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling were selected on the basis of their special interest in the topic of problem gambling among youth. They came from Canada and the United States, from government, education, the gambling industry, finance, law enforcement, health care, the judiciary, and the research community. Although their backgrounds and perspectives were widely diverse, they shared a common commitment: to invest their time, energy and considerable talents in the development of a national strategy to address the problem of youth gambling. Neither presenters nor participants were compensated for their attendance. A list of Think Tank participants is included as Appendix A to this report.

Funding for the North American Think Tank was provided by progressive gaming operators, bankers, insurance executives, lawyers and tribal governments in Mississippi and Minnesota, two of America's most significant gaming markets. The fundraising effort was led by Thomas J. Brosig, Executive Vice President of Grand Casinos, Inc., who along with colleagues in Mississippi and Minnesota, formed the National Policy Board on Youth Gambling Issues as a vehicle to raise funds for the Harvard Think Tank and for implementation of its recommendations in the future.

A complete list of volunteers, sponsors and contributors to the North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling is included as Appendix B to this report. Without their support, this event would not have been possible.

Definition of Terms

Many of the terms contained in this report have different meanings to different people. To ensure that Think Tank participants and readers of this report share a common understanding of some of these key terms, the following definitions are offered:

Gambling: There are many forms of gambling operated by private or public entities, or a combination of both. *For purposes of this report, the words "gambling industry" refer to legal, government-sponsored lotteries; charitable bingo or pulltab games; tribal casinos, bingo halls and card rooms; and privately owned casinos, betting parlors, race tracks or other legally sanctioned establishments.*

Underage gambling: Minimum legal gambling ages vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and from one gambling form to another within jurisdictions. For example, in most states, the minimum legal age for purchasing lottery tickets is 18, as is the minimum for pulltabs and pari-mutuel betting. In some states, the minimum legal age for casino gambling is 18; in others, 21. In some states, 18-year-olds may play the lottery or pulltabs legally, but may not gamble at casinos or place pari-mutuel bets. *For purposes of this report, underage gambling is defined as gambling by youth under the minimum legal age to place a bet in a particular venue.*

Problem gambling: It is estimated that between 9.9% and 14.2% of children and youth may be "problem gamblers." *For purposes of this report, a "problem gambler" is defined as a person who suffers some loss of control over his/her gambling behavior, leading to negative consequences.*

Pathological gambling: According to the American Psychiatric Association, and *for purposes of this report, pathological gambling is defined as a chronic and progressive psychological disorder characterized by emotional dependence, loss of control and accompanying negative consequences in the gambler's school, social or family life.* The distinction between "problem gambling" and "pathological gambling" is similar to the distinction most people recognize between alcohol abuse and alcoholism. As previously cited, between 4.4% and 7.4% of youth meet the criteria for pathological gamblers.

THE THINK TANK PROCESS

The Think Tank was structured to allow for general session presentations by leading North American experts, as well as extensive discussion among participants in breakout groups. Each presentation was strategically placed on the agenda so that the information presented in that session would be directly relevant to the breakout sessions scheduled to follow. This process helped to ensure that each group conducted its deliberations with the same general background as a frame of reference. The text of these presentations is available upon request. General session presenters and their topics were:

General Session Presenters

Keynote Address:

Philip G. Satre, President and Chief Executive Officer
Promus Companies, parent company of Harrah's Casinos
Memphis, Tennessee
"Why Care About Youth Gambling?"

- Thomas J. Brosig, Executive Vice President
Grand Casinos, Inc.
Plymouth, Minnesota
"The Right Thing to Do: Exercising Leadership in Youth Gambling"
- Howard Shaffer, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Director
Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions
Boston, Massachusetts
"An Overview of Youth Gambling in North America"
- Henry Lesieur, Ph.D., Professor and Chair
Department of Criminal Justice Sciences
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois
"Gambling Research: The Next Wave"

- I. Nelson Rose, J.D., Professor of Law
Whittier Law School
Los Angeles, California
"Underage Gambling and the Law"

- William R. Eadington, Ph.D., Director
Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, Nevada
"The Economics of Underage Gambling"

- Joseph Malone, State Treasurer
State of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts; and

- Eric Turner, Executive Director
Massachusetts State Lottery
Braintree, Massachusetts
"Youth Gambling in the Public Sector"

- Wayne M. York, Director, Cape Breton Region
Department of Health, Drug Dependency Services Division
Sydney, Nova Scotia
"The Canadian Perspective"

- Durand F. Jacobs, Ph.D., Clinical Professor of Medicine
Loma Linda University Medical School
Redlands, California
"Ten-Year Trends in Youth Gambling"

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

For the breakout sessions, Think Tank participants were assigned to five separate groups. They remained with those groups for the duration of the conference. The process was deductive in approach, moving from the general to the specific. A set of worksheets was provided for each session to keep the groups focused on the assigned topics and tasks.

The three breakout sessions were carefully designed to lead from a highly generalized vision to more specific themes and goals, and finally to specific recommendations for action. Each session built upon the findings of the previous session. Findings were summarized in writing by the facilitator after each session, and briefly reviewed with the entire assembly before the next breakout session began, to ensure that all groups had the same information gleaned from previous sessions.

Breakout Session I was spent in developing answers to the question, "What Should Be the Goals of a National Program to Address Problem Gambling Among Youth?" During the session, participants were asked to define a vision for the future, and to identify the key themes and goals contained in that vision. The themes and goals served as a foundation for development of specific action recommendations later in the process.

Breakout Session II moved to the question, "What Issues Need to Be Addressed in Order to Achieve the Goals Identified?" Participants were asked to identify current trends, decide whether they had positive or negative implications for the future, and define the assets and obstacles inherent in the status quo. Each obstacle was assessed for its seriousness and its solvability, to assist in setting priorities.

Breakout Session III was devoted to the question, "What Actions Should Be Taken to Address the Issues and Achieve the Goals Identified?" Participants developed specific action plan recommendations to overcome the obstacles and meet the goals established in previous breakout sessions.

Breakout sessions were facilitated by group leaders, who played a vital role in the two-day process. At a briefing before the first Think Tank session, group leaders familiarized themselves with the worksheets to be used, and received instructions for management of the discussion process. Group leaders were asked to encourage participation from all group members, to use consensus-building techniques that unite rather than divide group participants, and to discourage adversarial behavior within the group.

Following the final breakout session, all Think Tank participants convened in general session to review group findings and discuss the process by which the final report would be prepared and circulated for discussion.

Copies of the Think Tank agenda and a list of the participants in each group is included as Appendix C to this report. Group leaders are identified with an asterisk (*).

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSION I

A Vision for the Future

As indicated, the purpose of Breakout Session I was, first, to develop a very general vision for the future with respect to the management of youth gambling issues, and then to identify the key themes and goals which were contained in that vision. From those key themes and goals, more specific action recommendations ultimately would be developed. Several key themes and goals emerged from the group process:

THEME: NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: A binational or North American task force including all key stakeholders.

THEME: FUNDING

GOAL: A consistent, dedicated revenue source for youth gambling programs.

THEME: LAW ENFORCEMENT

GOAL: Tougher and more consistent enforcement of existing prohibitions against underage gambling.

THEME: RESEARCH

GOAL: A comprehensive research program to measure the prevalence (i.e., extent) of youth gambling, analyze program outcomes, and help identify the "why's" of youth gambling.

THEME: TREATMENT AND TRAINING

GOAL: Proven treatment programs for underage gamblers who need them, as well as for their families.

THEME: EDUCATION

GOAL: An aggressive education and prevention program in schools and communities.

THEME: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA

GOAL: A major media campaign to increase awareness and dramatize the issues associated with youth gambling.

GOAL: A voluntary "code of practice" among gambling advertisers to discourage ads which target young consumers.

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSION II

AN INVENTORY OF ASSETS AND POSITIVE TRENDS

The purpose of Breakout Session II was to identify the issues which need to be addressed in order to achieve the goals defined earlier. Think Tank participants were asked to identify existing assets and positive trends which might enhance our ability to achieve the desired goals. Some of the most important assets and trends were:

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY

- The willingness of government and private sector gambling entities to participate in addressing the issue of youth gambling.
- The economic resources being generated by government-sponsored gambling, and by privately owned gaming operations through taxes, economic expansion and job creation in rural areas, and charitable contributions.
- Economic development of Indian reservations, enabling tribal governments to participate as full partners in community problem-solving.

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN COMMUNITIES

- Increasing awareness of the youth gambling issue.
- Increasing involvement of community groups, religious and fraternal organizations in discussion of the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of new gambling policies.

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN PUBLIC POLICY

- Growing inclination of elected officials to consider problem gambling issues, including youth gambling, when evaluating gambling policy decisions.
- Increasing support among lawmakers for "child protection" measures.
- Increasing interest among lawmakers in funding problem gambling programs, including youth gambling programs.
- Public pressure for accountability when public funds are spent.

- More frequent use by lawmakers of specialized research and policy analysts to formulate public policy.
- Expanding technologies such as computer modeling to help forecast the economic and social effects of gambling policy changes.

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- U.S. and Canadian universities, and independent researchers conducting credible scientific research and legitimizing the study of problem gambling.
- National and state compulsive gambling councils addressing the issue of problem gambling, including youth gambling.
- Corporations that contribute support to youth and problem gambling programs.
- Think Tank planners, sponsors and participants.

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN TREATMENT AND TRAINING

- A growing base of persons with experience in treatment.
- Increasing sophistication of training and treatment technologies.
- Increasing emphasis on training, curriculum development and skill- building for treatment providers.
- Holistic health trends emphasizing wellness and treatment of the whole person.
- Increasing involvement of family and friends in the treatment of problem gambling among youth and adults.
- Increasing availability of creative self-help programs such as Gamblers Anonymous in the U.S.

ASSETS & POSITIVE TRENDS IN THE MEDIA

- Increasing media attention to youth and problem gambling.
- Strong media interest in the results of the North American Think Tank, suggesting more coverage in the future.
- Potential for use of entertainment media such as youth-oriented television to educate children and youth about problem gambling.

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSION II

AN INVENTORY OF NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES

During Breakout Session II, Think Tank participants also noted the emergence of some negative trends and obstacles which might affect our ability to achieve the desired goals. They were:

NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES IN THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY

- Linkage of gambling with family entertainment, i.e., video arcades, thrill rides, theme parks, etc.
- Gambling advertisements featuring or aimed at young consumers.
- The increased dollar value of highly publicized multi-state lotteries or other prizes, stimulating youth interest in gambling.

NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES IN COMMUNITIES

- Declining economic prosperity, leading to growing demand for "get rich quick" opportunities.
- Increasing demand by youth for immediate gratification, and/or relief from boredom.
- Growing numbers of disaffected, "disconnected" youth.
- Lack of jobs, creating a real or perceived lack of economic future for youth.
- Increased access to gambling by youth due to rapid expansion.
- Lack of social programs targeted to diverse cultural and ethnic groups.
- Dependence of churches and not-for-profit organizations on gambling for needed revenues.
- Increased accessibility of credit and cash through credit cards and ATM machines.
- Increasing preoccupation of children and youth with computer games and technologies, enabling an easy transfer of skills to high-tech interactive forms of gaming (e.g. the inclusion of free "video blackjack" games with purchase of new home computer).

- New gambling technologies, including the potential for unregulated youth gambling at home through online communications or other interactive systems.
- Breakdown of family unit combined with overburdened schools.
- National obsession with sports and "winners," along with tendency to ignore or refuse to recognize "losers."

NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES IN PUBLIC POLICY

- Rapid expansion of gambling by lawmakers without analysis of potential effects, positive and negative, on society, and without accepting responsibility for consequences.
- Dependence of governments on gaming revenues to reduce general operating deficits, finance vital infrastructure improvements, or fund targeted programs such as education, elderly services, environmental and economic development, etc.
- Trend to conservative, "program-cutting" political mindset.

NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES IN TREATMENT AND TRAINING

- Proliferation of untested, unproven treatment programs.
- Turf battles among treatment providers.
- Lack of adequate treatment models, training, and delivery systems.
- Refusal of most insurance companies to fund prevention and treatment programs, or even to consider gambling addiction, including youth gambling, as a medical problem.
- Potential national reduction in U.S. health care services through federal budget cuts either directly reducing services or reducing funds available to states for that purpose.

NEGATIVE TRENDS AND OBSTACLES IN THE MEDIA

- Frequent focus on sensationalism instead of accurate reporting on scope of problem and availability of help.
- Sporadic coverage concentrated in media rating periods (sweeps), rather than on-going to create an understanding of context.

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSION III

AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Having identified assets, trends and obstacles during Breakout Session II, Think Tank participants moved on to the development of action plans during Breakout Session III. Although some groups emphasized certain themes over others, **most groups made an effort to address each of the major themes and goals identified earlier. Each recommendation was submitted by at least two groups, and received broad support, unless otherwise noted.**

ACTION PLANS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

1. Create a binational task force to include all key stakeholders.
2. Identify potential public and private funding sources.
3. Establish staff support to begin implementation of program.
4. Develop five-year strategic plan including programs and public policy initiatives.
5. Use research data to gain support from policy makers.
6. Identify allies in government and the private sector.

Discussion

Every group agreed on the need for a broad-based binational task force to coordinate a North American response to youth gambling. Think Tank participants recommended that the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling and the Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions collaborate to appoint an interim task force, drawing from the roster of Think Tank participants. The interim group would assume responsibility for developing and circulating to other Think Tank participants a plan for the creation of the proposed binational task force.

Upon establishment of this permanent binational task force, a five-year strategic plan would be developed. The plan would address both programmatic and public policy goals, which might or might not include legislative proposals.

In view of the Think Tank's gambling-neutral position, it was felt by most members that it would be inappropriate and unproductive for the task force to engage in lobbying to change gambling laws, or

tell regulators how to do their jobs. The majority of Think Tank participants felt it more appropriate for the task force to seek public discussion on the issue of youth gambling in the U.S. and Canada, rather than federal legislation in either country.

ACTION PLANS IN FUNDING

Recommendations

1. Establish tax-exempt charitable structure to attract donations.
2. Raise seed money for initial operation of task force.
3. Identify and solicit potential public and private funding sources for recommended programs in policy development, research, treatment and training, education and public awareness.

Discussion

There was broad agreement among Think Tank participants that both public and private sector funding sources should be explored. Some state councils and private compulsive gambling treatment providers have received funding support from state legislatures. Increasing public concern about problem gambling may be creating a political environment in which public funds for youth gambling programs could be more accessible than in previous years. In most cases, however, legislative appropriations are restricted for use on programs conducted within the granting jurisdiction, so it is unlikely that programs in one jurisdiction would qualify for funding from other jurisdictions.

Recognizing the importance of an on-going, adequate funding source, some participants recommended that a portion of existing gaming tax revenues – from taxes already levied on the gaming industry, not new taxes – be earmarked by government mandate to fund youth gambling programs. Some government-sponsored lotteries are already required by law to devote a portion of their proceeds to problem gambling. However, this proposal may be contrary to the trend, at least in U.S. state governments. In the face of increasing fiscal pressures, many state legislatures are reducing or eliminating existing dedicated funds in an effort to maximize the revenues available for general fund obligations. In the current U.S. political environment, the creation of new dedicated funds for social programs might be unlikely.

While there is no mechanism other than negotiated tribal-state compacts by which such contributions could be mandated from tribal governments, there is every reason to believe that many gaming tribes would be willing to contribute voluntarily to youth gambling programs, particularly in the area of education and prevention. Some tribal governments and tribal gaming associations have already established working relationships with problem gambling organizations, offering both financial and other types of support.

Think Tank participants recommended that the binational task force be structured as a tax-exempt charitable organization, enabling it to solicit funds from government, businesses and foundations. It was felt that foundations or other organizations with an emphasis on youth health and wellness issues might be especially appropriate targets for fundraising efforts.

ACTION PLANS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Recommendations

1. Encourage the establishment of industry standards for enforcement of underage gambling prohibitions.
2. Support tougher penalties for vendors who consistently fail to enforce existing legal gambling age limits by repeatedly selling lottery tickets or pulltabs to underage gamblers, or who do not make a good-faith effort to restrict underage gamblers from entry into casinos, racetracks or other legalized gambling sites.
3. Support the enactment and aggressive promotion of gambling industry policies that prohibit payment of prizes to minors gambling illegally.

Discussion

Although some Think Tank participants supported an increase to 21 years in the minimum gambling age, the majority felt that the task force should focus its efforts toward more rigorous enforcement of existing age prohibitions. They felt that tougher enforcement measures, including the possible loss of license for particularly egregious violations, should be targeted to those vendors, governmental as well as private, who consistently fail to make a good-faith effort to deter underage gambling.

Participants also noted the complexity of operational issues associated with enforcement of minimum age laws. The challenge faced by a casino that handles thousands of visitors in a single day is very different from that faced by a convenience store operator whose lottery ticket customers usually number in the dozens. Think Tank participants stressed the importance of collaboration and cooperation between gaming entities, both governmental and private, and the law enforcement community.

Think Tank participants also emphasized the importance of public education in this area, pointing to Harrah's "Project 21" as an excellent public service campaign to discourage underage gambling. "Project 21" uses a multi-faceted approach which includes employee training programs; television spots which emphasize the potential consequences of illegal gambling; and a scholarship program which awards scholarships to students who develop essays on the issue of underage gambling. The program is in use at all Harrah's locations and is serving as a model for gambling entities in other states.

Think Tank participants agreed that effectiveness studies of prevention programs are sorely needed. As more objective, scientific information is obtained about what works and what doesn't, concerned businesses and organizations will be better able to target prevention programs to maximize their effectiveness with the young audiences they are intended to reach.

ACTION PLANS IN RESEARCH

Recommendations

1. Establish a clearinghouse to disseminate research findings on youth gambling, educational materials, and information on prevention and treatment programs; establish Internet capability for quick dissemination.
2. Develop an international research agenda encompassing prevalence studies of youth gambling as well as research to assess prevention and treatment programs.
3. Request that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) include questions on gambling in its annual youth health survey.
4. Develop a uniform methodology for prevalence studies of youth gambling.

Discussion

There was unanimous agreement among Think Tank participants that extensive additional research must be done on the prevalence of youth gambling, as well as on the efficacy of existing treatment methods. Since the definition of problem gambling differs depending on the screening mechanisms used, and since so many different methodologies have been used to collect and evaluate existing data, it remains difficult, even now, to get a clear sense of the scope of the youth gambling problem. Think Tank participants felt that a greatly expanded research effort is indispensable to further efforts to address the issue of youth gambling.

As a means of encouraging such research, participants suggested the establishment of several research centers, located at various North American universities, which would assist the task force in setting research agendas, host conferences, participate in joint projects and assists in the dissemination of research data.

Although the issue of funding has already been discussed, Think Tank participants noted that increased funding for problem gambling research would stimulate interest in the field, and likely lead to an increase in the number and quality of researchers working in this field.

ACTION PLANS IN TREATMENT AND TRAINING

Recommendations

1. Develop an inventory of North American treatment settings and methods to ensure a complete range of client-centered services.
2. Prepare an analysis of the efficacy of various treatment methods, based on credible research.

3. Assess treatment resource needs to facilitate professional training of treatment providers.
4. Act as liaison with third party reimbursement companies (insurance companies, HMOs, EAPs, etc.) and systems funded by states or provinces.

Discussion

Think Tank participants felt that an assessment of the efficacy of existing treatment programs and methods is long overdue, and must be conducted as soon as possible. It was felt that such an assessment would probably result in increased government funding for treatment programs, since legislators would feel more confident that the programs funded by tax dollars had been evaluated by qualified professionals and found effective.

Think Tank participants emphasized the importance of the recommended inventory as a means of evaluating the range of programs (i.e., the "continuum of care") currently available. Only through such an inventory can gaps in existing programs be identified and corrected.

On the question of training, Think Tank participants felt that professional training curricula should be tailored to treatment resource needs, to ensure an appropriate fit between trained professionals and the treatment programs in which they intend to work.

The need for liaison with third party reimbursement companies was also emphasized by Think Tank participants. It was felt that the binational task force could play a role in educating these companies about gambling disorders, and in persuading them to reimburse for pathological gambling treatment as they do for chemical dependency.

ACTION PLANS IN EDUCATION

Recommendations

1. Establish an ad hoc committee to develop broad-based national/international curriculum for schools.
2. Develop an educational video package to be distributed through school systems.
3. Involve youth role models in educational effort.
4. Educate parents and teachers about youth gambling and the dangers inherent in promoting gambling events such as "Casino Nights."

Discussion

Think Tank participants had well-defined ideas about the type of curriculum which should be developed for schools. They felt it should be reality-based, dealing with the practical consequences of excessive

gambling and avoiding ethical judgements or moralizing. It was suggested that youth role models, such as athletes, musicians or movie/TV personalities, might be utilized to deliver these messages. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that educational materials are multi-cultural, recognizing and respecting the unique perspectives on gambling held by various cultures.

The role of parents and teachers was extensively discussed. Think Tank participants felt that many parents and teachers consider gambling harmless, and actually encourage it through social or fundraising events with a casino gambling theme. Group members felt that parent/teacher/student organizations should be educated about the problem of youth gambling and the dangers inherent in institutional sponsorship of events which encourage gambling.

ACTION PLANS IN PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA

Recommendations

1. Publicize the findings of the North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues.
2. Identify and cultivate media allies and potential partners to assist in creating public awareness of the issue.
3. Establish binational Speakers' Bureaus on the topic of youth gambling.
4. Establish and publicize in both countries a National Youth Gambling Screening Week, highlighted by a televised screening test.
5. Establish and publicize international toll-free information/referral hotlines for teens with gambling problems in the U.S. and Canada.
6. Assist the gambling industry to develop and promote voluntary standards which discourage targeting gambling advertising to young consumers.

Discussion

According to Think Tank participants, the results of the Think Tank itself should be publicized aggressively to help stimulate public discussion of youth gambling. It was felt that advance publicity on the Think Tank had already contributed to growing awareness, as evidenced by extensive coverage in USA Today, and interest expressed by various television news organizations.

Think Tank members acknowledged the power of television as a tool to create public awareness, and recommended that the U.S. and Canadian task forces explore the possibility of nationally televised youth gambling screenings in their respective countries, perhaps followed by a town hall-type discussion of youth gambling. In view of the strong interest by some media organizations in this issue, there may be opportunities to develop partnerships with media outlets for funding such a program.

The development of a binational Speakers' Bureau was proposed by Think Tank participants. They felt that civic and community groups, professional associations and public policy groups would welcome presentations on this topic. The Speakers' Bureau would require organization and administration, so would probably be a function of the binational task force when established.

The issue of gambling advertising was widely discussed. Think Tank participants felt that the gambling industry should adopt a "code of practice," or voluntary standards to discourage gambling advertising that appears to target younger consumers. Participants acknowledged that recent efforts by casinos to position themselves as "family destinations" could complicate the task, but felt that an effort should be made among industry members to establish such standards. The role of the binational task force in this effort would be to advise and consult with industry members, and to assist them in promoting the standards within the industry and to the general public.

CONCLUSION

The North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues was the first international event to focus on youth gambling, and to develop specific recommendations for addressing the issue. Despite the wide diversity of group members, participants demonstrated an amazing commonality of purpose in the development of their recommendations. The few issues on which there was disagreement are noted in this report.

As previously mentioned, Think Tank members agreed during the final Think Tank general session that an interim task force should be established to begin implementation of the recommendations which emerged from their two-day discussions. Participants recommended that the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling and the Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, continue to serve as joint conveners, assembling a small subcommittee of Think Tank participants to serve as the interim task force and draft a plan for establishment and formalization of the permanent binational organization.

As meaningful as the North American Think Tank discussions were, they represent only the first step in what must be an on-going effort to respond to the issue of youth gambling. If the binational task force is to be established, and these recommendations implemented, fundraising will be key to the effort. Both public and private funding sources will need to be tapped.

As with any major social problem, the solution lies in our collective political will. If policy makers decide that this problem must be addressed, they will appropriate funds to address it. If the gambling industry believes that it is best served by a progressive, responsible approach to this issue, it will contribute funds to that end. If the business community recognizes that problem gambling can lead to loss of productivity and criminal activity in the workplace, it will become part of the solution. If private foundations believe that young people who are addicted to gambling need help, they will provide grants for that purpose.

The North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues has launched public dialogue on this issue and recommended a response. While the details of implementation may change as new ideas emerge, or better ways are discovered, Think Tank participants have helped define a plan to guide the development of new public policy. Think Tank participants and the organizations which sponsored this important event are confident that their recommendations will, indeed, serve as a blueprint for the development of a responsible and responsive North American approach to the management of youth gambling issues.

Appendix A

The following companies have made financial contributions to the *North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues*:

Casino Magic Corporation
Grand Casinos, Inc.
Healthspan/Medica
Minnesota Indian Gaming Association
Promus Companies
Riverboat Corporation of America (Isle of Capri)
Stewart Sneed Hewes, Inc.
Willis Corroon Corporation of Minnesota
Daugherty, Dawkins, Strand & Yost, Inc.
Dukes, Dukes, Keating and Faneca, P.A.
Gallagher Insurance Group
Hancock Bank
PDS Financial Corporation
Summit Tunica Partnership (Hollywood Casino)
The Peoples Bank
Watkins, Ludlum and Stennis
Allen, Vaughn, Cobb & Hood, P.A.
Bank of Wiggins
Bryant, Clark, Dukes, Blakeslee, Ramsey & Hammond
Randy Capurro (Layne & Associates)
Miller & Schroeder Financial, Inc.
Sawyer Insurance
Trustmark National Bank
Zurich American Insurance
Bank of Mississippi
Barlow Woods, Inc. (Best Western Seaway Inn)
Blackwell & White
Boyce Holleman
Braxton Hobdy
Diamond Lakes Casino
First National Bank of Picayune
First National Bank of Lucedale
Franke, Raine & Salloum
Hopkins, Dodson, Crawley, Bagwell, Upshaw & Persons
Merchants & Marine Bank
Page, Mannino & Peresich
Parsinen, Bowman & Levy

Members of the task force and other volunteers who have contributed a tremendous amount of time and effort to raise the money necessary:

Task Force:

- * ***Mr. Tom Brosig, Chair (Grand Casinos, Inc.)***
- * **Mr. Nick Roberts (Dukes, Dukes, Keating and Faneca, P.A.)**
- * **Mr. Watson Butts (Hancock Bank)**
- * **Mr. Johan Finley (PDS Financial Corporation)**
- * **Mr. John "Shorty" Sneed (Stewart Sneed Hewes, Inc.)**
- * **Mr. William Fisher (Willis Corroon Corporation of MN)**

Volunteers:

- * **Mr. Earl Yanase (Diamond Lakes Casino)**
- * **Mr. Rob Wyre (Grand Casinos, Inc.)**
- * **Mr. Tim Moncur (PDS Financial Corporation)**
- * **Mr. Chris Boone (Stewart Sneed Hewes, Inc.)**

Appendix B

North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues

Participant List

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***Group Leader**

****Keynote Speaker**



**HARVARD
MEDICAL
SCHOOL
DIVISION ON
ADDICTIONS**

NORTH AMERICAN THINK TANK ON YOUTH GAMBLING ISSUES



North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues Color Coded Breakout Group Assignment List

Please note you will be in the same breakout group on Friday and Saturday. Also, please note there is a room change on Saturday.

Breakout Group I (Green) ●

**Friday - MEC 105
Saturday - MEC 305**

Linda Berman (facilitator)
Jim Butler
Bill Eadington
Donald Ebbs
Betty George
Jan Rasch
Hila Richardson
Phil Satre
Robert Tannenwald

Breakout Group II (Yellow)

**Friday - MEC 115
Saturday - MEC 314**

Cliff Goldberg (facilitator)
Tom Brosig
Kathy Donovan
Jeannette Hargroves
Luc Provost
I. Nelson Rose
Kathleen Scanlan
Larry Vigil
Wayne Yorke

Breakout Group III (Blue) ●

**Friday - MEC 116
Saturday - MEC 315**

Colin Campbell
(facilitator)
Frank Campbell
Judy Cornelius
David Korn
Joseph Malone
John McCarthy
Lynn Rambeck
Howard Shaffer
Chip Silverman

Breakout Group IV (Red) ●

**Friday - MEC 117
Saturday - MEC 316**

Garry Smith (facilitator)
Judith Byrnes
Tom Cummings
Jeffrey Derevensky
Dewey Jacobs
Henry Lesieur
Eric Turner
Tom Wispinski

Breakout Group V

**Friday - MEC 118
Saturday - MEC 317**

Chuck Maurer (facilitator)
Ron Frisch
Alan Gilbert
Bob Jones
Robert Ladouceur
Beverly Martin
Sirgay Sanger
Rachel Volberg
Tim Wapato

Appendix C

North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues

AGENDA

Thursday, April 6, 1995

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Common Room Vanderbilt Hall (Avenue Louis Pasteur)
	<i>Keynote Address</i> Mr. Philip G. Satre President and Chief Executive Officer Promus Companies	

Friday, April 7, 1995

7:45 - 8:15	Breakfast	Medical Educational Center Atrium (MEC)
8:15 - 8:45	Welcome and Introduction to the Think Tank Process	MEC 227
	Betty George, Executive Director, Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling Howard Shaffer, Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions Marsha Kelly, Facilitator, Issues Strategies Group, Inc.	
8:45 - 9:30	General Session: First Presentation	MEC 227
	<u>Title: Youthful Gambling in North America: Considerations for the 21st Century</u>	
	Presenter: Howard Shaffer, Ph.D. Associate Professor Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions Boston, Massachusetts	

9:30 - 10:00

General Session: Second Presentation

Title: Gambling Research: The Next Wave

Presenter: Henry Lesieur, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Illinois State University
Department of Criminal Justice Sciences
Normal, Illinois

10:00 - 10:15

Coffee Break

Atrium

10:15 - 11:45

Breakout Session 1

**Room #'s 105, 115,
116, 117, 118**

Topic: What Should be the Goals of a National
Program to Address Problem Gambling
Among Youth?

*** See Group Assignment List**

11:45 - 1:30

Luncheon Session: Third Presentation

MEC 227

Title: Underage Gambling and the Law

Presenter: I. Nelson Rose
Professor of Law
Whittier Law School
Los Angeles, California

Luncheon Session: Fourth Presentation

MEC 227

Title: The Economics of Underage Gambling

Presenter: William R. Eadington
Director
Institute for the Study of Gambling and
Commercial Gaming
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, Nevada

1:30 - 2:00

General Session: Group Reports

MEC 227

Topic: Report on Outcomes of Goals Session

2:00 - 3:30

Breakout Session 2

**Room #'s 105, 115,
116, 117, 118**

Topic: What Issues Need to be Addressed in Order to
Achieve the Goals Identified?

*** See Group Assignment List**

12:00 - 1:30

Luncheon Session: Sixth Presentation MEC 227**Title:** The Canadian Perspective**Presenter:** Wayne M. Yorke
Director, Cape Breton Region
Department of Health, Drug Dependency Services
Division
Sydney, Nova Scotia**Luncheon Session: Seventh Presentation****Title:** Teenage Gambling in North America: Ten Year
Trends in Problems and Prospects**Presenter:** Durand F. Jacobs, Ph.D.
Clinical Professor of Medicine
Loma Linda University Medical School
Redlands, California

1:30 - 2:30

Breakout 3 (continued)**Room #'s 305, 314,
315, 316, 317**

2:30 - 2:45

Coffee Break**MEC 4th Floor
(Balcony)**

2:45 - 3:45

General Session: Group Reports**MEC 227****Topic:** Report on Outcomes of Actions Session

3:45 - 4:00

**Review and Closing Summary
of Think Tank****MEC 227**

Appendix D

NORTH AMERICAN THINK TANK ON YOUTH GAMBLING ISSUES PLANNING COMMITTEE

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