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AGENDA COVER MEMO

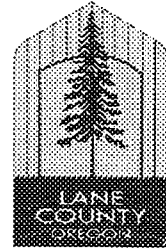
AGENDA DATE: March 10, 2004

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Health & Human Services

PRESENTED BY: Rob Rockstroh

AGENDA TITLE: In the Matter of Proclaiming the Week of March 8, 2004 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County



I. MOTION

TO PROCLAIM THE WEEK OF MARCH 8, 2004 AS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK IN LANE COUNTY

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

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

III. DISCUSSION

A. Background / Analysis

The issue of problem gambling is relatively new to the behavioral health field. While the majority of people gamble with few or no consequences, the incidence of problem gambling has increased as gambling opportunities have become more available. In Oregon, over 60,000 adults (2.3%) and 10,000 teens (one in 25 youth, ages 13-17) meet the criteria for problem or pathological gambling (Moore, 2001; Carlson & Moore, 1998). In Lane County, an estimated 6,000 adults and over 1,000 teens are affected. This growing public health issue affects individual problem gamblers, their families and communities, and causes enormous social, economic, and psychological costs. The following information illustrates the costs reported by problem gamblers enrolled in Oregon's gambling treatment programs (Moore, 2003):

- One in ten problem gamblers (10%) considered and formulated plans to commit suicide within six months of enrollment to treatment

- One in four problem gamblers (24%) reported their gambling cost them a marriage or significant relationship
- Fifteen percent of problem gamblers lost their jobs due to their gambling
- Forty percent of problem gamblers committed crimes to finance their gambling

While research is new with regard to gambling activity among youth, gambling activity appears to be more prevalent and have an earlier age of onset than in the past. Surveys of middle school youth conducted since 2003 by Lane County's problem gambling prevention program show the following:

- Four in five (80%) middle schoolers report having gambled, with the average age of gambling onset of nine years old
- The average range of gambling frequency reported was one to five times per month
- One in 25 (4%) students responded positively to the question, "Have you ever lost so much money you've felt embarrassed to tell someone about it?"

Effective prevention and treatment programs present the most significant opportunities to reduce the burden of problem gambling. The Oregon legislature has dedicated one percent of video lottery revenues to address problem gambling. Though current funding dedications are less than one percent, Lane County continues its commitment to supporting the continuum of care through its comprehensive problem gambling prevention program and award-winning treatment program. The prevention program, provided through Lane County Health & Human Services, has reached thousands of Lane County citizens by means of presentations, educational materials, media efforts, and collaboration with other prevention and treatment partners. Since 2003, over 700 Lane County youth have been directly served through the program's problem gambling prevention workshops. Lane County's gambling treatment program, ACES Meridian, provided gambling addiction treatment services to 229 problem gamblers and family members last year; ACES Meridian also houses the statewide problem gambling Help Line, which responded to over 4,407 calls last year.

This year will mark the second-annual National Problem Gambling Awareness Week and Oregon Problem Gambling Awareness Week, both to be observed during the week of March 8, 2004. Efforts in Lane County are more limited this year than last due to funding reductions, but are to include a gambling awareness poster search for middle school youth, a number of outreach presentations, a news release, and support of statewide media efforts.

B. Alternatives / Options

1. To declare the week of March 8, 2004 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

2. Not to declare the week of March 8, 2004 as Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

C. Recommendation

To approve number one above.

D. Timing

Upon Board approval, the week of March 8, 2004 will be declared Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Lane County.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation will be completed as stated above.

V. ATTACHMENT

Board Order

