



March 16, 2017

Dear Editor,

March is Ohio Problem Gambling Awareness Month. With Ohioans now able to gamble in more ways than ever, keeping gambling in perspective is essential.

To help educate the public about problem gambling and raise awareness of the treatment options available to those with a gambling problem, the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, the Ohio Casino Control Commission, Ohio Lottery and the Ohio State Racing Commission joined forces to create Ohio for Responsible Gambling (ORG). By leveraging our combined resources, ORG has worked to promote awareness of safe gambling practices and ensure all those affected by gambling addiction are able to access treatment.

Trainings on problem gambling and addiction have been held across the state for mental health professionals, chemical dependency clinicians and counselors. As a result, there are now 83 locations in Ohio where individuals can receive free treatment for gambling disorders – a marked increase from just two years ago. ORG is also a sponsor of Ohio's annual Problem Gambling Conference, which brings hundreds of professionals together each year to learn from experts at the local, state and national levels on best practices regarding the prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

In addition, ORG helped create "Be the 95%" – an award-winning, statewide campaign designed to help encourage healthy behaviors when it comes to gambling. Information on recognizing the warning signs of problem gambling, tips on how to gamble responsibly and how to get help for loved ones can be found at [www.the95percent.org](http://www.the95percent.org). The campaign also contains a toolkit that communities can use to help personalize the campaign's message for their area.

Anyone who gambles can develop a gambling problem. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-589-9966 to talk to a referral counselor about problem gambling and the treatment options available in your area.

Sincerely,

Tracy Plouck, Director  
OhioMHAS

Matthew T. Schuler, Executive Director  
Ohio Casino Control Commission

Dennis Berg, Executive Director  
Ohio Lottery Commission

William Crawford, Executive Director  
Ohio State Racing Commission