



December 2, 2014

(518) 388-3415

## **NEW YORK'S RESPONSIBLE PLAY PARTNERSHIP JOINS WITH NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING TO ENCOURAGE NEW YORKERS TO GIFT RESPONSIBLY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

**SCHENECTADY, N.Y.** – Members of New York's Responsible Play Partnership, comprised of the New York State Gaming Commission, New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) and the New York Council on Problem Gambling today announced its participation in a national public service program sponsored by the National Council on Problem Gambling aimed at curbing the popular practice of giving Lottery tickets as holiday gifts to minors.

The Lottery's commitment to the national "Gift Responsibly" holiday campaign is the latest in a series of steps taken by the Gaming Commission aimed at drawing attention to the legal gambling age in New York State.

Gaming Commission Executive Director Robert Williams said, "We encourage New Yorkers of legal age to play the Lottery and participate in the other games available in the state, but we stress that they must do so responsibly. The approaching holiday season serves as an appropriate time to remind New Yorkers on both sides of the sales counter that those over the age of 18 should not gift Lottery tickets to minors and that it is illegal to sell a Lottery ticket to or accept a wager from a minor regardless of the time of year."

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez said, "Research has shown that just as with alcohol, drugs and tobacco use, gambling at an early age can increase a child's chances of developing a gambling problem. We're asking all New Yorkers to consider the age of the person on the receiving end of a Lottery gift not just during the holiday season, but year-round."

New York Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director James Maney said, "We applaud the Commission, OASAS and the National Council for their efforts to remind New Yorkers of the legal sell age for gambling products in New York State and we look forward to continuing to work with the RPP to educate New Yorkers on the risks and penalties associated with underage gambling."

National Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director Keith Whyte said, "Lottery tickets are often viewed as the perfect gift at holiday time because they fit inside a greeting card or into a stocking hung over the fireplace. The *Gift Responsibly* program urges adults to recognize that gifting children with Lottery tickets sends the message to this impressionable population that

youth gambling is acceptable when our research has shown that children who receive Lottery tickets as gifts tend to start gambling earlier in life and are put at greater risk of developing a gambling problem.”

The Responsible Play Partnership is coordinating the placement of the “Please Gift Responsibly” message on all draw game tickets during the month of December and posting the same message on all the electronic promotional displays located near the terminals at more than 18,000 licensed Lottery locations statewide. The Commission is also reminding all gaming licensees that being cited for illegal underage sales may make them subject to written warnings, fines and/or suspension or revocation of their Commission license. Store personnel who sell tickets could also be arrested, as the sale of lottery tickets to underage buyers is a misdemeanor.

*About the New York State Gaming Commission*

The New York State Gaming Commission regulates all aspects of gaming and gambling activity in the state, including horse racing and pari-mutuel wagering, class III Indian gaming, video lottery terminal facilities at race tracks, the state lottery and charitable gaming.

*About the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services*

The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services oversees one of the nation’s largest addiction services systems dedicated to Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, with nearly 1,600 programs, including crisis, inpatient, residential and outpatient services, that serve approximately 100,000 people on any given day.

*About the New York Council on Problem Gambling*

The New York Council on Problem Gambling is a not-for-profit independent corporation dedicated to increasing public awareness about problem and compulsive gambling and advocating for support services and treatment for persons adversely affected by gambling. The Council maintains a neutral stance on gambling and is governed by a Board of Directors.

*About the National Council on Problem Gambling*

The National Council on Problem Gambling serves as the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families. The National Council’s vision is to improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling. The National Council is neither for nor against legalized gambling. NCPG is organized with three classes of members: state affiliate, corporate and individual. The NCPG concentrates efforts on the national level, while the state affiliates work at the state and local level.

###