



## **New York’s Responsible Play Partnership Recognizes National Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

**NYS Gaming Commission launches “broadest self-exclusion program in the nation”**

**Public and private partners undertaking series of efforts, including visiting new casinos and meeting with communities to underscore State’s commitment responsible gaming practices**

New York’s Responsible Play Partnership (RPP) – consisting of the New York State Gaming Commission, the New York State Office on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and the New York Council on Problem Gambling – today announced a series of initiatives in recognition of March as National Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

The Commission also launched its statewide self-exclusion program – recognized by a national advocate as “the broadest self-exclusion program in the nation” – for individuals who self-identify as needing help in their battle with problem gambling. It allows problem gamblers to ban themselves from all casinos operating in New York State

The RPP’s plans for March include visiting newly opened casinos to review the operators’ efforts to promote responsible gaming practices, followed by public meetings in the communities hosting the casinos to educate the public on the resources available for those who need help.

The RPP will also foster awareness through a focused social media campaign, conversation-driving signage at all gaming facilities across the State and development of a new public service announcement reminding New Yorkers that the OASAS HOPELINE (1-877-8HOPE-NY/TEXT HOPENY) exists to address all forms of addiction – including gambling. Finally, for the first time ever, the New York Lottery will feature responsible gaming messaging as part of its daily televised drawings.

“The Responsible Play Partnership continues to be an effective tool in forging a comprehensive smart gaming policy in New York State,” said Commission Executive Director Robert Williams. “By engaging all stakeholders involved in the issue – problem gambling treatment providers, casino operators and regulators – and venturing into the community, we are driving focus to the issue and making more resources available for those who need help. The Commission is proud of the RPP’s work, and this month provides a perfect opportunity to highlight New York’s ongoing commitment to responsible gaming.”

“While most people can gamble responsibly, unfortunately, some develop gambling problems,” said OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez. “The RPP collaboration over the years has made a positive difference in our State, ensuring help is available for problem gambling and providing prevention programs to keep problems from developing. I look forward to more successes to come.”

“We are proud to partner with the Gaming Commission and OASAS to recognize National Problem Gambling Awareness Month,” said NY Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director James Maney. “The initiatives we have undertaken, including producing widely seen public service announcements, developing a comprehensive statewide self-exclusion policy, and bringing together gaming facility operators and the problem gambling treatment community, have indeed made a difference and elevated the issue. The RPP will continue to promote a responsible gaming environment in New York State.”

New York State’s specific plans for National Problem Gambling Awareness Month include the following:

- The RPP will visit each of the newly opened casinos in Tioga County (Tioga Downs), Seneca County (del Lago Resort & Casino) and Schenectady (Rivers Casino & Resort) to meet with facility management, tour the facility and review implementation of each facility’s required responsible gaming plans. In conjunction with these visits, the RPP will hold public meetings in nearby communities to underscore New York’s commitment to promoting responsible gaming, educate the public and community leaders on the resources available in the region, and ensure that persons dealing with problem gambling have access to the help they need. Dates, times and locations for the three events will be announced in the near future.
- The RPP will begin production of the latest in a series of public service announcements to promote a responsible gaming environment in the state. This PSA will promote the OASAS HOPELINE (1-877-8HOPE-NY/TEXT HOPENY) as a critical resource to those battling gambling addiction (in addition to all other forms of addiction). PSAs addressing [the overall issue of problem gambling](#), [addressing underage gaming](#) and [discouraging giving children lottery tickets as gifts](#) are available in both English and Spanish on the Commission’s YouTube page.
- Messaging and signage promoting the HOPELINE will be displayed at all licensed gaming facilities, including 17,000 Lottery retailers across the State.
- The RPP members (@NYSGamingComm, @NYSOASAS and @NYProbGambling) will coordinate a focused social media campaign to promote awareness of problem gambling
- Signage at all licensed gaming facilities in the state will encourage New Yorkers to start their own conversation about problem gambling with their families, friends and fellow players.
- For the first time, the New York Lottery’s daily televised drawings will include responsible gaming messaging.

### **Statewide Self-Exclusion Program**

In February, the Commission launched a comprehensive [statewide self-exclusion program](#), described by National Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director Keith Whyte as “the broadest self-exclusion program in the nation.”

The statewide policy closes a decades-old regulatory loophole in New York that made it possible for video lottery and casino patrons to voluntarily ban themselves from one gaming property only to continue playing at a neighboring facility unabated.

New York's new statewide self-exclusion program gives gamblers who recognize they need help the ability to sign a universal self-exclusion contract acknowledging that they elect to ban themselves from participating in all casino gambling, video lottery gaming, off-track pari-mutuel wagering, internet and account wagering and interactive fantasy sports in New York.

Upon signing, problem gamblers willingly acknowledge they face arrest for entering a gaming facility licensed by the Commission. To administer the program, all licensed gaming facilities across the state have access to a secure, Commission-maintained database where information on all self-excluded individuals is housed. The Commission is finalizing plans to extend the state's self-exclusion program to include Lottery winnings and casinos operated by Native American Tribes within the State's borders.

As it has since its inception in 2013, the RPP will continue to work with gaming operators, players, and the problem gambling prevention and treatment communities beyond March, educating the public about the warning signs of problem gambling and raising awareness about the help that is available close to home.

The RPP was [formed in February 2013](#) to address collaboratively problem gambling in New York State. Since then, the RPP has undertaken a series of initiatives, including the State's [first-ever public forum](#) featuring experts and stakeholders from around the world discussing best practices and policies in the era of expanded gaming. To learn more about the RPP's work, visit [here](#).

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