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NYS Gaming Commission Marks National Problem Gambling Awareness Month with First-of-its-Kind Public-Private Collaboration

The initiative leverages existing state- and privately-owned media assets to generate awareness about problem gambling where New Yorkers live, play and shop

Effort is in keeping with the Commission's recent certification as a world-class provider of Responsible Gaming programming

The New York State Gaming Commission has partnered with the New York State Thruway Authority (The Thruway), the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the Commission's video lottery gaming licensees, horse racing tracks and OTBS, commercial casino operators, and Lottery retailers to launch a statewide public service campaign to increase awareness of problem gambling. The effort is one of several high-profile initiatives to commemorate National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) in March.

The Commission is recognized by the World Lottery Association as North America's only gaming regulator to earn Level 4 Responsible Gaming (RG) Certification for incorporating RG principles into its daily operations across all Divisions including Gaming; Horse Racing and Pari-Mutuel Wagering; Charitable Gaming; and Lottery. The world-class certification also recognizes the Commission's commitment to continuous improvement.

A 15-second [TV Public Service Announcement](#) (PSA) and complementary 30-second [radio PSA](#) serve as the foundation for the Commission's 2019 PGAM campaign. Slated to run at no cost on commercial TV, radio, and social media, the crossword-puzzle inspired PSA will also be featured in some of New York's commercial casinos, on closed-circuit TV at all 27 toll plazas along the Thruway, and in DMV's 24 state-run offices. Additional support includes a poster campaign at all Thruway toll plazas, lottery retailers, video lottery gaming facilities, and horse racing tracks and OTBs statewide. In addition, custom PGAM messaging will be employed at the point of sale at more than 17,000 licensed lottery sales agents, on lottery draw game tickets, and during televised lottery drawings throughout the month of March.

"The Commission is pleased to collaborate with our sister agencies, professional partners, and licensees in this unique effort to educate New Yorkers where they live, work and shop with a message about problem gambling and the State's steadfast commitment to manage its gaming operations responsibly," said Acting Executive Director Robert Williams.

Thruway Authority Executive Director Matthew J. Driscoll said of the Thruway's involvement in the month-long initiative, "The New York State Thruway's 570-mile system and its 27 service areas statewide offer a unique opportunity to reach millions of visitors from New York and beyond in a convenient and timely manner. We are pleased to be able to amplify the Commission's important Responsible Gaming message during National Problem Gambling Awareness Month."

"As National Problem Gambling Awareness Month starts, the DMV is proud to be working with the New York State Gaming Commission," said Acting DMV Commissioner and GTSC Chair, Mark J.F. Schroeder. "Sharing this new PSA will not only raise awareness of problem gambling but lead those needing help to crucial state resources."

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez said "Problem gambling can result in issues that affect individuals, families, and communities. In New York State, we have greatly expanded the resources that are available to help people who are suffering from adverse effects related to problem gambling, and this campaign will make more people aware of these services and where they can find the help that they need."

The PSAs lead viewers to the new [NY.Gov/NYResponsibleGaming](https://www.ny.gov/nyresponsiblegaming) program page filled with information to help infrequent players make educated decisions about their gambling options prior to play and offers frequent players access to industry-certified self-assessment tools like the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS) Questionnaire as endorsed by the Cambridge Health Alliance Division on Addiction. The BBGS may be used to self-identify potential problem gambling behaviors. The Commission's Responsible Gaming page also features a link to New York's [Statewide Voluntary Self-Exclusion Agreement](#) (VSE) which players may use to voluntarily ban themselves from all New York gambling venues regulated by the Commission. To date, more than 1,700 individuals from New York and elsewhere have been registered in the VSE database for exclusion periods ranging from 1 year to a lifetime.

New York's 1-877-8HOPE-NY addictions support and referral service and its text equivalent, HOPENY (467369), also feature prominently in the PSA. The HOPEline is administered by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

In addition to these public-facing efforts, the Commission is once again requiring internal staff and management to complete a Problem Gambling and Responsible Gaming Training module produced in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. The on-line session is mandatory for all new employees and serves as an annual refresher course for all others.

The Commission continues to be an active member of New York's Responsible Play Partnership (RPP), which, in addition to the Commission, is comprised of OASAS and the New York Council on Problem Gambling. To date, the RPP has successfully forged gaming policy and coordinated community outreach events aimed at sustaining a public conversation about problem gambling addiction. For 2019, the RPP is once again working to provide Problem Gambling Awareness materials to professionals in the Problem Gambling prevention and treatment communities.

In the coming months, the Commission will roll out additional programs and services aimed at building awareness of and removing the stigma surrounding problem gambling addiction. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- Collaborating with other stakeholders to produce and distribute targeted problem gambling-related PSA and social media campaigns
- Educating Lottery licensees about a new Problem Gambling function on Lottery terminals allowing store personnel to provide information about the NYS HOPEline directly and discreetly to at-risk players
- Refreshing the Commission's underage gaming prevention program to increase in-store visibility on both sides of the sales counter, and
- Further standardizing internal processes to ensure Responsible Gaming elements are being incorporated into the development and deployment of all products and services under the Commission's regulatory control.

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