

May 21, 2007

For more information contact:
Steve Burton (304)344-2990

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page 1 of 1

Network Providers Pass National Certification

Twenty-eight members of the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia recently passed the National Certification for Gambling Counselor. This certification, which is sponsored by the National Gambling Counselor Certification Board, ensures that clinicians with the network meet the minimum national competency standards for treating problem gamblers and their loved ones.

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia provides the 1-800-GAMBLER help-line for problem gamblers and their loved ones throughout the state of West Virginia. All callers to the help-line are offered a free, two-hour consultation with one of 81 trained clinicians statewide. The program, already modeled nationally for the way it provides problem gambling services, is proud of its latest accomplishment. Help-line Supervisor Steve Burton states, "To have 28 individuals pass the NCGC is an outstanding accomplishment for our network. This was an extremely difficult exam and shows the dedication our network providers and staff have for helping problem gamblers and their loved ones." Of the twenty-eight people who passed, 6 are employees of the 1-800-GAMBLER program.

The certification started in 1984 due to complaints from recovering gamblers and their families that the clinicians they were seeing for their gambling problems did not understand how to treat problem gambling. Internationally renowned gambling treatment expert Joanna Franklin states "the NCGC is the highest standard in the field and means a competent behavior health specialist is caring for the client."

The 1-800-GAMBLER program, funded by the West Virginia Lottery, has been in existence since August of 2000. In that time the network has taken nearly 6000 calls from problem gamblers or the loved ones of problem gamblers. Burton says having so many individuals pass the exam will keep the West Virginia program in the national forefront of providing problem gambling related services "it is very rare to find a state in which the entire help-line staff has passed the NCGC certification. That is exactly what we have here in West Virginia."