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**March 1 - 7 is National Problem Gambling Awareness Week**

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***Association for Compassionate Transformation Launches Community Problem Gambling Awareness Campaign***

**SAN DIEGO/CALIFORNIA** –During March 1 – 7 in 2009, communities across the nation will observe National Problem Gambling Awareness Week (NPGA). March 1 – 7 is a period to focus our awareness on problem gambling that affects 6 – 9 million Americans annually. Sadly, only a small percentage of individuals seek help.<sup>1</sup> The goal of National Problem Gambling Awareness week is to educate the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs and harmful effects of problem gambling. In addition, NPGA week seeks to raise awareness of the assistance available at the local and national level. Effective treatment is available for improving the lives of individuals with problem gambling and their families.

The latest research conducted by the National Gambling Impact Study Commission estimated the yearly cost of problem gambling was \$5 billion. Americans nationally have gambled over ½ trillion dollars in 1997. Even more disturbing, Americans spend more on legal gambling than most other forms of hobbies combined.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that the majority of individuals can gamble without negative repercussions. Nevertheless, a small percentage of individuals who gamble suffer severe psychological, social, occupational and economic consequences. Problem gambling is related to crime, depression, suicide and domestic violence. Further, problem gambling has serious implications for children of pathological gamblers.<sup>3</sup>

Given that 3 percent of the population is affected by problem gambling at any given time, this addiction places individuals and their families' at emotional and financial risk. Individuals can become preoccupied with gambling and be unable to stop without professional assistance. Warning signs of problematic gambling include the following: 1) Boasting about gambling, embellishing wins and minimizing losses 2) Restless and irritable when not gambling 3) Gambling to win back what one's losses 4) Borrowing money for gambling 5) Lying about time spent gambling or unpaid debts 6) Frequent unexplained absences at home and work due to gambling 7) Engaging in illegal activity to obtain money for gambling 8) Jeopardizing a significant relationship or job by gambling.

A.C.T. is committed to raising awareness of the dangers surrounding problem gambling and the need for treatment. A.C.T. will provide information on how to gamble responsibly and screen adolescents and adults for pathological gambling to promote public education about problem gambling during the annual observance. For more information, please contact Dr. Drecun at [Dr.Drecun@a4ct.com](mailto:Dr.Drecun@a4ct.com) or (858) 792-3541.

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1 NPGAW.org  
2 Gross Annual Wager Report, 1999  
3 WORC, 1999