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## **NY's Responsible Play Partnership Kicks Off National Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

*Premiers First-in-Nation Quick Response (QR) Code for Problem Gamblers  
Announces Public Service Initiative to Expand Statewide Voluntary Self Exclusion  
Promotes Responsible Gaming with Month-Long List of Public Events*

The New York State Gaming Commission, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and New York Council on Problem Gambling, which together comprise New York's Responsible Play Partnership, today marked the start of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) by announcing a mix of new technologies and creative initiatives designed to increase public awareness of problem gambling and promote access to available prevention, treatment & recovery services.

The RPP is pleased to begin PGAM with the premier of the nation's first Quick Response (QR) Code specifically designed to connect problem gamblers with specially trained clinicians faster and closer to home than ever before.

Commission Executive Director Robert Williams said, "Finding a safe and efficient way to bridge the gap between players looking for help and providing immediate access to that help via a dynamic QR Code serves as a timely and necessary extension of New York's voluntary self-exclusion (VSE) program."

National Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director Keith Whyte who has recognized NY's VSE program as, "the broadest of its kind in the nation," said the QR Code offers an overdue solution to an issue faced by many problem gamblers.

"It is very likely that a person actively seeking help for his or her gambling problem is already in crisis or living or working with someone who is," said Whyte. "New York's QR Code gives that person a chance to find, contact and get help from a trained professional in one discreet step and increases their overall chances of receiving the help they need."

OASAS Commissioner Dr. Chinazo Cunningham said, "Individuals in need of assistance for problem gambling will now have another valuable resource to link them to resources available in their own community. The QR code is an innovative way for people to make immediate connections to the help they need."

Council Executive Director Jim Maney noted, "The development and implementation of a QR code that links players to information, on who to contact for help in their area, is a monumental change that serves as a much needed first step towards connecting people directly to care when they need it most. We look forward to the progression of this process and the dynamic nature of the QR code, which we envision in the near future, will provide a direct link to a live expert who can assist callers with connecting to care and/ or VSE."

The QR Code or its hyperlink equivalent is available for use on most public facing advertising and promotional materials issued by the Commission and its licensees. Applications under development include, but are not limited to, New York Lottery scratch-off tickets, mobile sports wagering promotional mailings, and digital signage found on the gaming floor at video lottery gaming facilities and commercial casinos.

Since its soft launch in January, the QR code has logged 1,529 total scans and more than 417 unique scans from PC, Android and IOS devices. The scans have resulted in a near 300 percent increase in unique visits to [www.nyproblemgamblinghelp.org](http://www.nyproblemgamblinghelp.org), a web page administered by the Council to highlight NY's expanding network of Regional Problem Gambling Resource Centers funded by OASAS.

New York currently has more than 2,600 individuals enrolled in its statewide VSE program. The RPP is currently collaborating with members of the state's prevention, treatment and recovery communities on a new public service initiative aimed at increasing awareness of VSE and the many benefits it provides to individuals all along the problem gambling spectrum.

### **A Series of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month Events**

In addition to its work to expand the statewide VSE program via QR code, RPP members have planned a series of in-person events to help build public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of prevention, treatment & recovery services. These events include:

- Hosting Gambling Disorder Screening Day at their respective agencies to help identify individuals who should seek an assessment of their gambling behavior. Background information on this international event is available [here](#).
- Participating in the New York Council on Problem Gambling 2022 Annual Conference on March 9 - 10. Information on this event is available [here](#).
- Taking part in an "Introduction to Mobile Sports Wagering" webinar to be hosted by OASAS. The webinar will give New York State prevention, treatment, and recovery providers a chance to learn more about the state's newest gambling

option directly from the regulator charged with overseeing the nine newly licensed MSW operators, and a representative from one such operator. The webinar is tentatively scheduled for March 29.

- Completing a “What is Responsible Gaming?” informational tour of New York’s video gaming and commercial casino venues that was started in 2020 and cut short by the onset of the pandemic. The sessions are designed to showcase the physical, environmental, and technological safeguards in place at gaming facilities to optimize the experience for the social gambler and minimize harm to patrons who may be playing for reasons other than entertainment. Informational Sessions will be scheduled throughout the month of March and thereafter, as needed.

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