

**John R. Kasich**, Governor  
**Mary Taylor**, Lieutenant Governor  
**Orman Hall**, Director

**For Immediate Release**

## **March 4-10 is National Problem Gambling Awareness Week**

**(Columbus, OH – March 4, 2012)** – As the State of Ohio gears up for casino-style gambling and expanded gaming options at the state’s racetracks, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) is encouraging Ohioans to join with the Cabinet-level state agency in recognizing the week of March 4-10 as “National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.”

“Research has shown that individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders are at a much higher risk for developing a co-occurring gambling disorder,” said ODADAS Director Orman Hall. “We also know that compulsive gambling increases closer to gaming facilities. We are proud to join with our partners at the Ohio Casino Control, Lottery and Racing Commissions to help raise awareness around the prevalence of problem gambling, and provide people with the resources to get help.”

The Department, in conjunction with the gaming Commissions, is currently conducting a statewide prevalence survey to establish baseline data around the type and frequency of gambling in Ohio. Results of that survey are expected to be released this summer. ODADAS is responsible for the training and preparation of gambling treatment counselors and other professionals, and presents an annual conference on Problem Gambling.

Nationwide, an estimated 6 million adults and 500,000 teens meet criteria for gambling addiction. In Ohio, approximately 300,000 adults and adolescents meet the established guidelines. Warning signs of a potential problem may include: preoccupation with gambling, chasing losses and financial harm. Problem gambling is often associated with substance abuse, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

ODADAS has worked with the Ohio Lottery Commission to address problem gambling for nearly 10 years. At this time, six gambling addiction treatment programs are in operation in Ohio’s publicly-funded system in Athens, Youngstown, Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati.

ODADAS will expand its problem gambling prevention, treatment and research efforts when the planned casinos come on line later this year. The passage of a Constitutional Amendment in 2009 that allowed casinos to be built and operated in Cincinnati, Franklin County, Cleveland and Toledo also included language that “two percent of the tax on gross casino revenue shall be distributed to a state problem gambling and addictions fund which shall be used for the treatment of problem gambling and substance abuse, and related research.” That two percent allocation has been estimated to be in the range of \$8 million annually once all four casinos are in full operation.

The National Council on Problem Gambling has selected to highlight veterans as one population especially at-risk for developing a problem with gambling during its 10th annual observance of National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. For more information, visit [www.npgaw.org](http://www.npgaw.org) and [www.facetheodds.org](http://www.facetheodds.org).

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