STATE OF MARYLAND



DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene 201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor - Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor - Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

Karen Black 410-767-6490/91

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Approximately 1 in 30 Maryland Adults Have a Gambling Problem Baseline Study Will Help with Design of Prevention and Treatment Services

BALTIMORE, MD (Monday June 13, 2011) – The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) today announced the release of *Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: A Baseline Analysis*, a report on gambling habits and problem or pathological gambling in Maryland. Data were collected between September 7, 2010 and October 31, 2010. According to the study's report:

- 89.7 percent of the Maryland population has ever gambled, with 21.9 percent gambling monthly in the past 12 months and 15.3 percent gambling weekly in the past 12 months.
- Gambling is generally a positive experience for Marylanders. The most important reason given for gambling in Maryland was to win money (51.7 percent) followed by fun and entertainment (32.6 percent).
- A minority of gamblers face significant, debilitating problems that harm not only themselves, but also their families and the wider community. The survey found that in Maryland, 1.5 percent of adults over the age of 18 are pathological gamblers and 1.9 percent are problem gamblers. When combined, the prevalence of problem/pathological gambling in Maryland is 3.4 percent.

The essential features of pathological gambling include continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling, progression in gambling involvement, and a continuation of involvement despite adverse consequences, such as financial, occupational, or health problems. Problem gambling refers to individuals who experience gambling-related difficulties that are substantial but less severe than those experienced by pathological gamblers. Interventions directed towards problem gamblers can prevent progression towards the more serious pathological gambling disorder.

Today, Marylanders seeking assistance for problem gambling can call the Maryland Problem Gambling Helpline at **1-800-522-4700**, where they can be linked to appropriately trained counselors within licensed and certified treatment programs. Counselors have been trained throughout the state to assess and treat problem and pathological gambling within outpatient and residential settings.

"The study helps us understand the extent of problem and pathological gambling in Maryland prior to the opening of casinos in Maryland in 2010," said Dr. Tom Cargiulo, Director of the Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration. "The results will help us design the next steps directed towards preventing and treating gambling disorders."

The adoption of Senate Bill 3, *Maryland Educational Trust Fund-Video Lottery Terminals* (VLT) (2007 Special Session), and the passage of the subsequent referendum in the fall of 2008 authorized video lottery terminals in the State and created a new and expanded environment for gambling in Maryland. As a part of the law, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) was tasked with conducting a gambling prevalence study.

The study was led by Maryland Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (MIPAR) of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in collaboration with the University of Baltimore Schaefer Center for Public Policy, which conducted the telephone surveys, and Gemini Research, Inc., an internationally-known research group that specializes in managing and reporting on studies of problem and pathological gambling.

Using Random Digit Dialing, the Schaefer Center contacted 56,807 households in Maryland to obtain a final sample of 5,975 completed surveys. In addition to slot machine gambling, the study focused on a variety of gambling venues, including casinos, lottery, horse and dog racing, bingo, sports, the internet, private games and other forms of gambling. Measures included gambling frequency (ever gambled in one's lifetime, and past week, month or year gambling) and other demographic and socio-economic factors.

The data were than analyzed by a team of researchers at MIPAR, led by Dr. Judith Shinogle.

"It is important to understand that the baseline study determines the geographic regions where Marylanders gambled prior to the implementation of slots," said Dr. Shinogle. "Replication surveys are needed in approximately four years to determine whether the implementation of slots can be associated with any subsequent changes in problem gambling behaviors and negative social impacts."

The full report is available at http://www.maryland-adaa.org/content-documents/GAMBLING/gambling201-0610.pdf

###