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Ohio Receives Three National Awards for Problem Gambling Services “Be the 95%” Awareness Campaign and Risky Business Prevention Program

(COLUMBUS, OHIO) In July, Ohio brought home three awards from the 2017 National Conference on Problem Gambling in Portland, OR. The Ohio for Responsible Gambling (ORG) partnership that includes the Commissions of Casino Control and Lottery and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) won the Website and the Public Awareness Award for the statewide campaign “Be the 95%.” The National Conference on Problem Gambling will be held at the Cleveland Hilton in July, 2018.

Executive Director Dennis Berg, Ohio Lottery Commission, said, “The Ohio Lottery supports responsible gambling efforts and is a proud member of ORG, parent organization of the ‘Be the 95%’ campaign. We are thrilled at the success of this campaign.”

The campaign urges Ohioans who gamble to “take a quiz” to find out if they are responsible gamblers and provides tons of tips and resources to help families with problem gambling concerns. All the tools and information can be found at www.the95percent.com.

In 2016, this campaign won all four communication awards at the National Conference on Problem Gambling. The campaign was designed by Columbus agency Origo Branding to appeal to a broad range of Ohio audiences with messages targeted toward the influencers of gamblers, such as moms, dads, spouses, siblings and friends. Prevention Action Alliance, a certified statewide prevention agency, manages the campaign for the state.

“We want Ohioans to remember the campaign’s message – ‘If YOU gamble, be part of the 95% of Ohioans who gamble responsibly.’ The success of this message and the overall campaign benefits thousands of Ohio families,” added Executive Director Matthew Schuler of the Ohio Casino Control Commission.

A third award for Ohio is called the Jim Wuelfing Annual Award for Prevention, and it went to Josephine Wilson, DDS, PhD, Director of the Substance Abuse Resources and Disability Issues Program in the Wright State University (WSU) Boonshoft School of Medicine, for developing Risky Business. Risky Business is an OhioMHAS funded promising practice program that educates at-risk youth in healthy decision making related to risky behaviors, including gambling.

OhioMHAS Director Tracy Plouck commented, “We are grateful to the National Council on Problem Gambling for recognizing Ohio’s efforts related to responsible and problem gambling, and we are excited to have the national conference in Ohio next year. Our ORG partners help make the state’s service array possible, along with behavioral health leaders like Dr. Wilson, Wright State University, and the Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Board, who worked to create Risky Business – one of the few promising programs to prevent problem gambling.”

The Risky Business curriculum is six one-hour sessions that take at-risk youth, ages 13-17, through lessons focusing on Decision Making, Violence, Gambling, Risky Sexual Behavior, Myths and Facts about Drugs and Alcohol and Drug Prevention. Over the past three years, Dr. Wilson and WSU developed, trained, and tested the Risky Business curriculum in multiple Ohio counties.

To date, 1,003 youth have participated in the program, plus two control groups. Risky Business lessons' pre- and post-tests show significantly improved scores on every lesson. The control groups do not have improved scores. In 2017-18, the program is being tested with a universal youth population.

To take the gambling quiz, visit www.the95percent.org. To learn more about prevention of problem gambling, visit www.preventionactionalliance.org. To talk to someone about problems with gambling, call or chat at 1-800-589-9966.

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