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888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH ONLINE SUPPORT PROGRAM TO HELP PROBLEM GAMBLERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

As technology changes how we gamble, support programs offered for those with gambling problems are also evolving with new and innovative solutions.

SANFORD, Fla. -- The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) is launching a new, no-cost Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG), created with partnership support from the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Floridians can now access online interactive support immediately, on-demand. No insurance is needed and no additional payments for in-person services are charged.

Designed using the latest science, combined with data generated from decades of assisting problem gamblers, the FCCG's OPPG program offers meaningful and effective ways for people in Florida to get help.

"We want to lead the way for advancing problem gambling support services available in the United States," said Jennifer Kruse, Executive Director of FCCG. "And we are proud of our almost 30-year relationship with the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Seminole Gaming. Without them, we could not have created this program."

The 8-week online program, accessed through the FCCG's 24-hour HelpLine (888-ADMIT-IT), allows the user to self-pace exercises, videos, and readings, while interactive questionnaires provide individual feedback on participant results from licensed mental health professionals.

Informed by research from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, mental health, and problem gambling, the program's core content was developed by several of the world's leading experts, incorporating interventions shown to help problem gamblers obtain a path to recovery.

"This program is rooted in FCCG's extensive experience with problem gamblers, drawing upon data from 30 years of managing the helpline for one of the largest states in the USA," said Dr. Rory Reid, a research psychologist and International Certified Gambling Counselor with over 20 years of clinical experience working with problem gamblers. "The content targets important issues faced by problem gamblers."

The OPPG eliminates barriers that keep people from seeking traditional face-to-face help services, including cost, travel times, remote geography, childcare challenges, stigmatization of gambling, methods of learning, and fears about confidentiality.

"One of the big questions globally in the gambling field is, 'why don't more people who experience problems seek gambling help services?' The Florida Council's OPPG tackles this challenge head on," said Paul Pellizzari, Vice-President of Global Social Responsibility for Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock International.

Release of OPPG marks Responsible Awareness Education Awareness Week, September 19-25, an annual national event promoted by the American Gaming Association. The FCCG, Florida's authority on issues related to gambling addiction, will be traveling to all six Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock Casinos in Florida to promote OPPG and other services as part of Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock's

PlayersEdge program, which includes ongoing efforts to educate casino employees who interact with gamblers.

In addition to the new online program, the FCCG's 24-hour confidential and multilingual HelpLine provides many resources for gamblers, loved ones, and others in need of assistance, including referrals to:

- Professional treatment services provided by certified gambling addiction mental health professionals
- Self-help support group options
- Self-exclusion programs for land-based and online forms of gambling, including cryptocurrency and stock trading
- Resources for limiting access to cash and restricting transaction permissions
- Self-help literature

"OPPG is another way we can offer hope for positive change," Ms. Kruse said. "Problem gamblers can better understand their behavior, improve emotional regulation, develop sustainable personal coping strategies, and reduce the shame often associated with the disorder."

Compulsive or problem gambling is classified as a behavioral addiction by the American Psychiatric Association, and research shows this disorder is similar to substance-related disorders based on brain origin, physiology, association with other mental health problems, and treatment.

Gambling addiction is treatable for those who seek help. For anyone in need of assistance, contact the FCCG's 24/7 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine via phone (888-236-4848), text (321-978-0555), email (fccg@gamblinghelp.org), chat (gamblinghelp.org), or social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), and by downloading the 888-ADMIT-IT mobile app. Every contact is completely free and confidential, and multilingual support is available.

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