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GIVE THE GIFT OF PREVENTION: KEEP KIDS AWAY FROM LOTTERY PLAY

Sanford, FL: Today, the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) is joining the National Holiday Lottery Responsible Gambling Campaign to raise awareness about the risks of gifting lottery tickets to minors during the holidays and to encourage parents and others to choose safer gifts.

According to Jennifer Kruse, FCCG's Executive Director, "Unfortunately, the myth persists that gifting lottery tickets to children for the holidays carries no risks. There is a reason that gambling is strictly prohibited for those under the age of 18 in the Sunshine State. Research shows us that receipt of lottery tickets as gifts during childhood is correlated with risky, problematic gambling behavior later in life."ⁱ

Stressors brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which impact youth through school closures and restricted social activities, must also be considered as risk factors for the development of a gambling problem and warrant a heightened awareness for parents and caregivers about limiting exposure to gambling concepts before the legal age. In addition, many adults are not aware of the new ways that gambling opportunities are being integrated into online formats, such as through video games and mobile apps with shaky or no age verification. Data collected on the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine over the past year showed that an astounding 27% of lottery gamblers seeking help reported that they first gambled before the age of 21, and that 40% of all problem gamblers contacting the HelpLine started gambling before age 26.

"Taking the time to instead choose a gift that will inspire a new hobby or passion for the youngster in your life can help fight this troubling trend and leave a more lasting impact," continued Kruse. It's important to know that help and hope for anyone affected by problem gambling, including concerned loved ones, is available 24/7 through the confidential and multilingual 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine. "Like drugs and alcohol, gambling is off limits for minors and needs to be treated as such without exception to avoid the normalization of an illegal behavior and to support the prevention of problem gambling," concluded Kruse.

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. (FCCG) is a not-for-profit corporation under contract with Florida State government, serving as the designated state affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). In addition to operating the 24-hour Problem Gambling HelpLine (888-ADMIT-IT), the FCCG increases awareness of problem gambling through education and outreach efforts throughout the state of Florida, advocates on behalf of the public regarding issues relating to problem gambling, and provides programs, resources, and other population specific supports to those in need of assistance. For more information, please visit www.gamblinghelp.org.

ⁱ Kundu, Priya V et al. "Gambling-Related Attitudes and Behaviors in Adolescents Having Received Instant (Scratch) Lottery Tickets as Gifts" Journal of Adolescent Health: Official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine vol. 52, 4 (2013): 456-64.