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## Joint Media Release: March 19, 2015

### MARCH IS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

Join the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling and the Washington State Gambling Commission to Start the Conversation on Problem Gambling.

Olympia, WA – Throughout the year, partners in the gambling and gaming industries join the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling (ECPG) to raise awareness about problem gambling and how it affects individuals, families, employees, and communities. During March, combined efforts are enhanced during Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

At their March meeting, the Washington State Gambling Commissioners heard from Maureen Greeley, Director of ECPG, a nonprofit organization that serves problem gamblers and their families through treatment, training and awareness. Ms. Greeley talked about problem gambling and why it's a problem ([Click here for Maureen's presentation](#)).

Approximately \$1 million was spent by ECPG and the Washington State Dept. of Social and Health Services last year on problem gambling treatment, prevention, awareness and training combined, which is far below the national per capita average. In addition, many Tribes also fund their own problem gambling treatment and prevention programs. To compare, the amount of public funds invested nationwide in substance use disorder treatment is \$17 billion, compared to just \$60 million for gambling disorder.

Washington State Gambling Commissioner Julia Patterson said *“Evergreen’s programs are valuable and effective. These programs are helping more than just individuals struggling with a gambling addiction; they are helping families, businesses and entire communities.”*

Ms. Greeley said ECPG has an *“unprecedented partnership with the industry.”* She thanked the Gambling Commission, Washington’s Lottery, The Recreational Gaming Association and Tribal nations for their support. Ms. Greeley said this partnership, with help from businesses and health care organizations, is raising awareness about problem gambling. She also talked about the Therapeutic Justice program in Pierce County’s Drug Court and how it’s helping problem gamblers. The program is Washington State’s first problem gambling specific track in a drug court and it recently celebrated its first graduate.

*“For years, the strong partnership between ECPG and the Gambling Commission has allowed us to expand outreach, awareness, and prevention programs in Washington State through Public Service Announcements and community outreach”* said Ms. Greeley.

### Regional Gambling Summit April 29, 2015, Seattle:

To continue the conversation around problem gambling issues, including topics and trends, contact ECPG about our one-day Regional Gambling Summit. ECPG is partnering with the Commission, the Oregon Health Authority, and the Oregon Council on Problem Gambling to bring together

legislators and leaders in the industry to discuss regional, national, and international issues during the ***Focus on the Future*** conference in Seattle, April 29, 2015. Contact Ms. Greeley ([mlgreeley@evergreencpg.org](mailto:mlgreeley@evergreencpg.org)) for details and/or to request an invitation to attend.

**About the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling (ECPG):**

ECPG provides treatment, training, and awareness to address problem gambling in Washington State. We operate a toll free, 24/7 helpline: 1-800-547-6133. To find treatment providers in your area, for more information on our conferences and events, or to learn more about our youth prevention projects, visit [www.evergreencpg.org](http://www.evergreencpg.org). ECPG is dedicated to increasing public awareness of problem gambling, expanding the availability of services for those affected by problem gambling, and encouraging research and programs for education, prevention, treatment, and responsible gambling.

**About the Washington State Gambling Commission:**

The Gambling Commission is a limited jurisdiction law enforcement agency and the only statewide agency devoted to gambling licensing, regulation and enforcement. Five citizens are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, to act as part-time Commissioners for a single six-year term. The Commission holds public meetings once a month to discuss administrative issues, approve new gambling licenses, discuss and approve rule changes, take action regarding the revocation or suspension of gambling licenses, and more. To learn more about what we do, visit [www.wsgc.wa.gov](http://www.wsgc.wa.gov).