TRENTON, March 4, 2014 – Governor Chris Christie has issued a Proclamation declaring March 2014 Problem Gambling Awareness Month in New Jersey. Throughout the month, the New Jersey Lottery (NJL) and the Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) will be working with the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. (CCGNJ) to educate the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and to raise awareness of the help that is available both locally and nationally.

Today, Carole Hedinger, NJL’s Executive Director, and Donald Hallcom, DMHAS’s Director of Prevention, met with Donald Weinbaum, Executive Director CCGNJ and Jeff Beck, Chairman of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month, to discuss joint efforts to promote awareness about the dangers of problem gambling.

“The Lottery is proud of its commitment and initiatives in building awareness of problem gambling within the State,” Hedinger said. “Since June 1999, it has participated on the Council of Compulsive Gambling’s Board of Directors. The Council’s 1-800-GAMBLER helpline number is printed on every Lottery ticket, and on all brochures and signage, and it also appears as a tag line on all of the Lottery’s radio and television advertisements. The Lottery’s website directs visitors to the Council’s site, where members of the public can get free information and help.

“The Council continually works to address the unique challenges facing those with gambling problems,” said Weinbaum. “It is never too early or too late to get assistance for yourself, a friend, family member or a colleague that you believe may have a gambling problem. We’re very pleased to be partnering with the Lottery and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to get that message out to an even broader audience.”

“Compulsive gambling, like drug and alcohol addiction, can be successfully treated,” DHS Assistant Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services Lynn Kovich said, noting that DHMAS helps fund prevention, referral and treatment for gambling addictions and allocates money to CCGNJ operations every year. “For the majority of people, gambling is a choice, but the minority of people who are problem gamblers need to know there are services to help them recover.”
"Our campaign this year is titled "Navigate Problem Gambling" and focuses on problem gambling as a public health issue and a concern for everyone," Beck added. "It is not just a New Jersey issue, but a national and international one:"

CCGNJ operates a 24-hour confidential helpline, 1-800-GAMBLER, that takes over 15,000 calls a year. Any individual with a gambling problem or a family member needing assistance can call for help and referral. Information on Problem Gambling Awareness Month activities in New Jersey and additional resources can be accessed through the CCGNJ website: http://www.800gambler.org/

The National Problem Gambling Awareness Month website also lists resources and helpful tools on its website: http://www.npgam.org/

CCGNJ, which works with treatment providers and conducts prevention outreach programs, is partially funded by assessments on off-track wagering licensees and forfeited casino proceeds.

ABOUT THE LOTTERY
Since its inception in 1970, the New Jersey Lottery (NJLottery.net) has contributed more than $22 billion to the State in support of education and institutions. In fiscal year 2013 the Lottery’s contribution was more than $1 billion. Among its beneficiaries are: veterans homes, community and other colleges and universities, school nutrition programs, homes for the developmentally disabled, psychiatric hospitals, higher education scholarship programs and the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf.

ABOUT NJ DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MENTAL HEALTH AND DIVISION OF ADDICTION SERVICES
The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) promotes the prevention and treatment of substance abuse and supports the recovery of individuals affected by the chronic disease of addiction. As the Single State Agency for substance abuse, DMHAS is responsible for regulating, licensing, monitoring, planning and funding substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery support services in New Jersey. To achieve its mission, DMHAS provides leadership and collaborates with providers, consumers, and other stakeholders to develop and sustain a system of client-centered care that is accessible, culturally competent, accountable to the public, and grounded in best practices that yield measurable results.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING OF NJ, INC.
The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services for people affected by a gambling problem. The Council’s mission is to educate the public to the fact that compulsive gambling is a treatable illness. The Council’s 1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline and website www.800gambler.org have been resources for thousands of people who are compulsive gamblers and recovering from compulsive gambling, as well as their friends and families. For further information, contact: The Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, Inc. at 609-588-5515
Donald F. Weinbaum, Executive Director at ext. 17 or don@800gambler.org

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