

## CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION

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Tennessee Avenue and Boardwalk  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

# ***Self-exclusion can help problem gamblers***

## **For Immediate Release**

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**ATLANTIC CITY**— Casino gambling is a form of entertainment for most people who visit Atlantic City's gaming halls, but for those who can't control their gambling activity, the Casino Control Commission's Self-Exclusion Program may help.

Chair Linda M. Kassekert announced Tuesday that more than 1,000 people have signed up for the program which problem gamblers can use to help deal with their gambling problem. The announcement coincides with National Problem Gambling Awareness Week which runs through March 7.

"I know that this program has helped a lot of gamblers and their families who have struggled with this addiction," she said.

New Jersey's Self-Exclusion Program started in 2001. When people sign up for self-exclusion, casinos must stop marketing to them, must remove them from any mailing lists, stop offering comps or credit or any other inducement to gamble. If a person on the list decides to gamble anyway, money that the person wins can be forfeited to the state. Similarly, if a casino willfully continues to market to a self-excluded person and wins money from him or her, the casino's winnings can be forfeited to the state and the casino can face other penalties.

"The program is designed to eliminate any financial incentive for the self-excluded gambler to come back into a casino or for the casino to try to lure someone on this list back to the tables or slot machines," Kassekert added. She said that neither the state nor casino operators want to see compulsive gamblers in Atlantic City's gaming halls.

"These are people who need help to control their gambling problem and the Self-Exclusion Program is one tool they can use to help them put their lives back together," she said.

A person can sign up for a minimum of one year, five years or for lifetime. To date, more than 170 people who signed up for a minimum of one or five years have asked to be removed from the list. Kassekert noted that if a person signs up for less than lifetime exclusion, they are not automatically dropped after the one- or five-year period expires

but must complete an application for removal. There currently are 828 people in the Self-Exclusion Program, including approximately 20 who enrolled in the program, removed themselves and signed up a second time. The commission chair noted that when people sign up for self-exclusion, commission staff members inform them of other services that are available which can further assist them in dealing with a gambling addiction.

“People need to know that problem or compulsive gambling is a real addiction and that there can be real recovery from that addiction,” said Jeff Beck, Managerial Assistant of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey and Chairman of the Problem Gambling Awareness Week Project. The theme of this year’s campaign is Real Addiction, Real Recovery.

“We strongly encourage anyone with a gambling problem to seriously consider participating in the Self-Exclusion Program because it can help a person get on and stay on the road to recovery,” added Donald Weinbaum, Executive Director of the Council.

Kassekert and Weinbaum said the commission and the council work closely together to inform people about self-exclusion, treatment and other services available to compulsive gamblers.

People interested in self-exclusion can sign up at the commission’s offices at Tennessee Avenue and the Boardwalk in Atlantic City or the Division of Gaming Enforcement’s office at 140 E. Front St. in Trenton. When they do, they meet with staff members who describe the program; they complete the necessary paperwork and are photographed.