

## **New survey instrument will measure problem gambling among adolescents**

OTTAWA—A blue-ribbon team of researchers has begun work on a new instrument to assess gambling behaviour among Canadian adolescents. The Adolescent Problem Gambling Index (APGI) is expected to lead to a better understanding of problem gambling among young people who may be especially affected by the growing popularity of gambling in Canada. Research in this area has been hampered by the lack of a reliable instrument for measuring adolescent gambling behaviour and related problems

The APGI will be developed and tested over the next two years with funding from the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Québec. An additional contribution will be provided in the initial stage by the Canadian Institutes of Health (CIHR) Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (INMHA). The Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre (OPGRC) will administer the funding, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) will manage the research.

The project will be implemented in two phases. In the first phase, expected to end by April 2004, a five-member research team will examine the scientific literature and consult with a panel of 20 international experts to develop a new definition and description of adolescent problem gambling.

In the second phase, the new instrument will first be pilot-tested with a sample of 50 students from Ontario and Quebec, and then with a larger sample of 300 students in participating provinces. The instrument will be refined through these initial steps, and then administered to approximately 4,200 adolescents from 28 schools in the six participating provinces. Reliability and validity of the new instrument will be assessed through a series of analyses involving comparisons with existing problem gambling measures, expert panel review, retesting a random sub-sample of respondents, and detailed questioning of respondents about their reactions to the survey questionnaire. A final report is expected by August 2005.

Adult problem gambling surveys in Canada have shown that problem gambling rates are highest in the 18–24 age group. That fact, combined with a dramatic increase in the availability and marketing of gambling across Canada, makes it important to examine the nature and extent of gambling within the “feeder” population of adolescents under the age of 18. It is expected that a better understanding of gambling behaviour within this group will lead to more effective responses to resulting problems both in Canada and worldwide.

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## **Participating Organizations**

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Alberta Gaming Research Institute

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

Manitoba Gaming Control Commission

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (Québec)

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, British Columbia

Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation

Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre