



Iowa Gaming Association

WES EHRECKE

President & CEO, Iowa Gaming Association
wese@iowagaming.org | 515-229-5056

Monday, July 31, 2017

For Immediate Release

Contact: Wes Ehrecke
President & CEO
Iowa Gaming Association (IGA)
515-229-5056
wese@iowagaming.org

18th Annual Responsible Gaming Education Week July 31 – August 4 - Casinos to Focus on Voluntary Self-Exclusion Reform

Responsible Gaming Education Week (RGEW) will be held July 31st - August 4th at each of the 19 state-regulated licensed casinos who are members of the Iowa Gaming Association (IGA). Each casino location will offer several activities to heighten awareness and involve its staff and patrons.

One primary theme during RGEW is to help explain to patrons the recent significant changes to the voluntary self-exclusion program; that were recently passed by the legislature and took effect in July. The reform will now allow a person the choice to voluntarily ban themselves for either 5 years or lifetime irrevocable options. Previously it was only a lifetime irrevocable option that was implemented by the legislature in 2004. In recent years, most other states had also passed legislation to allow some multiple year ban option beyond just a lifetime choice; because research became more definitive on effective tools and resources to best help patrons.

Those persons who had signed a lifetime-only ban option between 2004 and July 2017, will also be allowed to request a reinstatement if they have been excluded for at least 5 years. In addition, the legislative reform clarified that a voluntary exclusion only applies to be banned from the gaming floor area. “There is a learning curve for casino staff and patrons alike on these new exclusion reform options,” said Wes Ehrecke, President & CEO, Iowa Gaming Association. “Legislators felt a person should still be able to attend a wedding or go to the many other amenities that comprise these premier casino entertainment destinations—such as lodging, restaurants, spas, concert and meeting space.”

During RGEW, most casinos will partner with their area gambling treatment provider- extending an invitation to display brochures, interact with patrons and conduct staff training programs. Employees will learn how and when to approach or come to the aid of those exhibiting compulsive behavior, know warning signs and learn intervention skills. There will be daily casino activities with quizzes and prizes to engage staff about the importance for promoting responsible gaming year around.

Resources that were implemented during last year's RGEW will continue to be utilized and shared. They focus on *FAQ's about the Self-Exclusion Process*; as well as *Tips for Having a Conversation about Problem Gambling*.

"The pieces were created with considerable input from the casinos and the gambling treatment counselors," said Ehrecke. "They were tailored for both casino staff training and for families to emphasize ways to have meaningful conversation."

Ehrecke added that a high majority of patrons coming to a casino can participate in responsible, fun entertainment. "Research consistently shows that less than 2 percent of those who gamble experience problems. It is important to heighten awareness so those who are prone to compulsive gambling will have avenues for securing help from the gambling treatment experts; by calling 1-800-BETS OFF or visiting 1800betsoff.org."

"Iowa has always been proactive in the treatment of problem gambling," he added. "We have a successful premier prevention and awareness program in place partnering with the treatment providers and Iowa Gambling Treatment Program."

For more information about getting help, visit the IGA [Iowa Treatment Program](#) page or [Responsible Gaming Resources](#) page at www.iowagaming.org.

The Iowa Gaming Association (IGA) is a nonprofit organization that was created in 1999 to support the current 19 state-regulated licensed casinos. The IGA serves as the premier resource and voice on behalf of the industry, provides resources and facts, plus advocates timely and accurate information to the media, regulators, elected officials, its members and the public.

Ameristar Casino Hotel, Council Bluffs
Casino Queen Marquette
Catfish Bend Casino, Burlington
Diamond Jo Casino, Dubuque
Diamond Jo Worth Casino, Northwood
Grand Falls Casino and Resort, Larchwood
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sioux City
Harrah's Council Bluffs Casino & Hotel, Council Bluffs
Horseshoe Casino Council Bluffs
Isle Casino Hotel Bettendorf
Isle Casino Hotel Waterloo
Lakeside Hotel Casino, Osceola
Q Casino, Dubuque
Prairie Meadows, Altoona
Rhythm City Casino, Davenport
Riverside Casino and Golf Resort, Riverside
Wild Rose Casino & Resort, Clinton
Wild Rose Casino & Resort, Emmetsburg
Wild Rose Casino & Resort, Jefferson

