

DATE OF ISSUE: 3 December 2007

MEDIA RELEASE

**NCPG AND IMH COLLABORATE TO ENHANCE
PROBLEM GAMBLING COUNSELLING HELPLINE SERVICE**

Following NCPG's latest findings¹ which show that the public are more aware of the signs of problem gambling and the avenues of assistance, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) has collaborated with the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) to enhance its problem gambling helplines by providing phone-based counselling services.

From December 2007 onwards, both NCPG helplines (1800-X-GAMBLE or 1800-6-668-668) will be manned by counsellors from IMH's Community Addiction Management Programme (CAMP). Members of the public who call the helplines will be given over-the-phone counselling and then referred to one of NCPG's designated counselling centres for follow-up where necessary. The helplines will operate from Mondays to Fridays from 8:30am to 6pm.

NCPG has been working closely with IMH since 2005 to tackle problem gambling. IMH's CAMP, which provides treatment for pathological gamblers with other addictions or psychiatric conditions, is also part of NCPG's three-tier intervention system aimed at assisting problem gamblers and their families. Under the system, any problem gambler or family member may receive community-based help services via three routes – social and community agencies, problem gambling counselling centres and CAMP.

The helplines were previously operated by NCPG's two designated counselling centres, the Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society and the Care Corner Counselling Centre. Both hotlines received a total of about 800 calls in 2006.

Mr Lee Kim Siang, Chairman of Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society has noted that "We have always believed in the importance of a helpline for problem gamblers and families to access help. That's why we started the X-Gamble line in early 2006. We welcome NCPG's efforts to streamline the helpline management and will continue to play our part to support the three tier framework in the provision of individual counselling and cognitive-behavioural therapy, family therapy, marital counselling and therapy, therapeutic group work on relapse prevention and recovery training, and referral services for other needs of the client. "

¹ NCPG 2007 Survey on Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gambling in Singapore

Ms Kiang Whee Fern, Centre Manager of Care Corner Counselling Centre expressed that “We are thankful for the support and strong partnership that have been built up over the last one year with NCPG. We are able to raise more awareness through our public education programmes; and reach out to more people who are facing the issues of problem gambling. With CAMP taking over the management of the Gambling Addiction Helpline, Care Corner Counselling Centre will continue to focus its efforts to raise awareness and provide counselling services to those individuals and their family members struggling with problem gambling issues.”

“The Institute of Mental Health is pleased that our Community Addiction Management Programme (CAMP) is part of the national effort to tackle problem gambling. We believe that this helpline is accessible and beneficial as a first point of contact, from which gamblers or family members can receive professional assistance with the assurance of confidentiality,” said Dr Tan Weng Mooi, Chief Operating Officer of the IMH.

Chairman Mr Lim Hock San concluded: “This move consolidates the operation of our helplines under one roof. The transfer also makes available telephone counselling as an additional avenue for problem gamblers and their families to seek help. Anyone who needs help should not hesitate to call the helplines.”

For media queries, please contact:

NCPG

NCPG Secretariat

Email: admin@ncpg.org.sg

Contact Tel: 6354 8154

IMH

Penny Chua

Assistant Manager, Corporate Communications Department

Institute of Mental Health

Email: penny_chua@imh.com.sg

Contact Tel: 6389 2827; Mobile: 9113 5580

About the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG):

The NCPG was appointed in August 2005 as part of Singapore’s national framework to address problem gambling. It is a council comprising 15 members with expertise and experience in public communications, psychiatry and psychology, social work, counselling and rehabilitative services. The

Council's main roles are to provide advice and feedback to the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) on public education programmes to promote public awareness on problem gambling; to decide on funding applications for preventive and rehabilitative programmes; to assess and advise the Government on the effectiveness of treatment, counselling and rehabilitative programmes; and to decide on the applications for exclusion of persons from casinos. For more information, please see www.ncpg.org.sg.

About Institute of Mental Health (IMH)

The Institute of Mental Health is a 2,000-bed acute tertiary psychiatric hospital located on a sprawling 25-hectare campus called Buangkok Green Medical Park in Buangkok View.

IMH is equipped with modern facilities, with 51 wards for inpatients and three Specialist Outpatient Clinics for outpatients.

IMH offers a multi-faceted and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and counseling services designed to meet the needs of three groups of people, namely, (i) children & adolescents, (ii) adults and (iii) the elderly.

IMH also provides integrated and accessible care to our patients through three Behavioral Medicine Clinics and runs an extensive range of therapeutic activities at three Day Centres. Its Community Addictions and Management Programme (CAMP) aims to provide treatment for individuals with various addictions, including substance behavioural addictions (e.g. compulsive gambling, sex addiction and internet addiction).

IMH runs mental health education programmes for the general public. Besides providing psychiatric services, IMH/WH also undertakes to coordinate and oversee research and training of clinicians in psychiatry.

APPENDIX: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)	全国预防嗜赌理事会
Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS)	社会发展, 青年及体育部
Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
Community Addictions Management Programme	社区戒瘾护理计划
Care Corner Counselling Centre	关怀辅导中心
Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society	德教太和观
Problem Gambling	嗜赌
Gamblers	赌徒
Pathological/ Problem Gambler (PPG)	病态赌徒
Gambling Addiction	赌瘾
Addiction	癖瘾症
Dr Tan Weng Mooi, Chief Operating Officer Institute of Mental Health	陈荣美博士 营运总裁 心理卫生学院
Khiang Whee Fern	强惠芬
