MARG Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Location: Rocky Gap Casino

**Present**: Rachel Carpenter, Mary Drexler, Jennifer Wetherell, Jasmine Countess, Deborah Haskins, Lori Rugle, Matt Heiskell, Skylar Dice, Jason Bittinger, Kate Tracey, Karry Pifer, Cindy Romeo, Sandy Davis-Hart, Eugenia Conolly, Tamala Law, Ardenia Holland, Gray Barton, and Charles LaBoy

**Action Items**:

* Deborah Haskins requested data for the race and ethnicity of VEP participants, which Mary said she could provide.

Meeting Called to Order:

Charles LaBoy called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

General Introductions and Discussion:

Charles thanked Skylar Dice and Rocky Gap Casino for hosting the MARG meeting. He noted Kathy Klausmeier’s proclamation on the Senate floor of Problem Gambling Awareness Month. He also mentioned the agency’s ongoing efforts to open MGM Casino.

Member Updates:

1. **Maryland Lottery and Gaming (various)**:

*Update on mtg. with Judge Rattal*: Mary was granted a meeting with Judge Rattal, who is interested in the court subpoenas issue. He is looking to create a docket to consolidate casino ban cases.

Gray Barton added that Judge Rattal is the chair of the Special Courts and Docket Committee. Gray’s ultimate goal is to familiarize the judges in that court with the VEP program. Rachel Carpenter noted that Maryland Live appreciates the effort.

*Update on VEP applicant numbers/removal numbers/pending removals*:

Mary updated members on the VEP numbers. There are 36 people currently pending for removal. Mary has been working with the Center of Excellence and conducted two VEP webinars for counselors. Mary is also exploring options for a voluntary exclusion program at agency-regulated bingo halls.

Charles discussed the Lottery receiving Level II certification from the World Lottery Association. The agency will continue its responsible gambling efforts through various public service announcements. The agency will apply for Level III certification in the spring of 2018. Charles also noted that the agency is incorporating responsible gambling features in lottery products.

1. **Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) (Eugenia Conolly)**:

Eugenia mentioned her agency’s efforts to address Baltimore’s heroin crisis. She also discussed the daily fantasy sports bills. She stated that her administration has been funding the Center of Excellence to raise awareness of problem gambling and treat problem gambling issues in local communities.

Eugenia stated that her staff continues to work closely with local health departments who have casinos in their jurisdictions. The BHA is looking at ways to provide prevention services and bolster services currently offered.

The BHA is holding an annual conference in May. They will send information to Mary on this.

Ardenia Holland hosted meetings with community outreach people at a few Maryland casinos. She will be reaching out to additional casinos to continue this effort.

1. **Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (Lori Rugle)**:

Lori passed around an annual report. She thanked the Lottery for assisting the Center with advertising; calls to the Center have quadrupled because of the Lottery’s help.

Center of Excellence staff testified before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee about reasonable expectations for daily fantasy sports games. The Center considers daily fantasy sports games a form of gambling; hopefully, the Center’s guidelines will provide support to the legislators.

Staff is actively collaborating on the VEP removal process. The goal is to help individuals make informed decisions for themselves and enable them to seek help after removal from the VEP list.

The Center’s annual conference is in May. It will last one day and there will be a panel discussion.

Kate Tracey is researching gambling’s impact on the public. She is doing a Pegasus study to identify problem gambling behaviors. She is also conducting a secondary analysis on traffic patterns and public safety, and is gearing up for a statewide study. She wants to analyze how the problem gambling helpline works to help people. In response to Charles’ questions about the timeline for the prevalence study, Kate stated that it will take about 6-8 weeks.

1. **Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service (DPSCS) (Sandra Davis-Hart)**:

This legislative session has been busy for DPSC. The Department is working to identify special populations and treatment options for these populations. The Department’s counselors continue to attend the Center of Excellence’s training sessions.

1. **Maryland** **Judiciary (Gray Barton):** No additional updates
2. **Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (Deborah Haskins)**:

Deborah thanked the BHA for funding support. The Council is focusing on strategic planning and is making decisions about restructuring.

In addition, the Council is working to increase awareness of problem gambling in Baltimore City. They would like to change their focus to hard-to-reach communities. They also want to focus on people in rural areas, such as Cumberland, MD.

Deborah wrote an advocacy letter to Senator Klausmeier and appreciates Senator Klausmeier’s responsible gambling efforts.

1. **Maryland State Senate (Senator Klausmeier)**: N/A
2. **Maryland House of Delegates**: N/A
3. **Gaming** **facilities (various):**
	* 1. Hollywood Casino Perryville (Matt Heiskell): The casino hosted some MARG colleagues during the week of March 14th.
		2. Ocean Downs Casino (Cindy Romeo): The casino completed its annual responsible gambling training. They received an invitation from their local health department to attend a special breakfast in recognition of their efforts to prevent underage drinking.
		3. Maryland Live! Casino (Rachel Carpenter):
* The casino is conducting problem gambling awareness training for back-of-house employees. The casino has a new learning management system for compliance training.
* The casino has an online site for entertainment only; it checks birthdays and voluntary exclusion participants. People can buy credits but they do not receive payouts; the site is not connected to the casino. Charles explained the agency’s efforts to approve this site, such as imposing marketing restrictions. There is also responsible gambling messaging on the site. In response to questions about monitoring play and limiting spending, Charles responded that the agency does not have the authority to restrict the casino’s amenities.
	+ 1. Rocky Gap Casino (Skylar Dice):
* Skylar Dice thanked the attendees for coming. The casino submitted their 2016 responsible gambling plan and is working to implement an online system to conduct responsible gambling training.
* The casino is expanding their parking lot; completion is anticipated in May.
	+ 1. Horseshoe Baltimore Casino: N/A
		2. MGM (Tamala Law): MGM is excited about opening this year. They are currently discussing responsible gambling with their local community. In addition, casino employees are being trained in responsible gambling practices.

Open Discussion

Lori requested that responsible gambling billboard messaging be made more legible.

Charles discussed the bills that were recently introduced on fantasy sports. One bill proposes to move the regulatory authority from the Comptroller to the Lottery. Another bill specifies what is legal and what is not legal. The last bill authorizes daily fantasy sports. In the gambling world, e-sports and the monetization of video games is also gaining momentum.

Charles also indicated that the development of the electronic VEP system has been halted; a task order requirement has been imposed, causing the project to be more expensive and complex.

Next Meeting:

Mary will reach out to MARG members to set a meeting date in June.