

Touchpoint

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Recent Loto-Québec Class Action Settlement Reimburses Therapy Fees

A nine-year-old class action suit against Loto-Québec ended recently with a settlement that will see thousands of individuals in Quebec with gambling problems receive approximately \$5,000 each.

The suit against Loto-Québec was launched in 2001 by people experiencing gambling problems and accused them of negligence for not including warnings on video lottery terminals. The plaintiffs sought approximately \$700 million for damages related to their addiction and increased measures to warn the public about gambling harms. The trial began in Quebec courts in 2008; an out-of-court settlement was reached in December of 2009.

On Monday, March 23, the Quebec Superior Court approved a \$50 million settlement to the suit. According to terms of the agreement, the Quebec government will pay the costs of therapy for those who underwent therapy for problem gambling between 1994 and 2002.

Treatment for gambling addiction has been provided and covered by the province since 2002. The nearly 120,000 affected claimants have until October 2011 to seek reimbursement.



Problem gambling advocates have voiced concern that the deal states that the video lottery terminal (VLT) machines did not cause the gamblers' addiction. As quoted in a [CBC News Article](#) on January 7, 2010, responsible gambling advocate and gambling counsellor [Sol Boxenbaum](#), a consultant on the case, said that the settlement was a mistake. He believes that the suit could have created a precedent that would have required Loto-Quebec to warn people about the dangers of VLT machines: "How did we give up on a point like that? [There]

should have been no question about a settlement unless we get that warning put onto the machines."

To read more gambling-related news stories, visit the 'Resource Library' section of the NSGF website, which houses archived articles from local, national, and international media sources under 'News Articles & Announcements'.

Until next time,
Jen Wheatley