

Touchpoint

May 14, 2010

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Hot Topic: Gambling Issues in Nova Scotia

Recently, students enrolled in the investigative journalism workshop at the University of King's College School of Journalism in Halifax, Nova Scotia, released an exposé about video lottery terminal (VLT) gambling in Nova Scotia.

Under the direction of Faculty Advisor Fred Vallance-Jones, the journalism students produced an impressive body of work. In addition to publishing numerous articles about socioeconomic issues related to gambling and VLT use in the province, the students also brought to light stories of **individuals affected by problem gambling**, explored **gambling on First Nations' reserves** and uncovered the unsettling fact that Nova Scotians who live in an area with one of the lowest incomes in the Halifax Regional Municipality are **four times more likely to find a VLT in their neighbourhood**.

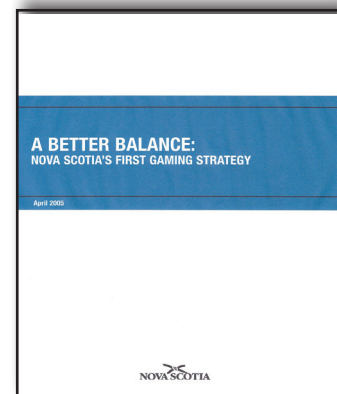
Just days before the release of the students' work, the province announced the **cancellation of a socioeconomic study of gambling** due to flawed methodology. The province-wide report, originally commissioned by the previous government as part of a five-year Gaming Strategy, will not be made public. According to Finance Minister Graham Steele and Labour and Workforce Minister Marilyn More, the report is valueless and incomplete.

In the wake of this announcement, **critics called for the report's release**, suggesting that it likely contains information that government does not want the public to see. They also questioned whether there were at least sections of the report that could be useful to researchers or gambling prevention specialists and clinicians. **Liberal MLA Leo Glavine denounced the NDP** for veering drastically from its stance on VLTs five years ago and announced plans to reintroduce a bill calling for a plebiscite on VLTs in the province - a bill that was originally introduced by the NDP in 2005.

Amidst the media storm, Finance Minister Graham Steele this week announced the **implementation of a new responsible gaming strategy**, to be released in the fall of 2010. Priorities include gaming regulations, dealing with internet gambling, and deciding if it will be mandatory for VLT players to use the Informed Player Choice System technology, which requires players to use a card to access the machines.

The Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation is a not-for-profit, arms-length government organization that supports an independent response to problem gambling in Nova Scotia. It, and no doubt the Nova Scotian public, will be watching the evolution of the Gaming Strategy closely and with great interest.

Until next time,
Jen Wheatley



Cover of *A Better Balance: Nova Scotia's First Gaming Strategy* (2005)



NSGF Informal Online Poll

Do you believe online gambling is a relevant concern for Nova Scotia youth?

[...take the poll](#)

News Articles & Announcements

38 gambling-related news articles and announcements were added to the online Resource Library since April 15, 2010.

Essay Contest Countdown: Submissions due May 28, 2010!

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Internet Gambling, VLT Cards in New Strategy

From the Chronicle Herald on Wednesday, May 12, 2010

VLT Critic Calls for Report's release

From the Chronicle Herald on Wednesday, May 7, 2010

VLTS: Nova Scotia's Billion Dollar Gamble

From the Kings College Investigative Workshop

Interested in Joining the NSGF Board of Directors?

May 4, 2010

CBC Radio Podcast: Mi'kmaq VLT Profits

From CBC.ca on Thursday, April 29, 2010

Strait Area Native Promotes Gaming Foundation Contest

From The Reporter on Wednesday, April 7 2010

[...more News Articles & Announcements](#)

Research Articles & Reports

Many new and archived gambling-related research articles and reports were added to the online Resource Library in recent months.

Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts

This report considers 14 social determinants of health, and outlines why they are important; how Canada is doing in addressing them; and what can be done to improve their quality...

Seniors and Gambling: A Hidden Problem?

Part of Community Link's NSGF 2009-2010 Community Project, "Seniors and Gambling", this report explores whether gambling is considered a serious issue for seniors in Nova Scotia...

[...more Research Articles and Reports](#)

Upcoming Events

CIFA FM 101.4 radio show - "Parlons des Problèmes de Jeu" or "Let's Talk Gambling"

March 25, 2010

National Council on Problem Gambling 24th Annual Conference

June 9 - 12, 2010

[...more Upcoming Events](#)

New Links

Gambling and Public Health Alliance International

The International Alliance on Gambling Harm is comprised of members from around the world who are working to reduce gambling-related harm. It was established at the International Gambling Conference 2008 in Auckland, N.Z.

[...more Links](#)