

January 23, 2014

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1

Dear Premier,

For more than a decade, Ontario's investment in policies and practices to address problem gambling has earned it an international reputation as a lead jurisdiction. As Ontario modernizes its approach to regulated gambling, there is a parallel need to modernize the province's strategy for addressing problem gambling.

Until now, Ontario's approach has been supported by directing 2% of a portion of racetrack and casino slot machine revenues to treatment, prevention, and research. With recent changes to the slots-at-racetracks program, it is an opportune time to update this model. To ensure that Ontario's problem gambling strategy is comprehensive, sustainable, and able to respond to emerging challenges related to gambling expansion, a new approach is needed.

Gambling is risky behaviour, and its harms can be measured, prevented, and treated through a strong problem gambling strategy. Ontario's investment in these areas can be considered risk insurance: gamblers are "insured" for the risks involved in gambling when the provincial government invests a small percentage of money gambled into a comprehensive strategy aimed at prevention, treatment, and research, including knowledge translation.

To this end, we propose that one cent from each dollar gambled in Ontario – in other words, 1% of total provincial gambling revenue – be invested in problem gambling. This will allow for the deployment of a more robust problem gambling strategy in line with the province's plans for gambling expansion. In addition to its social, community, and health benefits, this approach can protect the investment in gambling as a source of government income by reducing the negative financial impacts to the province in areas such as social, health, and legal services.

Ontario has distinguished itself as a lead jurisdiction in the area of problem gambling policy. This success should certainly be maintained, but can also be improved upon. We believe that gambling modernization carries with it both the aspiration and commitment to make Ontario the gold standard in problem gambling policies and practices. An updated and modernized problem gambling strategy would demonstrate the provincial government's continuing commitment to this goal, and to achieving a prosperous and fair Ontario. We hope that you will be able to meet with us to discuss this proposal in more detail.

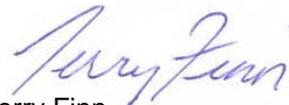
Sincerely,



Dr. Catherine Zahn
President & CEO
CAMH



Eileen Mahood
Chair, Board of Directors
OPGRC



Terry Finn
Chair, Board of Directors
RGC

cc: The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
The Honourable Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance
The Honourable John Gerretsen, Attorney General