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**Social Services Plan for Casinos
in Switzerland: A Prevention Model
for the Early Detection of Problem Gamblers**

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Social Services Plan for Casinos in Switzerland: A Prevention Model for the Early Detection of Problem Gamblers “careplay”

Slide 1: Title slide

Dear Participants,

I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak to you today about casinos in Switzerland and, more particularly, about our approach to the prevention of problem gambling. I would like to thank the University of Nevada for their invitation.

Slide 2: Europe/Switzerland

Let me begin with a few words on Switzerland itself. Switzerland is one of the smaller countries in the heart of Europe, with around 7 million inhabitants. Given the size of the country, we have a high population density of 175 people per sq. km.

Gambling was banned by law in Switzerland up until 1993.

What, then, is the socio-political background of casinos in Switzerland?

Nine years ago, this law was repealed by referendum as part of the financial restructuring of the Swiss federal budget.

The fact that the legislation remained in force for so long is due in part to our democratic structures: indeed, amending sections of the federal constitution is a very long, drawn-out process. Another reason may well have been that Switzerland is a small country, and that there are plenty of opportunities for gambling in our neighbouring countries: Germany, Italy, Austria and France. Nonetheless, in 1993, some twenty casinos began business operations, albeit with capped maximum betting stakes (approx. \$ 3). This meant that the gambling offer consisted almost exclusively of slot machines.

As of last year, under the new legislation casinos will be able to operate in much the same way as they do in your respective countries.

Slide 3: Switzerland / 7 A-Casinos / 15 B-Casinos

In 2000 the Swiss government issued licences to 22 casinos. On this slide you can see 7 red stars: these represent A-Casinos. A-Casinos are authorised to offer an unlimited number of gaming tables

and slot machines, and there is no upper limit on betting stakes. The casinos marked with blue stars are the 15 B-Casinos; at B-Casinos the number of gaming tables and slot machines is limited, as are the stakes. The rule of thumb, however, is that the ratio of gaming tables to slot machines should be 1:4.

Slide 4: Casino density

With this order of magnitude Switzerland outstrips by far every country in the world as far as the density of casinos per inhabitant is concerned. It's important to know that in Switzerland slot machines may not be set up anywhere other than in casinos (i.e. not in restaurants, bars or gaming halls). So, if we were to draw up a ranking based on slot machine density, in other words the number of slot machines per head of population, the ranking would look quite different. In Germany alone, which is ranked 9th here, more than 250,000 gambling machines are operated outside casinos, i.e. in restaurants and gaming halls.

But the Swiss Gaming Act stipulates a number of provisions that are probably unique in Europe. Under the terms of the Act, casino operators must demonstrate that they are making every effort they can to counter the detrimental effects of gambling by using what we refer to as a Social Services Plan.

There are also restrictive provisions and official inspections with regard to money laundering. As before, a ban remains on Internet casinos in Switzerland.

Slide 5: Federal Act on Casinos

The statutory provisions for social protection are as follows:

The top tier of the Swiss legal system is federal law. In federal law, social protection is described as follows in the Federal Act on Casinos:

1. Casinos are to work together with experts on prevention and addiction.
2. Casinos are to provide guests with information on the risks of gambling and the help available.
3. Casino personnel are to be trained on how to detect at any early stage – and approach – gamblers who are at risk, and be able to provide information on available assistance. Besides the

training programmes themselves, personnel are also to be offered opportunities for an exchange of experience and for practical counselling.

4. Casinos are to ban those guests who gamble beyond their means. Likewise, problem gamblers have the possibility of banning themselves. Technology is used to network these gambling bans throughout Switzerland. Once a gambler is banned, all Swiss casinos are off-limits to that gambler.

How does this procedure work?

We were commissioned by several casino establishments in Switzerland to draw up and implement a social services plan.

Slide 6: Binding co-operation

Co-operation between three large casinos and the School of Social Work, Lucerne was contractually regulated as binding. The subject-matter and aims of the contract were the implementation of the social services plan at the casinos and the setting-up of a comprehensive early detection network. I'll be discussing what this actually entails a little later.

To begin with, we asked ourselves the following questions:

- How can we make sure that these measures are sustained by the casino management, and integrated into the casinos' structures in the medium term?
- What do we need to do to ensure that these measures have a lasting effect? To avoid an attitude of “we want no hassle on any account” and ensure that genuine early detection is possible?

Our answer was to use project management in our approach to the implementation and achievement of the objectives.

Slide 7: Project organisation

And this is how it looks: In the project the casinos take charge of the strategic management; the instrument is the steering group, where the management decides on the planned measures and monitors their implementation. We assume the project management from the outside, and therefore assume responsibility at the operational level.

For each casino a partial project was set up so that these measures can be applied and developed further on a day-to-day basis at each particular casino. Each partial project is headed by a casino employee.

Slide 8: A Name for the Project

To enable all those involved to identify with the project, we gave it a name: “careplay®”. I am aware that the semantics may not be entirely correct since "to gamble" and "to play" have different meanings, but in our linguistic environment this inaccuracy is of little consequence. I would like to move on to the actual contents of the social services plan:

Slide 9: Early detection network

As I mentioned earlier, the aim of the plan is to set up a comprehensive early detection network. Our entire project rests on the early detection of potential problem gamblers. However, it can only be effective if other areas within the casinos are also incorporated and integrated in the work. That is why, besides the front-line work at the casinos themselves, we also have a number of practical groups. They are the prerequisite for adequate case discussion in the early detection of suspected problem gamblers. Logically, this also influences the atmosphere within the establishment. The casino management will be the first to accept that a positive entertainment culture is crucial to a gambling establishment. What will be more difficult is the introduction of a well organised and networked sorting system to get gamblers at risk to the "right" counselling address at the "right" time. Here, close co-operation with an outside specialised counselling agency is vital.

I'd now like to explain the individual measures designed to help us achieve our objectives:

Slide 10: 3 modules

They fall into three main areas, which we call our three modules, Personnel Training, Information and Research, and Counselling

Slide 11: Personnel training

What do our training programmes consist of?

Firstly, all new employees are informed about the social services plan when they join the casino. The policy is explained to them, and they are instructed on the allocation of duties within the casino. Next, all the relevant external partners are presented. After two to three months everyone attends a two-day training course to find out how and by what signs they can detect guests who are at risk from gambling. What is very important is that casino employees are able to think at length about their role. Indeed, initially many of them do not see why such measures are needed in the first place. In many cases they believe it is not their responsibility if some guests lose control of their gambling habits. To a certain extent, they may well be right; however, they have to understand that it is not in their employers' interest to tolerate the status quo. Ultimately employees must come to assume their duty of care as defined by law.

Likewise, all casino employees must know when to pass on this information, in what form and to whom.

For members of the key personnel (shift managers, floor managers and security managers) the programme includes a six-day communication training course. The delicate issue of how to address problem gamblers is practised extensively in role play and using video training as part of a solution-oriented discussion management.

These skills are continually improved by means of group supervision and coaching.

Finally, refresher courses on the subject are held every year at short course units.

Slide 12: Information brochures

The guest information provided by casinos focuses on the risks of gambling, and contains advice on how to keep gambling habits under control. These brochures are displayed prominently in various areas of the casino. They provide information on:

- The casino's policy
- The risks of gambling
- The address and phone number of outside counselling facilities
- The addresses of self-help groups
- The nationwide free hotline

Displayed separately from the brochure is the self-assessment questionnaire, with the 20 questions drawn up by Gamblers Anonymous, for guests to complete at their leisure.

This brings me to the second module: counselling

Slide 13: Counselling

Qualified counselling is provided by a specialised counselling facility, located in the same town or region as the casino. Co-operation between the two partners is also bindingly regulated in a co-operation agreement. Furthermore, part of the counselling services is financed by the casino. Counsellors also work within the casino's internal project group. This makes it possible to evaluate and improve co-operation on a regular basis.

At an initial meeting with a problem gambler, the counselling agency first of all determines what sort of assistance might be "right" for the person in question. Does he or she require psychotherapy? Should it be provided on an outpatient or an in-patient basis? Are there considerable debts? Can they be cleared? And so on and so forth. In any case, after this initial contact session the range of assistance available should be clear to the person seeking help. It is, of course, always up to the person himself or herself to decide which option he or she wishes to take.

The counselling agency also plays an important role in the proceedings involved in lifting gambling bans, and I shall be discussing this aspect in a moment.

We have also set up low-threshold access points to counselling, i.e. Internet counselling and a free hotline. Our experience shows that these anonymous facilities have in many cases provided a further step towards establishing a personal contact.

Slide 14: Research and documentation

A national research plan is currently being set up in the research sector. With the help of all 22 casinos a concept is to be drawn up to determine which data need to be collated on a regular basis to obtain reliable information in the near future on the precise figures for gambling addiction in Switzerland. Figures are currently available but they are sketchy at best. Some indicate 30,000, others 200,000. In other words, a spectrum with which we can do very little at present.

A monitoring system is to be installed within the casinos which, in a few years' time, will provide reliable data on the effectiveness of the social services plan.

At present we are making do with a differentiated documentation of all the measures. Every six months we publish a report, which is intended as a monitoring instrument for the casino management teams on the one hand and the Swiss Federal Gaming Board on the other.

I come now to the last part of my presentation, namely the subject of gambling bans.

Slide 15: Gambling bans

There are in principle two types of gambling bans: those applied for by the casino guests themselves, and those imposed by the casino.

The procedure is basically the same:

The ban is always preceded by a talk with the guest, and is documented in writing. The guest is informed of available counselling facilities and the existing self-help groups. As I mentioned right at the beginning of my presentation, the ban applies throughout Switzerland, and is in principle valid indefinitely. The person affected by the ban can apply at the earliest after one year to have the ban lifted.

Finally the guest is informed about the procedure involved in lifting a gambling ban. An external body draws up an expert opinion for the attention of the casinos. The main criterion here is whether the reasons that initially led to the ban at the time have disappeared. To this end the banned person has to disclose his or her financial standing and income. An official body also has to furnish proof that there are no debts outstanding.

These stringent provisions reduce the risk or likelihood that problem gamblers quickly fall back into their old ways.

Ultimately, it is the casino's management that decides on the lifting of the ban, based on the written expertise from the outside body.

Here are a few figures, which we compiled already in three big casino establishments from the middle of June until the end of December 2002.

Slide 16: Data on gambling bans: according to gender

Between 1 July 2002 and 31 December 2002, i.e. over a period of 6 months, 216 gambling bans were imposed at the three casinos. Over 90% were self-imposed bans. 82% affected men, 18%

women. This indicates that in Switzerland, too, it is mainly men who develop problematic gambling patterns – at least that is still the case for the time being.

Slide 17: Data on Gambling Bans: according to age

The second slide shows the spread of bans according to age group.

23% belong to the group of 18- to 30 year-olds.

38% – and therefore the biggest group by far – are the 31- to 40-year-olds; then the figures drop again, namely to 25% for 41- to 50-year-olds, and the quota dips to 12% for the 51- to 60-year-olds; for the over 61-year olds the level is surprisingly low at 2%.

So already these initial figures show that we can draw clear parallels with epidemiological data collected on gambling addiction.

Slide 18: DSM IV Screening I

In connection with gambling bans persons are getting examined according to the DSM IV screen if ever possible. Out of a group of 216, this procedure was possible to be applied to 114 persons. 24% reached 0-2 points – obviously they did not show any considerable psychosocial problems regarding their gambling attitude; 39% reached 3-4 points; therefore showing a problematical gambling attitude, 37% reached 5+ points, which means that they definitely belong to the group of pathological gamblers.

Slide 19: DSM IV Screening II

As regards the frequency of the individual “yes-answers”, we additionally have analyzed each individual screen. We have notified that the “Chasing” question was answered most frequently with yes, followed secondly by the “Tolerance” question. On the third position we had the question of “Loss of Control” followed by “Preoccupation (4th position).

After this brief digression I'd like to finish by summarising the main criteria for the success of our prevention model:

Slide 20: Final considerations

- The provisions governing responsible gaming and aimed at casino operators are set forth in law. The execution of these programmes is monitored by the regulator, in our case the Swiss Gaming Board.

- Co-operation between the casinos and prevention experts is bindingly regulated.
- Training programmes are aimed at the early detection of problem gamblers
- All the measures aimed at preventing gambling addiction are to be established in the medium term in the structures within and outside the casinos.

We believe that once all these measures are in place and implemented by employees in their day-to-day work, this early detection network will be effective in the medium term.

Thank you for your attention.