

The WAGER, Vol. 1(1) - Recommendations from the North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues

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The North American Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues was held on April 6-8, 1995 at Harvard Medical School. The event brought together key leaders from throughout the United States and Canada who represented diverse fields including government, education, the gambling industry, finance, law enforcement, the judiciary, health care and research.

North American Think Tank participants developed recommendations in seven key areas of concern. These are:

1. **POLICY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** The U.S. and Canada create a binational task force to coordinate the development of a North American response to youth gambling and solicit the funds necessary to pay for needed programs.
2. **FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS:** The task force be structured as a not-for-profit organization to attract funding from public and private sector sources.
3. **LAW ENFORCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** The gambling industry establish industry standards for enforcement of underage gambling prohibitions, support tougher penalties against vendors who fail to enforce legal gambling age limits, and aggressively promote policies that prohibit payment of prizes to minors gambling illegally.
4. **RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS:** An international research effort be undertaken to determine the prevalence of youth gambling and the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs, findings to be disseminated via an electronic "information superhighway" through a national or international clearinghouse.
5. **TREATMENT AND TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS:** Treatment methods in North America be inventoried and evaluated for clinical efficacy, and

that professional training for youth gambling treatment providers be tailored to meet training needs.

6. EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS: Curricula and programs be developed to educate children, parents and teachers about the issue of youth gambling.
7. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS: The public and policy makers be educated about youth gambling through the media and various other strategies, and that the gambling industry develop and promote a voluntary standards program to discourage the targeting of gambling advertising to young consumers.

References

Shaffer, H.J., George, E.M., & Cummings, T. (April, 1995). North American think tank on youth gambling issues: A blueprint for responsible public policy in the management of compulsive gambling. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.