**17th Annual Ohio Problem Gambling Conference Kicks off Feb. 20**

*There will be a media availability with problem gambling experts from around the country in advance of Problem Gambling Awareness Month in March*

**WHAT:** 17th Annual Ohio Problem Gambling Conference media availability

**WHEN:** Thursday, Feb. 20 – 11 am

**WHERE:** Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center – 100 Green Meadows Drive South, Lewis Center

Birch Room 2

**INFO:** This annual conference brings together hundreds of national experts, state leaders, and local innovators in problem gambling prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, research, administration and responsible gambling. Experts will be addressing the following topics, among many others:

* The connection between marijuana use and gambling;
* The emergence of gaming-to-gambling and how children who play video games regularly are four times more likely to be a problem gambler later;
* Co-morbidity – people who struggle with gambling disorders often have other behavioral or mental health issues ranging from substance abuse to anxiety; and
* Best practices to help integrate problem gambling services into behavioral health.

**WHO:** The following experts will be available for media interviews:

* + Stacey Frohnapfel-Hasson, Chief, Office of Prevention Services, Bureau of Problem Gambling, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
	+ Derek Longmeier, Problem Gambling Network of Ohio Executive Director
	+ James Syphax, Director, Prevention Action Alliance (to talk about the *Change the Game* initiative that focuses on children and emergence of gaming-to-gambling)
	+ *NOTE:* Dr. Tim Fong, UCLA, is an expert on connection between marijuana and gambling and can potentially be available for interviews between sessions at approximately 10:30 am to 10:45 am or 12:15 pm to 12:30 pm

**For more information, contact:**

**Sarah Irvin Clark, Irvin Public Relations – 614.296.4057**