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Video Game Addiction Expert Raises Awareness of Youth Gaming Risks

Statewide Organization to Host Local Town Hall Meeting, Workshop for Professionals

TOPEKA, Kan. – International speaker, entrepreneur and pioneer Cam Adair will present at a town hall meeting for youth, parents and others who work with youth on March 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, 701 SW 8th Ave, Topeka.

Adair will also provide a workshop for professionals on March 27 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the same location. These events, sponsored by the Kansas Coalition on Problem Gambling (KCPG), will address how gaming and social media are designed to keep teenagers hooked.

“Rapid changes in technology and social media have created more opportunities for youth to engage in gaming and gambling through online sports pools, casino-style game apps and social video games like Fortnite,” said Joyce Markham, licensed specialist clinical social worker and president of KCPG. “There is growing concern that these opportunities will increase the prevalence of problem gambling in younger generations, so we look forward to Adair’s insights on the impact this could have on Kansas youth.”

Adair is the founder of Game Quitters, the world’s largest support community for video game addiction, serving members in 95 countries. He speaks regularly around the world at high schools, universities, parent education events and addiction conferences, and his work has been published in *Psychiatry Research* and featured on NPR, BBC, Forbes, ABC 20/20, CNN, VICE and Bloomberg.

KCPG, an organization dedicated to solving the social issues of problem gambling, is using these events as a part of its annual awareness efforts for Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM). In addition to receiving a signed proclamation from Governor Laura Kelly designating March 2019 as PGAM in Kansas, the coalition is using social media campaigns to encourage those affected by gambling problems to seek help.

“It is so important for problem gamblers and concerned others to know they are not alone, and treatment is available, effective and affordable,” said Michelle Voth, executive director of Prevention and Recovery Services (PARS) and representative of KCPG. “We hope with Adair’s meaningful personal lessons on addiction recovery and our messages aimed at reducing problem gambling stigma, we can facilitate better conversations about these issues in our community and get individuals struggling with gambling problems the help they need.”

KCPG recognizes that while most Kansans who gamble do so without experiencing harm, a sizeable portion is negatively impacted by gambling. According to the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), one in every seven Kansans reports being negatively affected by the

uncontrolled gambling of a family member, friend or co-worker. With the World Health Organization now recognizing “gaming disorder” as a diagnosable condition, KCPG hopes to prevent gaming and gambling issues from spreading throughout Kansas, especially among youth.

The town hall meeting and workshop for professionals are free and open to the public, but [registration](#) is required to secure a spot at each event. For help with gambling problems, call the confidential 24/7 Kansas Problem Gambling Helpline at 800.522.4700 to be connected with a counselor trained to recognize gambling risks and direct individuals to certified counselors near them. Treatment in Kansas is available at no cost to problem gamblers, family members and others affected by the problem. Visit the Kansas Responsible Gambling Alliance website at ksgamblinghelp.com for information about treatment options, support programs and other resources.

About Kansas Coalition on Problem Gambling

The Kansas Coalition on Problem Gambling (KCPG) is an organization of mental health professionals, treatment and prevention providers, casino representatives and concerned citizens who are dedicated to solving the social issues of problem gambling. KCPG is committed to increasing public awareness; providing research, prevention and education programs regarding problem gambling; and ensuring the availability of treatment for problem gamblers and their families. KCPG provides objective information to educate legislators and other business leaders about prevention and treatment for problem gamblers and their families. KCPG is neither for, nor against, legalized gambling but concentrates on efforts to help those with gambling problems.

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