



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo attends sports betting and i-gaming conference to talk about gambling addiction

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

July 18, 2022

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As a way to promote the ways New York is working to help individuals with problem gambling issues, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. participated in the SBC Summit North America Conference and Tradeshow to speak on the “Leadership and Player Protection — A Shift Towards Solutions” panel on Wednesday, July 13 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in New Jersey.

As a panelist, Addabbo highlighted New York’s problem gambling services including the 1-877-8-HOPENY hotline, as well as the Office of Addiction Services and Supports

(OASAS), which provides people with prevention tips, problem gambling warning signs, responsible gambling techniques and additional resources.

“We knew when we introduced mobile sports betting in New York that it would cause an increase in problem gambling issues, but we were prepared for that eventuality. We improved the OASAS services, enhanced outreach and the free, confidential NYS HOPELINE, while building safeguards directly into the sports betting apps,” said Addabbo, Chair of the Senate Racing Gaming and Wagering Committee. “By safely legalizing mobile sports betting in New York and thus not having our residents go to other states, we are now able to identify and help those with problem gambling issues and get them the services they require.”

Addabbo noted that mobile sports betting has already brought in more than \$300 million in tax revenue and educational funds — more than any other state with mobile sports betting — and \$6 million for new addiction programs. Although this is a great start, more needs to be done, the Senator said.

OASAS needs additional funding for more staff to make it a 24/7 service and with a peer-to-peer aspect for those facing gambling addiction. According to Addabbo, there also needs to be more education and marketing of what gambling addiction is and to reach younger residents to prevent them from developing a gambling problem.

“We need to work on removing the stigma around gambling addiction, and the way we do that is by increasing educational materials and marketing,” Addabbo said. “If we can get rid of the fear of coming forward with a gambling problem we can get people the help that they need to overcome their addiction. It is my hope that by funding these free vital programs we are able to reach more people and have a greater impact on the state.”

Another entity that helps with gambling addiction is the New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG), which is dedicated to increasing public awareness about problem gambling, while advocating for support services and treatment for persons adversely affected by problem gambling.

During the panel, Addabbo discussed his “A-B-C’s” approach to problem gambling, that when put into practice will help those with gambling addiction issues.

The “A” stands for Awareness. By making people aware, through improved marketing, of the signs of gambling problems, the pitfalls of the addiction, and the services available to those effected by gambling issues, New York State can help with addiction recovery and hopefully prevent someone from falling victim to gambling addiction.

The “B” stands for Budget. The New York State budget has earmarked funds for gambling addiction programs, which will increase their ability for outreach and assistance. Additional budgetary funding could increase the staffing levels for OASAS to expand a 24/7 peer-to-peer program. A select portion of money from tax revenue gained from mobile sports betting will be used to fund these programs.

The “C” is for Codify. Legislators need to codify into law legislative language that creates the safeguards and measures to provide protections from problem gambling and addiction.

“With New York State looking to expand gaming with the process to select downstate casinos to receive full licenses about to start, and the potential of legalizing i-gaming, these problem gambling initiatives are more important than ever,” Addabbo said. “By working together with legislators and problem gambling advocates, we can create a comprehensive set of laws and programs that will keep New York bettors safe and provide those who have an addiction the services they need and educational awareness to prevent gambling addiction.”