

社區人士要求撥款教育市民

賭風勁吹 亞裔最受災

本報記者關文傑三藩市報導

二月六日至十二日為「全國賭博問題醒覺周」(National Problem Gambling Awareness Week)，華人健康組織聯合會與亞裔事務委員會昨日舉辦了一場座談會，邀請加州眾議員陳煥瑛和社工，講解賭博對亞裔社區的影響及要求州政府和賭博娛樂工業，重視這些嗜賭的受害人，希望撥款教育市民，認識到賭博對家人所產生的種種問題。類似的會議分別在南加州的洛杉磯和聖地牙哥舉行。

代表屋崙地區的州眾議員陳煥瑛表示，印第安賭場有如雨後春筍般，開遍整個加州，而賭博機構全力向亞裔社會宣傳招引顧客，前往賭博的亞裔估計最少佔二成。陳煥瑛強調，這是州長和一些立法議員，為了增加稅收平衡財政赤字，容許更多的賭場開設。加州政府於十年開始容許州內的印第安部落開設賭場。

陳煥瑛指出，例如東灣聖巴勃羅市的Lytton Band of Pomo將現有的「撲克俱樂部」改建成為有二千五百部老虎機的賭場，有四分之一收益撥歸加州政府。不

過，這些收入將用作建築公路出口、交通設施和增聘警員以應付因賭場所引起的罪案，社區並沒有從中得益。

加州亞裔事務委員會主席許行認為，賭博是三藩市華人的重要問題，在一次一千八百名華人的問卷調查中，有七成承認有賭博習慣，在華人社區發生的家庭暴力和夫婦離異事件中，大部分都是由賭博所引起。

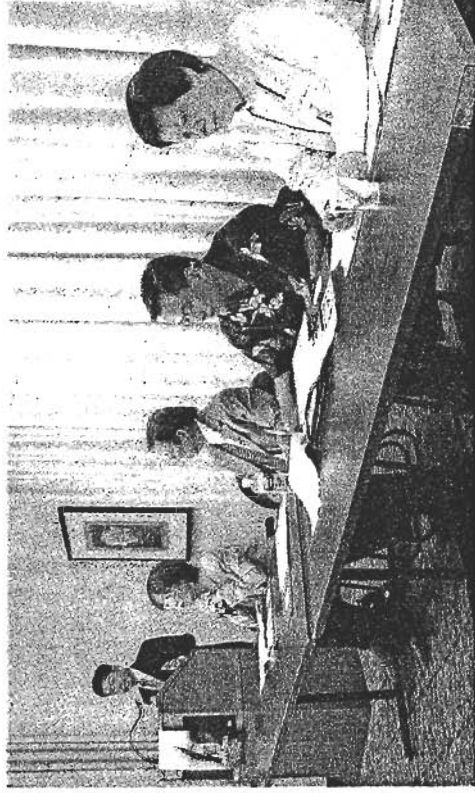
該委員會已將亞裔社區的賭博問題，列為本年度的主要工作，日裔委員Paul Osaki已開始組織一個名為「亞裔賭博問題專責

小組」(API Problem Gambling Task Force)，與加州各地社區領袖組成聯盟，要求州政府重視亞裔的賭博嚴重問題及撥款作戒賭教育宣傳。Paul又指現時時的賭場事業得益，沒有一分一毫用在亞裔人士身上。

聖瑪利中心的社會服務主任楊小薇修女指出，上了賭癮和毒癮或酒癮不同，除了有時情緒低

落外，從外表難以察覺，上了賭癮的華人，以新移民為多，土生土長的華人也有染上賭癮，賭博可以五花八門，現時最危險的是足不出户的電腦網上賭博，賭徒只要坐享家中，便可以投注。

有意戒賭的人士可致電中文熱線求助，1-888-968-7888，一切資料保密，也可向「華人健康組織聯合會」求助，415-788-6426。



「全國賭博問題醒覺周」主講人左起：華人健康組織聯合會行政主任胡國立、州眾議員陳煥瑛、亞裔事務委員會主席許行、日裔委員Paul Osaki、楊小薇修女。記者關文傑攝。

COMMUNITY WORKERS REQUEST FUNDING FOR CITIZEN EDUCATION
**THE WIND OF GAMBLING BLOWING FIERCELY
MOST DISASTROUS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS**

<Staff reporter Kwan Wen Jie reported from San Francisco>

March 6 to 12 is "National Gambling Awareness Week". NICOS Chinese Health Coalition and California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs organized a press conference yesterday. California Assembly member, Wilma Chan, and social workers expounded the influence of gambling on the Asian and Pacific Islander American community and requested the state government and the casino industry to pay attention to the plight of the victims of problem gambling, in the hope that they would set aside funding for the education of the public to realize the many problems gambling posed on the family members. Similar conferences were being held separately in Los Angeles and San Diego.

Wilma Chan, California Assembly Member representing Oakland, indicated that Indian casinos were opened throughout California, like spring bamboo shoots sprouting after the rain. And these casino operators targeted their advertisement and promotional efforts full-force towards APIs. Among their gambling customers, APIs were estimated to make up at least 20%. Wilma Chan emphasized that the state governor and some legislators allowed more casinos to operate in an attempt to balance the budget deficit. Since 10 years ago, the Californian government permitted the Indian tribes in California to operate casinos.

Wilma Chan cited the example of Lytton Band of Pomo in San Pablo in the East Bay. The existing poker club would be converted to a casino with 2500 slot machines. She pointed out that a quarter of their profits would go to the state government. But, this income would be used for the construction of highway exits, institution of traffic facilities and employment of more police to tackle crimes resulting from casino operation. The community did not benefit from it.

Dr. Norman Hui, Chairman of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, felt that gambling was an important issue among San Francisco Chinese. In a survey of 1800 Chinese, 70% admitted that they had gambling habit. In the Chinese community, most cases of the family violence and divorce were caused by problem gambling.

This commission had already listed problem gambling as their main agenda for this year. Their Japanese Commissioner, Paul Osaki, had initiated an "API Problem Gambling Task Force" by forming a coalition among community leaders from various Californian communities. The taskforce advocated the state government to pay more attention to the seriousness of gambling problems and to fund public education and rehabilitation of gambling addiction. Paul criticized the casino business for not spending a single cent of their profits on APIs. Sister Paulette Yeung who was in charge of the social service of St. Mary's Teahouse Ministries pointed out the difference between gambling addiction and drug addiction. Apart from episodic depression, it was difficult to identify gambling addiction from external appearance. Majority of the Chinese gambling addicts were new immigrants, although some local born Chinese could also get addicted. Gambling could take many different forms. Currently the most dangerous type was internet gambling. Gamblers could stay home and bet. If you would like to quit from gambling addiction, please call Chinese hotline for help: 1-888-968-7888. All information would be confidential. You can also call NICOS Chinese Health Coalition at 415-788-6426 for assistance.

<Translated by Josephine Wong, NICOS Chinese Health Coalition>