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Massachusetts Gaming Commission Votes to Initiate Rule-Making Process Toward Uniform Medication and Drug Testing Program

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission voted today to initiate the formal rule-making process in an effort to contribute to a uniform medication and drug testing program to which eight states have so far pledged their support.

Regulators from Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia all committed earlier this year to work together towards implementation of the program once final model rules were approved by the Association of Racing Commissioners International's Board of Directors. Approval of the first prong of the program – a schedule of controlled therapeutic medications – was given by the Board in early April. Approval of the second prong – an enhanced penalty structure for repeat offenders of medication rules - was given in late July.

The horse racing industry will now distinguish between those medications which have been recognized as appropriate for therapeutic use in the horse and those which have no business being in a horse on race day. The schedule of controlled therapeutic medications includes restricted administration times, which will provide clear withdrawal guidance to veterinary practitioners and trainers, and regulatory decision levels which will provide uniformity in a region that is home to 18 different racetracks within a 200-mile radius.

The industry is also taking a tougher stance against those trainers who accrue multiple medication violations involving the horses in their care. The new penalty structure will assign points for each medication violation, based on whether the violation involves a therapeutic or prohibited substance, with mandatory additional penalties imposed once a certain number of points has been accumulated. The new provisions are the culmination of more than two years' work by a number of committees involving stakeholders from all corners of the industry.

Following a 14-day advisory period, the proposed regulations will be offered for public comment beginning September 6th. A public hearing has been scheduled for October 9th.

MassGaming's Director of Racing, Jennifer Durenberger, stated, "The Division of Racing is proud to open the book to this historic chapter in the movement toward uniformity. We are grateful to all of the industry stakeholders and hard-working committee members whose unwavering efforts to see these rules come to fruition will soon be rewarded." The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast consortium plans a uniform regional implementation date for the new rules of January 1, 2014.



Massachusetts Gaming Commission

About MassGaming

The mission of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in November, 2011. In creating that process, the Commission will strive to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory systems engender the confidence of the public and participants, and that they provide the greatest possible economic development benefits and revenues to the people of the Commonwealth, reduce to the maximum extent possible the potentially negative or unintended consequences of the new legislation, and allow an appropriate return on investment for gaming providers that assures the operation of casino-resorts of the highest quality. For more information on MGC, please visit MassGaming.com or connect and share on Twitter (@MassGamingComm) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/MAgamingComm).



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