

Number of problem gambling cases seen by NCPG appointed centres rise

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SINGAPORE -- The number of cases seen by the National Council for Problem Gambling's (NCPG) two appointed centres to treat problem gambling has been going up.

The National Addictions Management Service (NAMS), which offers clinical and counselling services, has seen 243 cases in the first half of 2010 - compared to the 290 cases for the whole of last year, and 176 cases for 2008.

Of the 243 cases, 130 were new clients.

NAMS treats cases with more severe addiction problems.

The Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre, which treats less serious cases, saw 113 cases in the first half of 2010, compared to the 134 cases for the whole of last year.

Of the 113 cases at Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre, 44 were new cases.

The Community Development, Youth and Sports Ministry (MCYS) released these figures in Parliament on Monday.

Community Development Minister, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan released these figures after Marine Parade GRC MP, Assoc Prof Fatimah Lateef, asked how many cases have been referred to the NCPG in the past two years.

The number of individuals requesting to exclude themselves from entering gambling facilities at integrated resorts were also released.

148 applications for family exclusion orders have been made since they were available in April 2009, and 123 orders were issued.

Of these, 113 applications were received after the first casino opened on 14 Feb 2010, and 92 orders issued since then.

There were also 1,546 self-exclusion applications as at June 2010.

88 per cent or 1,360 applications were received after the first casino opened.

The ministry said the increase in numbers is not unexpected, as there has been greater awareness of the exclusion orders following NCPG's public education efforts.

Dr Balakrishnan said the ministry and NCPG will continue to monitor the situation and take steps to address any social problems, should they arise. - CNA /ls

