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Communication
cw: <u>Oct 15/13</u>
Item: <u>20</u>

Mr. Jeffrey Abrams
City Clerk
Vaughan City Council
October 15, 2013

Dear Mr. Abrams:

Re: Submission to Item 20 of the Whole Committee Meeting, Vaughan City Council

We are two physicians who have been involved in primary care and addiction research and treatment for many years. Please accept this letter as a formal submission to Item 20 of the Whole Committee meeting on October 15.

Along with many other health professionals, we are very concerned about the proliferation of casinos in the province. An increasing body of literature demonstrates that gambling causes serious social harms. A casino in Vaughan will greatly increase rates of problem gambling in the region, because gambling rates are determined by availability of casinos and hours of operation. And the casino will harm the community. We know that 80% of patients who attend primary care clinics have gambled at some point in the past year. Of this group, 6.2% are problem gamblers, and 3% are severe problem gamblers. Severe problem gamblers generate approximately 30-40% of casino revenues; in other words, casinos are maintained by causing financial hardship and ruin. An estimated 20% of those who attend Gamblers Anonymous have attempted suicide because of their gambling. And the money spent on gambling hurts local businesses, because gamblers spend their money at the casino rather than in shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. Therefore we strongly urge the Vaughan council to protect its citizens and reject the casino proposal.

Sincerely,



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