

TO: Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission  
Jim Nielsen, Deputy Director

FROM: Carole Gentry, Managing Director of Communications

DIVISION: Communications

DATE: June 15, 2021

SUBJECT: Report for the June 2021 Commission Meeting

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Following is a status update of ongoing and special projects in the Communications Division:

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

### **News Coverage:**

More than 100 articles or segments on the Maryland Lottery, the \$2 Million VaxCash Promotion and/or Maryland's casinos were broadcast and/or published online in the past month by local/regional/industry media including WBAL-TV (Baltimore); WJZ-TV (Baltimore); WMAR-TV (Baltimore); Fox 45 (Baltimore); WUSA9 (Washington, D.C.); WJLA-TV (Washington, D.C.); WTOP radio (Washington, D.C.); WMAL radio (Washington, D.C.); WFMD/WFRE radio (Frederick); the New York Times; the Washington Post; the Baltimore Sun; the Annapolis Capital Gazette; the Cumberland Times-News; the Baltimore Business Journal and the Maryland Daily Record.

### **\$2 Million VaxCash Promotion:**

Members of the Communications staff have played vital roles in developing, managing and publicizing the \$2 Million VaxCash Promotion. Announced by Governor Hogan on 5/20, the promotion seeks to incentivize those who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine and reward those who have. Working in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Lottery is awarding a \$40,000 prize to one vaccinated Maryland resident each day from 5/25 through 7/3. The promotion culminates on 7/4 when one vaccinated Maryland resident will receive a \$400,000 prize. Because entry into the drawings is based on individuals' vaccination status and we must adhere to HIPAA guidelines regarding health privacy, MDH is required to make initial contact with VaxCash winners. The Lottery Communications team provided detailed guidance to MDH's constituent services staff regarding the winner notification process. Once winners have returned an authorization form to MDH, the Lottery's Communications staff then contacts the winners to guide them through the prize-claiming process.

The Communications team greets VaxCash winners at the Lottery's office in Baltimore when they arrive to claim their prizes, and interviews them for articles and possible videos that are published on mdlottery.com, released to the media and shared on social media. VaxCash winners are permitted to remain anonymous, but as of 6/14, five of the winners have consented to full publicity. Communications staff issued news releases with photos of those five winners on 6/1, 6/2, 6/8, 6/9 and 6/11. Communications also issued a statewide release on 6/14, announcing the promotion's halfway point and highlighting all of the winners and/or locations. The Lottery Communications team continues to work with the Governor's Communications team to arrange for VaxCash winners

to speak with Governor Hogan via Zoom if the winner desires. At present, two of those winners have spoken to Governor Hogan.

### **Broadcast Opportunities:**

Managing Director of Communications Carole Gentry appeared via Zoom on WBAL-TV on 5/22 to discuss the VaxCash Promotion. On 5/25, Carole was interviewed regarding the VaxCash Promotion on WMAL radio, WBAL radio, and in-person with WBAL-TV and WJZ-TV. Carole will appear via Zoom on the monthly Lottery Update segment on WBAL-TV on 6/26. Communications staff member Roslyn Lane appeared via Zoom in the Lottery Update segment on WBAL-TV on 5/29 to discuss the latest games and promotions. Communications staff member Doug Lloyd did weekly radio interviews to discuss Lottery news on WNAV-AM in Annapolis on 5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4 and 6/11.

### **Interviews and News Releases:**

On 6/14, the Communications staff resumed in-person interviews with winners who claim prizes of \$20,000 or more at the Lottery's Customer Resource Center in Baltimore. In the interests of customer and staff safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews were conducted by phone for nearly a year. Winner stories are published on mdlottery.com. Winners are permitted to remain anonymous, but stories include names or photos of winners who give written consent for publicity regarding their prizes.

In addition to the ongoing VaxCash releases, which are sent out regionally based on the location of the winners, Communications staff has issued or is going to issue the following news releases:

- 5/26 - Statewide and national news release to report that the \$731.1 million Powerball jackpot-winning ticket sold on 1/20 in Lonaconing had been claimed.
- 6/7 - Statewide news release to report May 2021 casino revenue numbers.
- 6/7 - Statewide news release, "Week in Winners"(WIW), which lists each Lottery ticket worth \$10,000 or more that was sold or claimed in the preceding seven days. The WIW release is sent each Monday.
- 6/14 - Statewide news release to remind consumers that the VaxCash promotion has hit the midway point.
- 7/6 - Statewide news release reporting the June 2021 casino numbers will be disseminate

### **Daily News Headlines:**

Communications staff sent daily news clip emails to Maryland Lottery and Gaming employees and members of the Commission during each day of the five-day workweek. Each email contained links to multiple media articles covering the lottery and gaming industries.

## **EVENTS AND SECOND-CHANCE PROMOTIONS**

### **Events and Community Outreach:**

The coronavirus state of emergency led to the postponement or cancellation of all events since mid-March of 2020 where the Communications staff was planning to attend and promote the Lottery. The Communications team continues to maintain contact with the operators of these events to determine future activities and is in the process of exploring event possibilities for later in the summer. The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Conference is planned for 8/18 through 8/21 in Ocean City; and the Maryland State Fair is scheduled for 8/26 through 9/6 in Timonium. The Lottery will have a presence at both events, and will be on Ravens Walk for all Baltimore Ravens 2021 home games.

### **Second-chance Promotions:**

Communications staff member Gail Pelovitz continues to work on procedures and fulfillment of all Lottery second-chance contests.

## **CORRESPONDENCE, NEWSLETTERS, PIA REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Correspondence:**

More than 200 email inquiries and letters were received and answered by Communications staff over the past month. Communications staff continue to provide timely, accurate and complete responses to email and other written inquiries.

### **Public Information Act Requests:**

Communications staff completed responses to PIA requests with assistance from the Attorney General's Office and other Agency staff, and continues to provide timely, accurate and complete responses to any such inquiries.

### **Newsletters:**

Communications staff members Debbie McDaniel-Shaughney and Mary Clark are working on the writing and design of the next Retailer Report newsletter, which is scheduled to be disseminated in late June.

### **"Retailer Corner:"**

Communications staff continued posting three to five blog entries per week on the "Retailer Corner" section of mdlottery.com.

## **DRAWINGS MANAGEMENT**

### **Daily Drawings:**

Twice-daily drawings of Pick 3/Pick 4, daily drawings of Bonus Match 5 and 5 Card Cash and twice-weekly drawings of Multi-Match were conducted successfully. The drawings team also ensured that winning numbers for those games and multi-state games, Powerball, Mega Millions and Cash4Life were posted on mdlottery.com, the Lottery's mobile device apps and winning numbers phone line.

The Drawings team continues to follow proper social-distancing protocols to ensure the safety of drawing officials, announcers and other TV team members who are on-site at the drawings studio.

## **CUSTOMER RESOURCE CENTER**

Out of concern for player and employee safety during the pandemic, the Customer Resource Center was closed to the public on 3/30 and reopened by appointment-only on 6/24. Customers continue to make appointments to claim prizes by using the scheduling page on mdlottery.com. Lottery winners without Internet access can schedule appointments by phone. Winners may also claim by mail or use the Claims Dropbox in the lobby of the Montgomery Park Business Center. The appointment-only process continues to be effective and efficient. All Lottery retailers are authorized to cash winning tickets up to \$600, and Expanded Cashing Authority Program (XCAP) retailers can cash tickets up to \$5,000. Winning tickets up to \$25,000 can be cashed without an appointment at all six Maryland casinos.

**Data concerning the number and amount of winners' claims processed by the Lottery, the casinos and XCAP retailers are noted below:**

<b>Location</b>	<b>May 2021 Count</b>	<b>May 2021 Amount</b>	<b>YTD 7/01/20 to 06/30/21</b>	<b>YTD 7/01/20 to 06/30/21</b>
<b>Baltimore</b>	2,769	\$553,626,153	14,914	\$617,465,154
<b>Casinos</b>	78	\$803,723	864	\$8,932,930

**XCAP PROCESSING:**

<b>May 2021 Count</b>	<b>May 2021 Amount</b>	<b>YTD 7/01/20 to 06/30/21</b>	<b>YTD 7/01/20 to 06/30/21</b>
8.078	\$16,645,897	74,453	\$153,905,223

**SUBSCRIPTIONS PROCESSED:**

The Lottery's Customer Resource Center is also responsible for processing subscriptions. Multi-Match, Mega Millions, Powerball and Cash4Life subscriptions can be purchased for 13, 26 or 52 weeks. Data concerning subscriptions processed is noted below:

**Subscriptions as of May 2021:**

Multi-Match	0
Mega Millions	3,930
Powerball	3,069
Cash4Life	500

**Total** **7,499**

**Subscriptions Processed During May 2021:**

Multi-Match	0
Mega Millions	486
Powerball	403
Cash4Life	114

**Total** **1,003**

<b>INTERCEPTIONS</b>	<b>May 2021 Amount</b>	<b>YTD 7/1/20 to 06/30/21 Amount</b>
Child Support	\$33,806	\$204,095
CCU Debts	\$176,911	\$1,246,465