

GIVE TO THE MAX DAY
NOVEMBER 14, 2013
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Each year, Minnesota celebrates Give to the Max Day. It's an opportunity to rally the state's philanthropic spirit by raising contributions for a range of charitable causes. We hope you'll take advantage of this day to give generously in support of problem gambling in Minnesota. To make a contribution, visit NorthstarProblemGambling.org and click the "Donate Now" button at the right.

NORTHSTAR ARTICLE APPEARS IN MINNESOTA HEALTHCARE NEWS



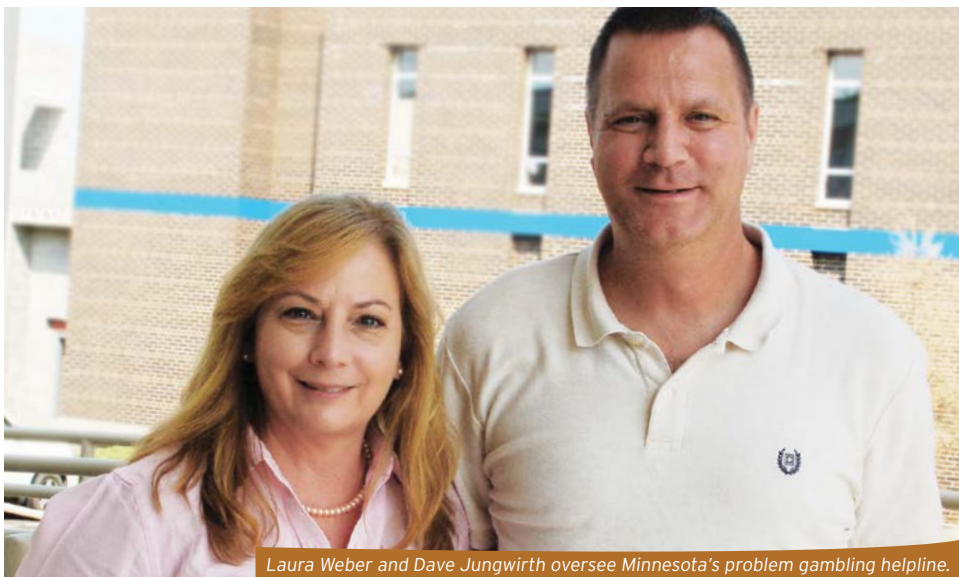
An article by Northstar about gambling addiction appeared in the August 2013 issue of *Minnesota Healthcare News*.

The publication provides health information for Minnesota consumers. A pdf of

the article can be found by clicking on the News & Publications section of NorthstarProblemGambling.org.

STATE'S PROBLEM GAMBLING

Helpline Can Be a Lifeline



Laura Weber and Dave Jungwirth oversee Minnesota's problem gambling helpline.

At the pivotal moment when a problem gambler reaches out for help, it's essential that their inquiry be handled with compassion, support and professional guidance. That cry for help often starts with a call to the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline, where a team of trained experts from Canvas Health is ready to help those in crisis.

"Our goal is to meet callers where they're at," says Dave Jungwirth, a chemical health counselor and gambling specialist at Canvas. "They've called for a reason and it's up to us to ask probing questions to learn more about their situation."

The initial focus of each call is to ascertain the level of crisis and to ensure the caller is in a place of safety. "We screen to determine whether the caller may be suicidal or have major issues with depression," says Dave. Beyond that, callers to the state helpline

... callers to the state helpline receive information, support and referrals to state-certified gambling treatment providers . .

receive information, support and referrals to state-certified gambling treatment providers in the area where the caller lives.

Some callers are simply seeking information, while others are in a destructive phase of a gambling addiction. A call that Dave remembers vividly was from a man, holding his paycheck in hand, vowing, "I'm going to go gambling." "I had to determine where he was calling from – home, casino, etc., and how imminent the situation was," says Dave. He discussed the man's gambling history, and learned that this was not the first time he'd wanted someone to take his check away from him.

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Cathie Perrault
Executive Director
NPGA

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

We thank all our members, donors, volunteers and affiliates who have contributed to our mission.

Become a member today. Visit www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org to join us.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

An Uncertain Outcome: The Effect of Technology on Problem Gambling

It's always a pleasure when Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) in Washington, comes to Minnesota to share his knowledge. In September, Keith spoke at our annual conference about an issue of increasing importance: the implications of technology on problem gambling.

If you've ever played a game on a computer, game console or mobile app, you know how luring technology-based games can be. While the strong urge to participate in these games is not classified as an addiction in the realm of professional diagnostic criteria, there is extensive research underway aimed at understanding the addictive quality of online games – and the related risk factors for uncontrolled compulsive behavior in some gamers.

Now that online gambling is legal in three states (New Jersey, Delaware, Nevada), there is more focus on the nexus of online games and online gambling. People have multiple online options to play traditional casino-like games free, with the potential to win virtual money and points. Other types of games allow for the purchase of various game components to enhance the game experience. The jump to real online gambling is a short one, and is cause for concern given that online gambling is likely to become legal in many states in the coming years.

The question is what these technological changes mean for addictive gambling. On one hand, the ability to play anonymously through the use of credit cards could attract players who seek to escape through gambling. Further, the fast rate of play, 24-hour availability and social isolation can all be factors in developing gambling problems. On the other hand, however, there are also potential safeguards that can be built into online technology to actually protect the gambler. These measures include limits on deposits, bets and time spent playing.

To ensure safe online gambling, the NCPG developed the first-ever U.S. standards on internet gambling in April 2012. The standards (which can be viewed at www.ncpgambling.org/irgstandards) inform policy, decision making, advertising and more. Our hope is that as technology and gaming evolves, precautions can be incorporated to help minimize the risk. We will closely monitor this issue in the coming months and years.

As always, thank you for your support.

Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to help those affected by problem gambling in Minnesota. We do this by promoting awareness and understanding of the issue via our website, newsletter, community education programs, sponsorship of the Minnesota State Conference on Problem Gambling, and training of professionals in preventing and treating problem gambling.

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MARY MAGNUSON *Brings Passion and Wealth of Gaming Knowledge to Northstar*

More than a decade ago Lance Holthusen, one of the founding fathers of the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, asked an attorney with experience at the forefront of the state's gaming regulation efforts to help further the cause of problem gambling in Minnesota. That attorney was Mary Magnuson, and she's been an ever-reliable source of counsel and support for Northstar ever since.

Mary has been involved in legal issues related to gaming in Minnesota since the Minnesota racing commission was in its infancy. Much of her career has been spent ensuring that clients comply with gaming regulation and legislation.

"The more involved I got in the field, the more I began to understand that problem gambling was a concern," says Mary. "I could see that it could be a potentially bigger problem as gambling continued to grow."

Mary will be serving as NPGA's president in 2014, a position she has held in the past. "I find Northstar's work to be a challenge for several reasons," says Mary. "First, we're working toward developing some really good prevention and awareness materials and programs that can really make a difference in peoples' lives. And secondly, it's satisfying to move this organization from a very small, money-strapped operation to an organization that has additional resources to get messages out to maximize its effectiveness in helping people."

Northstar also benefits from the efforts of Mary's husband, John Apitz. John is an attorney and lobbyist who volunteers his time to assist Northstar in communicating the importance of its mission to state legislators in a position to appropriate vital funding for problem gambling treatment and education.

"Mary and John both bring an important perspective to the work of Northstar, and we are very fortunate that they volunteer their efforts to help us accomplish our mission," says Cathie Perrault, Northstar executive director. "They, along with all our board members and volunteers, really make a huge difference."

Mary, who has worked with the Jacobson Law Group since 1992, has extensive legal experience in both the public and private sector. As managing attorney for the Gambling Division of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office she provided legal representation to all of Minnesota's state agencies responsible for the regulation of gambling. She was a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Gambling, Chair of the Indian Gaming Committee of the North American Gaming Regulator's Association, and reporter for the Canterbury Downs Commission.

Mary has represented Minnesota in the negotiation of gaming compacts and provided consultation and advice to several state governments and organizations on the issue. She has written several reports and articles on gaming issues in Minnesota and is a frequent speaker on gaming-related topics at conferences throughout the country.

Looking ahead to the future, Mary sees Internet gaming regulation as among the most important developments to watch. "Internet gaming poses some incredibly difficult policy questions and social questions," says Mary. "Does the state want to permit any form of Internet gaming? Are they capable of regulating it? And from Northstar's perspective, what might Internet gaming do to the incidence of problem gambling?"



The Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance Board of Directors is made up of volunteers who give their time and talents to guide the mission of the organization and ensure fiscally responsible operations. The board is comprised of representatives from various industries engaged with gambling and problem gambling. This includes representatives from the Minnesota Lottery, Canterbury Park, the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, several gambling treatment providers, Allied Charities of Minnesota, researchers from the University of Minnesota, and recovering individuals. Regardless of their background, each board member is committed to the mission of helping Minnesotans deal with the negative aspects of gambling through awareness, education and advocacy for treatment. Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance is a gambling-neutral entity and takes no position on whether there should or should not be gambling in Minnesota.



REAL *Voices*

Recovery from gambling addiction is possible. Here's one such story.



I white knuckled it and floundered around for a while, staying gambling-free but still trying to “find recovery” on my own.

I had my first big win of \$500 as a 7-year-old at a church picnic in a small town in Minnesota. I was like a celebrity for a while after that. I chased that feeling for 34 years, becoming very competitive in sports, games, spelling bees and just about everything else.

I figured out I had a gambling problem in 1994 and went to a few meetings, but didn't take anything away from them at that time. That same year I went through outpatient treatment to help control my gambling. But I did not want to stop; I wanted to get back to the winning streaks I thought I had.

Over the next two years I had periods where I abstained from gambling to prove

to myself and others that I had it under control. But I didn't. In 1997, I stole \$250 from my employer to cover gambling losses. By the middle of 1998, I was taking much larger sums, with the last theft being for \$25,000. With each theft, I convinced myself it would be the last time I'd do it.

Every time our company had an audit, I would pray and pray that they wouldn't pick one of the stolen checks I had cashed. I felt really bad about what I did, and the pressure to hide my gambling problem increased. I even worked on plans to have someone kill me, put me in the trunk of a car and abandon the car. I thought it would be better for my parents and others to

see me murdered than to learn about my gambling problem and the illegal activities I had committed.

I was eventually caught, and was fired from my job on December 6, 1998 – yet that was not my bottom. I worked out a repayment agreement with my employer, but I reneged on it when I couldn't make the payments because of my continued gambling. In February of 2000, I was charged with 24 federal felony counts of theft by swindle for the money I stole from my employer, a securities firm and a banking institution. I plead guilty to much lesser charges, served my time and am still making restitution payments.

I thought it would be better for my parents and others to see me murdered than to learn about my gambling problem and the illegal activities I had committed.

My last day of gambling was two days before I entered inpatient treatment on September 20, 2000. I white knuckled it and floundered around for a while, staying gambling-free but still trying to “find recovery” on my own. I believed that I was not worthy of God's or any other higher power's help or caring.

On November 7, 2001, I was involved in a serious accident that changed my outlook on recovery and life in just a few seconds. My SUV was demolished after rolling over three and a half times. I was pulled from the wreckage by a good Samaritan.

I walked away from the accident with very minor injuries because I heard from within the car that I needed to lay down. There was no one else in the car with me, but I listened to that voice and laid down on the front seat, seat belt still intact. The roof of the car was crushed down to the steering wheel. Had I not laid down, I would have most likely been killed or paralyzed.

I knew then that I did have faith in God. If I didn't or had hesitated about lying down, I may not have survived. I began to live a different life the next day, one where I am involved in GA, the conference and the fellowship that GA has to offer. I am alive today because of the choices I have made in recovery. Some choices have been made without hesitation while other choices have taken longer – like asking for help during sad times.

I have a few friends from before recovery who tried to help, but I wasn't ready to accept help. They still stood by me in courtrooms and then a treatment center, having accepted my addiction without necessarily understanding its affect on me. The hundreds of friends I have met through recovery do understand the effects my addiction has on me. I have been willing to accept their help and they in turn are willing to help me.

What a different life I am experiencing – thanks to my higher power, my friends and my choices.



18-25

The percentage of compulsive gamblers who will attempt suicide. This compares to 7-11% for alcoholics. ¹

40

Almost 40% of patients admitted to a treatment program for compulsive gambling had at least one suicide attempt. ²

213 to 1,000

The percentage increase in suicide rates after new casinos opened in Las Vegas, Reno and Atlantic City. ³

674

The number of gambling-specific calls to the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline in FY2012-13. ⁴

800-333-HOPE

The phone number for the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

¹ Michael Goldman presentation on suicide risk for compulsive gamblers

² Kausch (2003)

³ Various research studies per Michael Goldman presentation on suicide risk for compulsive gamblers

⁴ Canvas Health



Problem Gambling Update from the State:

Q&A WITH NICK PUENTE

Recently, the oversight of problem gambling in Minnesota moved from the Adult Mental Health Division of the Department of Human Services to the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. As part of that change, Nick Puente will be leading the state's programs related to problem gambling.

Northern Light conducted a Q&A with Nick to learn more about the state's plans moving forward. Here are highlights from our Q&A; the full version can be found at www.northstarproblemgambling.org/2013/10/qa-with-nick-puente-supervisor-minnesota-compulsive-gambling-services.

What are the short and long-term recommendations that came out of the work with the division's problem gambling advisory committee?

- Help individuals with problem gambling behavior and their families become self-sufficient through individualized attention to multi-cultural factors;
- Reduce the negative consequences of problem gambling on families, employers and the community at large;
- Inform the general public about the warning signs of problem gambling to minimize the progression to pathological states;

- Develop policy and procedures that support a recovery oriented, person-centered system of care;
- Expand the knowledge base regarding problem gambling with focus on evidenced-based techniques and best practices.

Why did the program move from Adult Mental Health division to the Chemical Dependency Division?

- Primarily because new research suggests that pathological gambling and substance use disorders have similar effects on the brain and neurological reward system.

What is the most immediate need within the next 6-12 months?

- Develop a plan that sets clear goals and directions for the program. An assessment of the program is currently being conducted to identify strengths and areas that can be shored up. It's important to understand the legislation that mandates the services and ensure that measures are taken to comply with those mandates.

What do you see as opportunities for improving the program?

- Exploring ways to get the word out that treatment works.

- Determine what needs to be in place to ensure there are paths to the appropriate levels of care from assessment and referral to treatment and recovery.
- The ideal operation for problem gambling treatment and awareness would include an effective continuum of care system that's integrated with other systems, such as the mental health and chemical dependency system and the primary care system.

Other Comments

The Affordable Care Act may present some opportunities to enhance the DHS compulsive gambling program. The plan is to work with partners to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves.

Nick thanked members of the DHS problem gambling advisory committee and various treatment providers for the warm welcome and help in teaching him so much about problem gambling and the pain it causes. He's excited about their passion, their work and the possibilities of working together to make the program great.



2013 MINNESOTA PROBLEM GAMBLING CONFERENCE RECAP



The 10th Annual Conference on Problem Gambling took place from Sept. 19-20, 2013.



Participants listen to a presentation on suicide risk and depression in problem gamblers by Michael Goldman, MA, LPC, PCGC and employee assistance professional.



Randy Ringaman, former NPGA board member and volunteer, emphasized the importance of recovering problem gamblers sharing their stories with others.

State's Problem Gambling Helpline Can Be a Lifeline continued from page 1

"I talked to him about his options and whether he'd received treatment in the past," says Dave. "Initially he was against getting treatment but he eventually took the resources I gave him."

In addition to providing educational materials and contact information for treatment providers, the helpline also provides support to help people cope and suggests ways of handling their issues going forward. "We'll often help people by suggesting internal coping mechanisms, such as teaching them to do deep breathing so they can talk and think with less anxiety," says Laura Weber, manager of Canvas Health's HSI Crisis Connection. For example, callers may be asked if they want to develop a safety plan or receive a follow-up call to monitor their safety and use of resources and referrals.

Helpline calls are answered by trained volunteers and master level interns who are supervised by staff supervisors. Their

40-hour training includes eight hours of shadowing with an additional two days of certified applied suicide intervention skills training. A dedicated gambling specialist is always available to assist on a call that requires specialized attention.

By the end of a helpline call, which might last as long as 20 minutes, callers typically state that the call has been helpful and that they have a better understanding of their options. They are reminded that they can always call back for additional assistance and support.

Approximately 80 percent of gambling helpline calls come from the gambler; callers may also be friends or family members of problem gamblers. Callers typically learn about the helpline from the internet or from information provided by the Minnesota Lottery.

Canvas compiles information gathered from callers to help understand more about their experience with gambling and

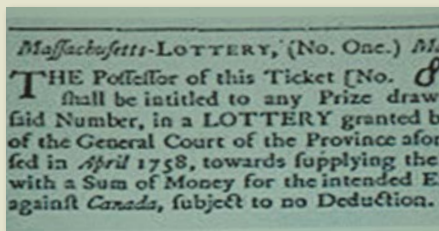
their efforts to seek help. Some of this data includes forms of gambling causing the problem, treatment experience, primary and secondary concerns, referral sources and the caller's county of residence. The specific referral or information provided is also chronicled for each call.

"The data we collect allows us to identify areas where help is most needed," says Laura. "We also determine how the caller found the helpline so we can better tailor where the public dollars are spent to advertise it, thus connecting with gambler's experiencing problems where and when they need the help."

Those concerned about their gambling behavior or the gambling behavior of a friend or loved one should contact the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-333-HOPE. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is funded through the Minnesota Department of Human Services.



Nita Kordonowy, MA, LADC, NCGCII, taught an introduction session to LADCs, social workers, MFTs, psychologists and others.



A variety of artifacts from the past were used to illustrate the attitudes about gambling over time.



John Gessner from Gambler's Relief in Burnsville takes a break between sessions.



Nick Puente, supervisor for the Compulsive Gambling Services Program at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, talks with Marcie Carper, a treatment provider from Little Falls.



Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling, and Michael Goldman from the Illinois Council on Problem Gambling share a lighter moment.



Sandi Brustuen, former program director of Project Turnabout's Vanguard Compulsive Gambling Program, was the recipient of the 2013 Outstanding Service Award. (From left to right: Don Feeney, Sandi Brustuen, Cathie Perrault)



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Subscribe to Our E-newsletter For More News

In addition to *Northern Light*, we also produce a monthly electronic newsletter. This includes additional information about problem gambling and related developments in Minnesota. To receive our electronic newsletter, please email Linda Bisdorf at linda@northstarproblemgambling.org or call (612) 424-8595.



scan to visit
www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org

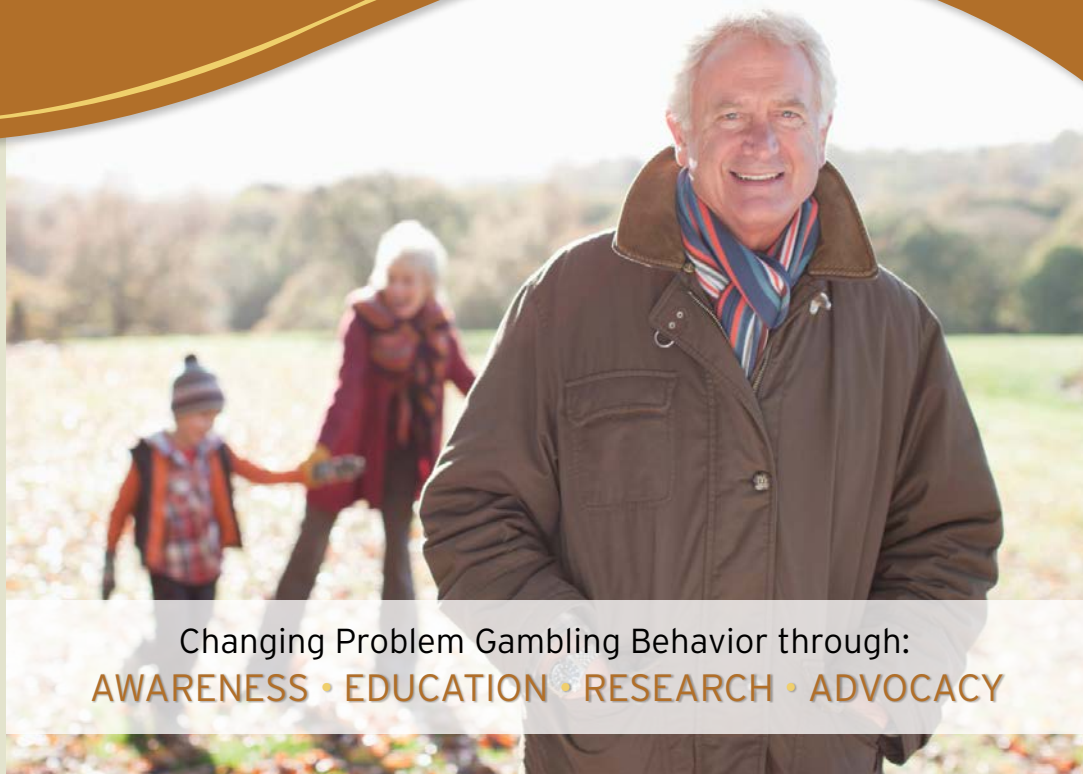
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NORTHSTAR PROBLEM GAMBLING ALLIANCE

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