

NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK IS MARCH 4-10



**Anyone -
Anywhere -
Anytime** is the
theme for the
next National
Problem Gambling

Awareness Week (NPGAW), which takes place March 4-10, 2012. Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance participates in this annual grassroots campaign, sponsored by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), to educate the public about the warning signs of problem gambling and the resources available for treatment.

Anyone - Anywhere - Anytime emphasizes that problem gambling can impact anyone and that there is no stereotypical addictive gambler. Problem gamblers are equally likely to be male or female, or of any race. It's estimated that approximately 160,000 to 214,000 Minnesotans struggle with this addictive disorder, defined as the urge to gamble despite harmful negative consequences or a desire to stop.

As the Minnesota affiliate to the NCPG, Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance will extend its outreach efforts through a media campaign, public service announcements, and by advertising the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline (800-333-HOPE).

Additional information about the national awareness week can be found at www.npgaw.org. Visit www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org for resources and helpful materials on problem gambling.

New Survey Sheds Light on Minnesotans' ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS TOWARD PROBLEM GAMBLING



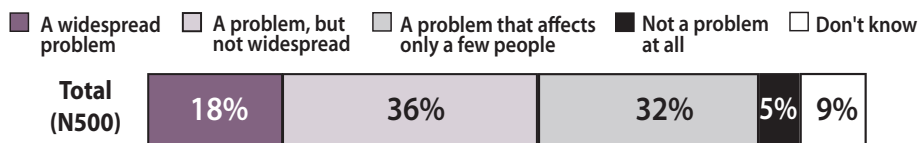
How well do Minnesota residents understand the issue of problem gambling? The Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance recently commissioned a research study to find out. This past fall, a survey of 500 adults of all ages from across the state was conducted to provide a benchmark of attitude and awareness about problem gambling.

The study focused on a variety of topics, including gambling behavior, understanding of problem gambling, attitudes about gambling and awareness of gambling

treatment. The study will allow Northstar to measure attitudes about problem gambling as they change over time, and ultimately help shape the messages communicated to the general public about gambling addictions.

"The results of this study tie in with some additional research we've done with focus groups," says Cathie Perrault, Northstar executive director. "We know that Minnesotans are concerned about 'problem gambling' but don't have a clear definition of what that means. This research will help us address these knowledge gaps."

Gambling can become a serious problem for some people. From what you have read or heard, is problem gambling in Minnesota...?



Just 5% of respondents in total said problem gambling is not a problem at all in the State of Minnesota. About one-third of respondents in total said problem gambling is a problem that affects only some people while a similar portion

felt that problem gambling is a problem, but not widespread. Eighteen percent of respondents in total said problem gambling is a widespread problem in the State of Minnesota.

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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

"Problem Gambling"

What exactly describes the circumstances faced by a gambler when there's a persistent inability to stop gambling when undesired consequences result? Is it a problem? An addiction? A compulsion? An obsession? A disease? A disorder?

"Problem gambling" is the phrase many use to describe an array of issues that result from gambling behavior that's damaging to an individual, their family or their broader community. It's included in the name of the National Council on Problem Gambling, the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, and other groups.

While those of us working in this field have come to understand a variety of terms describing those with gambling problems, my colleagues and I were curious as to how the average citizen would describe problem gambling. We engaged a research firm to conduct focus groups to get a better understanding of what problem gambling means to the public, and what it perceives as differences between terms such as addictive, compulsive, obsessive, etc.

While the study results are in the process of being compiled, I wanted to share an initial finding that jumped out to us. Across all focus groups, the preference to describe this issue was not problem gambling. Instead, the phrase "addictive gambling" was considered most appropriate.

Does this mean we'll be changing our letterhead to read "Northstar Addictive Gambling Alliance?" Well, not just yet. However, it does remind us that sometimes what we think we're communicating is not what our audience always hears. This information is valuable to know as we work toward our mission of expanding awareness, understanding and knowledge of the very real gambling problems faced by people in our community.

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.

Northern Light is funded by a grant from the state of Minnesota. Designer: ESD Graphics. Writer: Bill Stein

*NPGA Board Member Profile:***JOHN RUNDQUIST, LADC**

John Rundquist, senior counselor and marketing director at Crossroads Aftercare Program, will never forget his first interaction with a problem gambler eight years ago. "I had a client who had been living in his car in the desert, and I saw that he was missing some teeth," recalls John, who joined the Northstar board in July 2011. "My assumption was that meth use was running his life." However, as John listened to his client talk about the devastation in his life and what had transpired, he learned something that surprised him; gambling was the primary cause of his client's problems and distress.

"I'm passionate about helping compulsive gamblers and their families find recovery. I see the need for more education about problem gambling."

"My initial reaction, even as a 'trained professional,' was to think, 'Well, why can't you just stop gambling?' That experience opened my eyes to the power of gambling."

John, who is a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, subsequently spent a week as a professional in residence at Project Turnabout in the Vanguard Compulsive Gambling Program in Granite Falls, Minnesota, to learn more about the challenges facing problem gamblers. He's since become a state-certified gambling provider in Minnesota and is currently working to attain a national gambling counselor certification. John is also a member of the Minnesota Problem Gambling Advisory Council.

In addition to developing the tools to effectively treat gamblers, John feels strongly about creating greater awareness about the prevalence of gambling addiction. "I see the need for more education, more treatment and just getting the message out about problem gambling – all the things that Northstar does," says John, whose caseload is comprised of approximately 25 percent problem gamblers. "This is a disorder that the general public and professionals, in particular, need to be more aware of so it can be diagnosed and treated."

"I'm passionate about helping compulsive gamblers and their families find recovery," says John. It's those aspirations and goals that John hopes to help further as a member of the Northstar board. "I look forward to working collaboratively with other board members to continue their efforts to educate, support and guide professionals that work in the field."

**18**

Percent of Minnesotans in a recent poll who consider problem gambling to be a widespread problem (source: NPGA survey, Fall 2011)

67

Percent of Minnesotans in a recent poll who did not know that the state of Minnesota pays for treatment of individuals with a gambling problem (source: NPGA survey, Fall 2011)

3 - 11

The percentage of college students in the US estimated to have a serious gambling problem (source: Task Force on College Gambling Policies, Division on Addictions at Cambridge Health Alliance, 2009 report).

\$95 Billion

The amount of legal gambling revenue recognized in the US (source: National Council on Problem Gambling).


1

The number of phone calls someone concerned about their gambling habits or the gambling habits of someone else needs to make to receive help and guidance. The number is 1-800-333-HOPE.



INTERNET-BASED INTERVENTIONS

May Help Youth Deal With Gambling Problems



Responses indicated that it was less “intimidating” and “scary,” and that counselors wouldn’t think they were “weird” and couldn’t see if they cried.

One of the challenges facing the problem gambling treatment community is finding ways to reach those struggling with gambling addiction. In particular it can be especially challenging to help younger gamblers who are less likely to seek treatment let alone recognize the extent of their gambling problems.

A recent study from the University of Sydney (Australia) School of Psychology suggests that youth with gambling problems may be receptive to internet-based interventions. The study is based on the relative success of online-based self-help programs in engaging youth with smoking, alcohol and other high-risk behaviors.

Interest in online therapeutic interventions has grown with increasing research that online programs for health and mental health problems have been as effective or better than traditional programs including face-to-face therapy. The study was focused on active interventions involving interactive self-help programs including personalized feedback or Internet-based interactions with therapists or peers through email, chat or discussion forums.

There are several reasons why online interventions may be helpful in treating high-risk behaviors among youth. First, the

confidentiality and nonjudgmental quality of the Internet may make it more likely for youth to divulge personal information, which may facilitate knowledge, attitude or behavioral changes. A second advantage is the ability to assess a large and vulnerable population in a cost-effective and confidential manner and provide relevant resources to those in need. Internet interventions also provide for the ability to tailor customized program content that is more likely to be read, remembered and viewed as personally relevant – all factors that may ultimately increase utilization and effectiveness.

The study also noted that online focus groups of adolescents reported that the online environment was less confronting than traditional forms of counseling. Responses indicated that it was less “intimidating” and “scary,” and that counselors wouldn’t think they were “weird” and couldn’t see if they cried.

The study notes that while online interventions are being increasingly implemented and evaluated to reduce some high-risk behavior among youth, there is little to no empirical evidence supporting the use of online intervention for gambling-related problems specifically. However, the study suggests it’s reasonable to conclude that such interventions would be an acceptable form of treatment for those with gambling-related issues and potentially preferred to traditional face-to-face or self-help alternatives.

Beat the Bet (www.beatthebet.com) is an online problem gambling education site for youth from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.



National Center for Responsible Gaming is MAJOR FUNDER FOR GAMBLING RESEARCH

A considerable portion of gambling-related research is undertaken through financial support from the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG). NCRG is the only national organization exclusively devoted to funding research that helps increase the understanding of pathological and youth gambling and finding effective methods of treatment for the disorder. The NCRG is the American Gaming Association's affiliated charity.

"By bringing the issue of problem gambling to the forefront, the NCRG also has encouraged government institutions to make investments in pathological gambling research."

Founded in 1996 as a separate 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the NCRG's mission is to help individuals and families affected by gambling disorders by: supporting peer-reviewed, scientific research into pathological and youth gambling; encouraging the application of new research findings to improve prevention, diagnostic, intervention and treatment strategies; and advancing public education about gambling disorders and responsible gaming.

In the area of education and outreach, the NCRG strives to: raise public awareness of pathological gambling; provide meaningful, research-based education for clinicians,

health providers and the gaming industry; promote a lively exchange of ideas within the field of gambling research; and develop practical applications for research findings.

More than \$22 million has been committed to the NCRG through contributions from the casino gaming industry, equipment manufacturers, vendors, related organizations and individuals. Prior to the establishment of the NCRG in 1996, the field of gambling research was undeveloped and lacked a substantial number of peer-reviewed studies on gambling disorders.

By bringing the issue of problem gambling to the forefront, the NCRG also has encouraged government institutions to make investments in pathological gambling research. In 1998, the National Institutes of Health began offering grants in the field, and NCRG-funded grants have helped researchers leverage millions of federal dollars for continued research on gambling.

The NCRG offers funding opportunities for investigators from various disciplines and at all career levels. The NCRG invites applications for three-year projects that: 1) conduct cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary investigations of gambling-related disorders, 2) translate research findings for the public, and 3) cultivate the next generation of gambling researchers by mentoring young investigators. For more information and application materials, visit the NCRG Centers for Excellence in Gambling Research page at <http://www.ncrg.org/research-center/apply-ncrg-funding/ncrg-centers-excellence-gambling-research>. The next application deadline for grants is July 2, 2012.

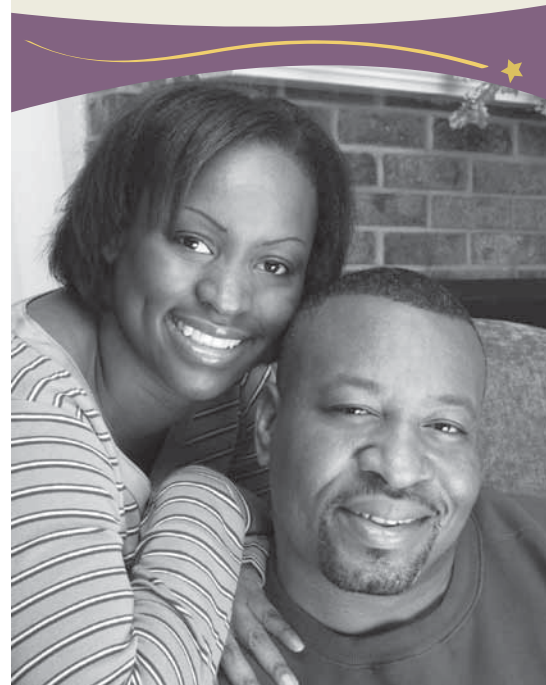


RECENT MINNESOTA GAMBLING STUDIES FUNDED BY THE NCRG



The NCRG has been a source of funding for several major gambling research studies performed in Minnesota. These include:

- ★ A study by Serena M. King, Ph.D., L.P., Hamline University titled *Gambling Behaviors Among Youth: A Developmental Behavioral Genetic Perspective*. Dr. King analyzed large-scale twin studies to examine the roles that behavioral problems, genes and environment play in gambling behaviors from adolescence to young adulthood.
- ★ The selection of the University of Minnesota as a Center of Excellence in Gambling Research. Under the leadership of Dr. Jon Grant, the University of Minnesota is developing a model of impulsivity that will enable the identification of young adults at risk for developing pathological gambling. Understanding who is susceptible and why will help lead to effective interventions for prevention and treatment. For more information on The Impulse Control Disorders Clinic, visit <http://www.impulsecontroldisorders.org/>.



CONTRIBUTIONS LARGE AND SMALL

Support the Work of the Northstar Alliance

With our fiscal year now more than halfway over, it is a good time to thank the individuals and organizations who have contributed financial support to the NPGA this year. Through grants, fees for service, memberships, one-time donations and corporate sponsorships, NPGA is able to continue providing education and advocacy to help Minnesotans affected by problem gambling. If you would like to become a member or make a one-time contribution, you may do so online at www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org/donations. Or call our office at (612) 424-8595 and ask for Linda.

Note: Your contribution will be twice as valuable as donations are matched by the state of Minnesota.

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for your support.

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Help Us Save Printing and Postage Costs: Receive Northern Light by Email!

NPGA currently prints and mails approximately 5,000 copies of *Northern Light* each quarter. While we find that some members enjoy receiving paper copies of the newsletter so they can share them or display for friends and colleagues, others prefer to receive *Northern Light* electronically. If you'd like to receive this newsletter through email - and help us save costs (and the environment) - please send an email to Linda Bisdorf at linda@northstarproblemgambling.org. Past issues of *Northern Light* are available as pdf files on the Northstar website.

Northstar to Enhance Online Presence

In the coming months, Northstar's website (www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org) will be rebuilt and modernized to include advanced features that will make it easier for individuals to find the help and resources they need and to provide more opportunities for interactivity. These changes will enhance the goal of serving as the definitive "clearinghouse" for research and other items related to problem and addictive gambling in Minnesota and beyond.

The site will also complement and highlight Northstar's emerging social media efforts with visual "snippets" of Northstar's activity on Facebook, Twitter and the organization's blog.

If you have ideas or suggestions for video or other appropriate online content, please contact Bill Stein, Northstar's communications specialist, at steinbill@gmail.com or (651) 283-7015.

9th Annual Minnesota Problem Gambling Conference

The 9th Annual Minnesota Problem Gambling Conference will expand this year to include an evening program on Monday, April 30 followed by a full day of training on Tuesday, May 1. The evening program is being designed as a night for "all recovery" and is geared toward individuals and family members who are in recovery from any type of addiction as well as professionals working with addiction. It is known that the incidence of dual addictions is common, especially between alcoholism and gambling. This educational evening will focus on practical commonalities between recovery methods. A conference brochure will be available in February and conference registration will be available online. Check www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org for details in the coming months.

New Survey Sheds Light on Minnesotans' Attitude and Awareness About Problem Gambling

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The following is a recap of key findings from the study:

Past 12-Month Gambling Behavior

Nearly eight in ten respondents reported participating in at least one gambling activity in the past twelve months with lottery games being the most common activity. Compared to those living inside the 11-county metro area, respondents living in outstate Minnesota were more likely to have purchased a raffle ticket from a charity or non-profit organization and significantly less likely to have gambled at a race track.

Problem Gambling in Minnesota

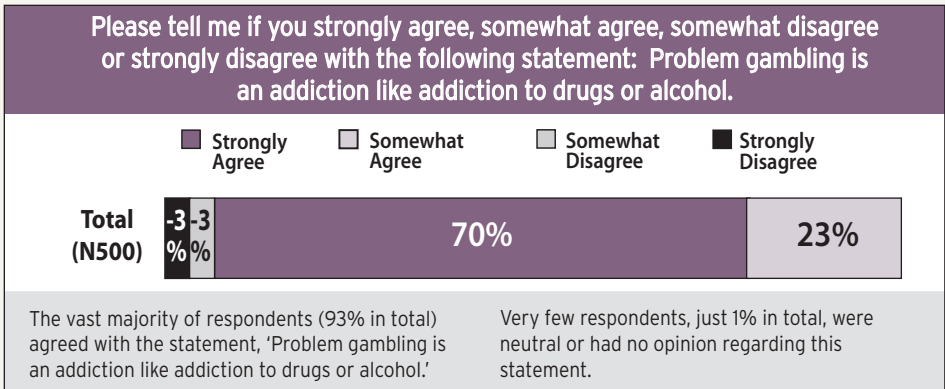
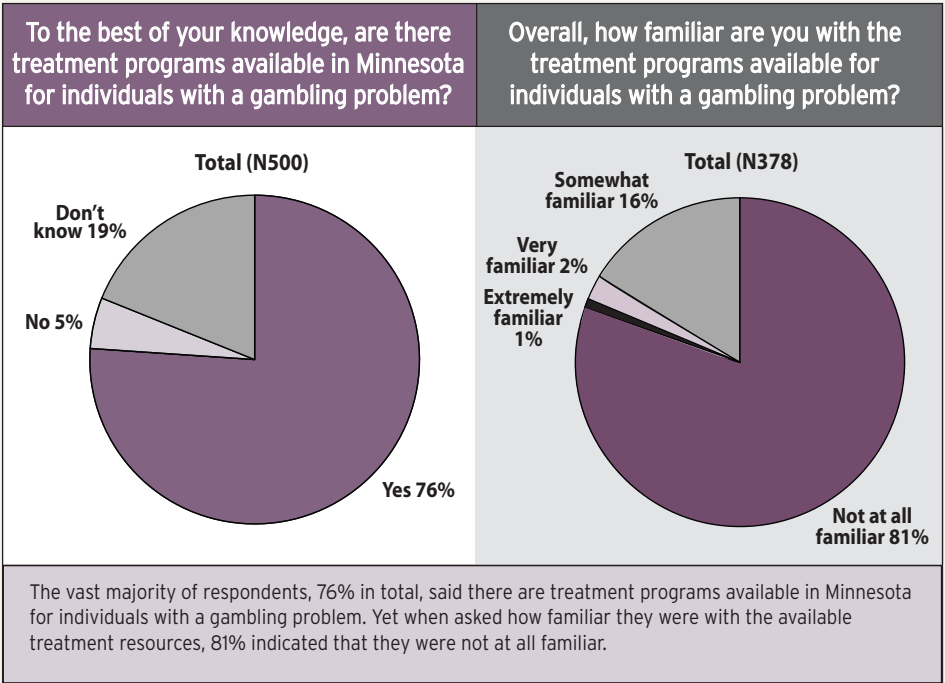
Problem gambling was seen as a widespread problem in Minnesota by 19 percent of respondents. Conversely, five percent see it as not being a problem at all. Approximately three in four respondents felt that problem gambling is a problem, but not a widespread one. Survey participants residing in the 11-county metro area are significantly less likely than those outstate to say that problem gambling is a widespread problem.

Problem Gambling Advertising Recall

Recognition about advertising related to problem gambling varied. Fifty-six percent of respondents recalled hearing or seeing some type of advertising about problem gambling in the last 12 months. However, seventy-five percent of those people could not recall which organization sponsored the advertisement.

Problem Gambling Assistance

There was very little awareness of organizations providing assistance to individuals with gambling problems. Sixty-nine percent of respondents were unable to name one Minnesota organization that provides assistance to problem gamblers. Gamblers Anonymous, identified by 20 percent of



total respondents, was the organization most mentioned.

Problem Gambling Treatment

There appears to be solid consensus (76 percent) that treatment programs are available in Minnesota for problem gamblers. However, approximately half of these respondents could not name specific treatment programs. The portion of respondents at least somewhat familiar with treatment programs was significantly higher in outstate Minnesota (25 percent) than in the 11-county metro (14 percent). Two of three survey participants did not know that the state of Minnesota pays for treatment for individuals with a gambling

problem while 87 percent did not know anyone who has received treatment for a gambling addiction.

Problem Gambling Attitudes

The vast majority of respondents (93 percent) agreed that problem gambling is an addiction similar to an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Fifty-seven percent agreed that services to treat problem gamblers exist in their community. However, just less than half of respondents (47 percent) felt that the majority of people receiving treatment achieve life-long recovery.





2233 Hamline Avenue North
Suite 630
Roseville, MN 55113

Join Northstar at the following events

March 4-10

National Problem Gambling
Awareness Week

April 30-May 1

9th Annual Minnesota Problem
Gambling Conference



scan to visit
NorthstarProblemGambling.org

Northern Light

NORTHSTAR PROBLEM GAMBLING ALLIANCE

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Changing Problem Gambling Behavior through:

AWARENESS • EDUCATION • RESEARCH • ADVOCACY