



Connecting. Reflecting. Moving Forward.

Assessing the state of problem gambling – 2022

Connecting. Reflecting. Moving Forward. Assessing the State of Problem Gambling - 2022

What:
MNAPG annual
conference

When:
November 15

Where:
Heritage Center of
Brooklyn Center and
virtually

Cost:
Free

**Registration
Deadline:**

October 25
(for in person)
November 10
(for Zoom)

**For More
Information:**
[www.mnapg.org/
conference2022](http://www.mnapg.org/conference2022)

The gambling landscape continues to shift quickly, as new types of gambling and gaming activities proliferate. Those working in prevention, treatment and research need to understand and be responsive to these changes.

This year's conference, which will be offered in person and online, will cover a variety of topics with two presentation tracks, one geared toward treatment professionals and another for a more general audience. The full conference will be recorded, so whether you join us in person or online, you won't miss any of our content. CEUs will be offered.

Who Should Attend?

The conference is appropriate for many people, including:

- Gambling, alcohol and drug addiction counselors and therapists
- Other health care and social service workers
- Law enforcement officers
- School and church leaders
- Lawyers and financial professionals
- People in recovery and their families
- Policymakers
- Gaming operators and regulators
- Behavioral health researchers

CEU credits are available from various professional boards.

Programs and Speakers

While conference details are still falling into place as of this writing, here are some of the programs and speakers that will be part of the conference:

- "Problem Gambling and Alexithymia: Implications for Interviewing, Screening, and Intervention," presented by Jerrod Brown, Ph.D., Pathways of St. Paul.
- "Gambling Disorders in a New Era of Gambling," presented by Jody Bechtold, LCSW, ICGC-II, BACC, CGT, CEO of The Better Institute.
- "How Can We Move Forward with Cultural Humility/DEI Absent a Strategic Plan? What's Your Navigation System?" presented by Deborah Haskins, Ph.D., LCPC, board-approved supervisor; MAC, ICGC-II, CCGSO, BACC, CGT, President, Maryland Council on Problem Gambling.
- "Sports Betting Integrity and Today's Student Athlete," presented by Dan Trolaro, MS, Vice President of Prevention, Epic Risk Management.
- "Emergence of Problem Gambling from Childhood to Emerging Adulthood: A Systematic Review," presented by Dr. Serena King, L.P., Professor and Chair, Psychology of Hamline University.



Susan Sheridan Tucker
Executive Director
MNAPG

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.MNAPG.org to
join us.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our Wish List if Funding is Increased

As detailed on page 3, sports betting legislation did not pass this session in Minnesota. While MNAPG remains neutral on gambling expansion, I consider the lack of new legislation as a good news/bad news proposition. It's good news because the Senate bill was not to our liking. But it's bad news because the House bill, which provided unprecedented funding for problem gambling services, was favorable.

While I realized the odds of either bill passing were losing ground each day as we inched closer to session's end, I couldn't help but imagine what a significant source of funding could do for our programming. MNAPG has no shortage of items on our wish list including:

- Producing major state-wide ad awareness campaigns.
- Developing and implementing prevention curriculum for middle school and high schools.
- Creating scholarships for Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) students to create a pipeline of culturally diverse gambling treatment providers.
- Train counselors within the county behavioral health clinic system to identify and treat gambling disorder.
- Train community leaders to understand the basics of problem gambling and refer community members to appropriate resources.
- Increase number of staff to support these and many other endeavors.

As we see more and more people gamble, Minnesota needs a more robust and comprehensive infrastructure to respond to the inevitable risks and harms that come with increased gambling.

In the meantime, we will continue to work within our means and do all that we can to increase awareness and educate Minnesotans to the potential harms presented by gambling if one does not take the time to understand the risks.

Susan Sheridan Tucker



Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling 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 of 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: Evans-Stark Design. Writer: Bill Stein



Update on Minnesota Sports Betting Bill

The 2022 legislative session ended without any action on the sports betting bill. There were significant differences between the bill approved by the House and the bill introduced in the Senate.

House Bill

The House bill would have made sports betting exclusive to the tribal nations, with revenue taxed at 10%. The revenue generated would be set aside to fund the implementation and adherence to compliance, with the remaining funds distributed as follows: 25% to the Department of Human Services; 25% to MNAPG for problem gambling prevention, training and research; and 50% to encourage sports participation among youth in marginalized communities. In addition, the bill would have increased the number of counseling hours allowed for families and included a qualitative and quantitative study of young adults 18 -35 years old, the most vulnerable group identified in sports gambling.

This bill added some significant responsible gambling language, which MNAPG had advocated. The bill also would have raised the legal age for online gambling to 21 from 18.

Senate Bill

The Senate bill moved to the Finance Committee in the last days of session. Some of the language incorporated into the House bill was included in the Senate bill, including changing the legal age for online gambling from 18 to 21, but with some significant differences. It added Canterbury Park and Running Aces as allowable license holders. While the tax rate was also 10%, revenue would have been distributed completely differently than the House bill. No funds were set aside specifically for problem gambling. Instead, one-third of the funds would go to the Department of Human Services for mental health purposes. The second third would be provided to charitable gambling organizations in an attempt to compensate them for having the much higher 35% tax

rate. The last third would be used to support and attract sporting events to Minnesota, such as the Super Bowl.

MNAPG was extremely disappointed by the Senate bill and relieved that it did not progress. While we remain neutral on gambling expansion, we will fiercely advocate for the inclusion of best practices in responsible gambling and that significant funds be set aside for prevention, treatment and research. It's disillusioning that Minnesota continues to deny the serious implications of gambling harms as it makes attempts to expand access to gambling. We will continue reaching out to the legislature to require sufficient funding for problem gambling and to mandate that regulatory language is used to help ensure that harms are minimized for all who choose to gamble.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has extended telehealth services for problem gambling through June 2023.



NCPG Signs Historic Agreement with CCGNJ for Use of 1-800-GAMBLER

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) has entered into a six-year license agreement with the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. (CCGNJ) for the use of their 1-800-GAMBLER® federally registered service mark in all U.S. states outside of New Jersey, as well as all U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.

This builds on NCPG's multi-year National Problem Gambling Helpline Modernization Project. The project, supported by a grant from the National Football League Foundation in 2021, will improve call center technology, data collection and reporting, as well as upgrade criteria and offer standardized training and certification for call centers across the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network.

"The Modernization Project will allow us

to make significant improvements to the operations, technology and infrastructure of the network to keep up with the ever-growing need for problem gambling resources," said Keith Whyte, executive director of NCPG.

So what does this mean for Minnesota's helpline? Once a helpline is well established, it's important to keep the helpline number. "One never wants to be in a situation when someone in need calls a helpline number and finds it's been disconnected," says Susan Sheridan Tucker, MNAPG executive director.

While the Minnesota Department of Human Services will ultimately make the decision, MNAPG will recommend continued use of 1-800-333-HOPE in all in-state publications, brochures, etc. However, when the day comes that sports betting is approved, MNAPG will advise that the 1-800-GAMBLER number

be used, especially with regard to intrastate games and advertising. The use of one number will also help in the production of ads that often have to include several state helpline numbers when the ad audience is multi-state. Use of 1-800-GAMBLER would enable anyone from anywhere to call one number and be directed to their specific state helpline (if the state has its own vendor, like Minnesota).

The one aspect that will add another step is if someone purchased their cell number in one state and is currently calling from another state, their call will be directed to the state covering the originating area code. This is true for every helpline in the nation except for 911. Federal legislation must be passed in order for this technological change to happen. Until then, NCPG will work to improve its warm transfers when this situation arises.

Action Required: Reserve Your Issue of *Northern Light*

In an effort to reduce printing and mailing costs, we will greatly reduce the number of hard copy newsletters we print going forward. If you'd like to continue receiving a print copy of this newsletter, please send an email with your name/ address and preference to info@mnapg.org.

If you would like to be added to a list for receiving an electronic version, please sign up online: www.mnapg.org/sign-up-for-mnapg-emails.



In Their Own Words

Melanie's Story

I can't believe all the positive things about my life. I'm proud of who I am today and the work I do with the GA program. My desire to continue gambling was greater than my desire to not gamble.

I was exposed to a variety of games early in my life. Our family played Pokeno — which is how I learned to play cards — and spun dreidels, which was the first game I played that involved money. I won my first big pot at the age of five years old.

As I got a little older, I played poker and pinochle. I remember losing all my money in poker to my neighbors but then watching my father bail me out by winning it all back. I enjoyed the thrill of being a part of that.

I went to a casino for the first time at 21. I enjoyed it. Then, at about age 30, I met a man who also enjoyed gambling. We started playing Bingo a lot and pull tabs. I remember finding Bingo to be slow, so I played multiple cards and also pull tabs between games.

It was about this time when I started to become preoccupied with gambling. I began lying to myself and others about money. I lost a job directly because of errors in my work due to my gambling, which I sometimes did for 24-36 hours before work.

Eventually, I started attending GA meetings with my husband, but mainly to support him. I looked at the others and thought they had more problems than I did. There was a part of me that wanted to stop, but my desire to continue gambling was greater than my desire to not gamble.

I rationalized that gambling helped me when I was feeling depressed, as I would otherwise just stay home and sleep. I became suicidal, but since I only felt that way when I wasn't gambling, I convinced myself that I should keep gambling.

Eventually, I realized that my gambling was a symptom of a deeper problem. Gambling was a part of keeping feelings down — guilt, shame, remorse, etc. I was doing things that were against my core principles, such as lying to dear friends, writing bad checks, losing jobs, more drinking and depression. I rationalized some of my behavior by thinking that I hadn't gone to prison or killed anyone.

While I stopped gambling for periods of time, I couldn't stop completely. My finances were in ruin and I was full of anger toward myself and my out-of-control behavior. Thanks to my fellow GA members, I was eventually hospitalized for a second time for depression and then went on to treatment for my gambling. The last time I gambled was on February 19, 2011.

I learned that you can find hope and meaning from the most unlikely of sources. In my gambling fog, I had neglected so many things, including my dog and my plants. While I was away, a friend cared for my house, including my plants. When I returned home, I saw that my tomato plant had somehow survived and was even sprouting new life; I refer to it as Lazarus the Tomato Plant. I took that as a sign that I was going to grow a new life as well.

I can't believe all the positive things about my life. I'm proud of who I am today and the work I do with the GA program. In the past, I thought only of myself. Now I think of others

and volunteer my talents whenever possible. I've grown personally. I challenge myself to do things that make me uncomfortable. I enjoy trying new things and taking new approaches in my life of recovery.

If people reading this are on the fence about whether to seek help, I would tell them to keep coming back. Although I was initially not working the GA program when I attended the meetings, they still helped me — the seeds eventually took. I would encourage others to hang on to the desire to stop gambling. It doesn't have to be an armload of desire; it can be a smidgeon. The desire to stop gambling just has to be greater than the desire to gamble.



Gamblers Anonymous Meetings

Visit minnesotaga.com to find meetings for those with compulsive gambling problems as well as meetings for family and friends.

Outreach Resumes as Normalcy Beckons



As the pandemic turns endemic, MNAPG has had more opportunity to do in-person outreach. Here's a look at some of the recent efforts undertaken by Sonja Mertz, MNAPG's community educator, and Susan Sheridan Tucker, MNAPG's executive director.

Presentations

- **February 2022:** A virtual presentation for 20 staff members of the **University of Minnesota Duluth Health Services**, which included nursing, mental health and administrative staff members.
- **March 2022:** Susan was excited to present to Kevin Spading's class on Problem Gambling. Kevin has been on the forefront of presenting at least some content on problem gambling to his students for years. This year marks his first full semester offering problem gambling.
- **April 2022:** A presentation at the **Metro State University Recovery Conference** that focused on gambling and college students. The presentation was well received.

Exhibits

With conferences beginning to return to their normal formats, we had the opportunity to exhibit at the **Minnesota Social Services Association** and the **Minnesota Psychological Association** conferences this spring. In an effort to reach less traditional audiences, MNAPG has also been exhibiting at more community-based events, including **senior citizen health expos**, the **Minnesota Parent Teacher Association Conference**, the **Military Mental Health Conference** at Camp Ripley, and the **Minneapolis Community Connections Conference**.

A Seat at the Table

In April, Sonja had the opportunity to join the **Minnesota Suicide Prevention Taskforce**, housed under the Department of Health. This will be our opportunity to bring awareness about the impact that suicide plays in problem gambling and to ensure that language about problem gambling and gambling disorder is included in strategic planning for the

2023-2027 Minnesota State Suicide Prevention Plan.

Susan was recently appointed to the **Hennepin County Local Advisory Council on Adult Mental Health**. This group has been meeting for over two decades and has provided the county with significant feedback and input on its mental health services. As Hennepin County continues to identify where the gaps are in mental health services, Susan is advocating for awareness about the prevalence of co-morbidity of gambling disorder and mental health issues.

MNAPG will continue to explore opportunities in which we can be a voice at the table and increase awareness of gambling disorder.

If you'd like to have MNAPG provide a presentation to a group or at a conference, please contact Sonja Mertz at smertz@mnapg.org.



Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

A low-risk approach to gambling means choosing to gamble on a limited basis and because it's a fun recreational activity. By following these three guidelines, you can ensure you gamble responsibly (all guidelines should be observed to maximize safety).

1

HOW MUCH

Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

and

4

HOW OFTEN

Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

2

HOW MANY

Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

Note: these limits may not be suitable for those experiencing problems from alcohol, cannabis or other drug use, problems with anxiety or depression, or have a family history of addiction or problem gambling.



National Conference on Gambling Addiction & Responsible Gambling 2022

June 8-9 ★ Digital Symposium

Recap: NCPG Virtual Pre-Conference

Susan Sheridan Tucker provides a breakdown of the pre-conference sessions provided by the National Council on Problem Gambling on June 8-9.

One of the unanticipated benefits of the COVID pandemic is the variety of excellent content available on virtual platforms. NCPG has pivoted to providing conference content via Zoom for the past two years. This year, while committed to meeting in person in Boston in July, two half-day virtual sessions were added for those seeking CEUs who might not be able to travel and for those seeking supplemental information to the in-person conference.

This year, 30-minute sessions were offered on an array of topics. The first day's sessions included:

- Updates on this year's past legislation.
- The not-to-be ignored rise in women sports betting.
- Black women sharing their recovery stories and how they carved out recovery paths that met their cultural needs.
- The ability to track markers of harm for online gamblers and what some operators

are doing to communicate with players with problematic gambling.

- The promotion of International Gambling Counselor Certification Board (IGCCB)-approved gaming disorder training.
- A provider's ruminating over lessons learned in creating a problem gambling treatment program from scratch and living to tell the tale.
- An awareness alert about gambling activities in the expanding metaverse – the creation of casinos and other gambling venues within virtual worlds in which one's avatar is actually engaged in gambling activities.

The second day did not disappoint. The sessions included:

- The Massachusetts Council explained how it has instituted remote self-exclusion applications in conjunction with its successful Game Sense program.
- Descriptions of the emotional rollercoaster a family experiences when living with a person with problem gambling.
- Learning what a public health response to sports betting looks like in the state of Maryland.

- A summary of the wildly diverse and disjointed implementation of sports betting and regulations in 25-plus states.
- Building and implementing diversity, equity and inclusion into community outreach practices in the state of Massachusetts.
- The announcement of the new national helpline number, 1-800-GAMBLER, and the NCPG modernization project that will improve services for states without their own helplines and improve transitions to ensure anyone who calls is directed to their appropriate state helpline. (See separate article on 1-800-GAMBLER.)

The programs were stimulating, always leaving me to ponder how we can do better in Minnesota. It also left me a bit envious of some of my colleagues in other states who are provided appropriate funding for their problem gambling programs, integrating care, services, research and, above all, are able to acknowledge and respond to gambling disorder as a public health issue.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

Why belong to the Alliance?

You can make MNAPG's voice stronger and affirm the value of our work. Gambling disorder is a real and destructive addiction. Our work is not about prohibition, but to ensure those negatively impacted have available resources for recovery and to minimize the risks for all. Better informed consumers make better choices. More members equal greater credibility with decision makers. Visit our membership page at MNAPG.org/membership.

PLATINUM



Draft Kings

SILVER



Treasure Island
Casino

GOLD



Minnesota Indian
Gaming Association



Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community



Running Aces



Canterbury Park



Minnesota State
Lottery



Mille Lacs Band
of Ojibwe



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on Problem Gambling

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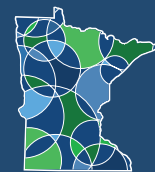


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Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling

Northern Light



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