

## CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING



Membership in the National Council on Problem Gambling is a

great way to stay informed about national efforts in the field of problem gambling. In celebration of NCPG's 40th anniversary, the organization is offering a special \$40 membership (new members) for treatment providers.

NCPG has three classes of membership: individual, organizational, and affiliate. Membership offers substantial benefits and is required for anyone wishing to be nominated to NCPG's board of directors. Benefits include substantial discounts on the national conference, counselor exam and literature, as well as providing subscriptions to important periodicals. For more information about NCPG membership, visit [www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org).

## HELP CONSERVE COSTS BY RECEIVING NORTHERN LIGHT ELECTRONICALLY

If you'd prefer to receive *Northern Light* electronically – and help save costs (and the environment) in the process – please send an email to Linda Bisdorf at [Linda@northstarproblemgambling.org](mailto:Linda@northstarproblemgambling.org). Past issues of *Northern Light* are also available electronically by visiting Northstar's website.

## MINNESOTA'S SANDI BRUSTUEN WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD *from National Council on Problem Gambling*



Sandi Brustuen accepts award from Keith Whyte, NCPG executive director (left), and Don Feeny, NCPG president and director of research and planning for the Minnesota State Lottery.

### **Sandi Brustuen may not be Neil Armstrong or Charles Lindbergh but she's a pioneer in her own right.**

Sandi, who received the Dr. Robert Custer Lifetime Award for Direct Service from the National Council of Problem Gambling (NCPG) in July, has spent the last 22 years advancing the field of gambling addiction treatment in Minnesota and beyond.

"Sandi was recognized not only for her outstanding record as a treatment professional, but also the influence she's had nationwide through efforts like Vanguard's in-service program and her generosity in sharing her knowledge and experience with

those entering the field," says Don Feeny, research and planning director at the Minnesota State Lottery and president of the NCPG.

In the late 1980s, counseling for problem gamblers was in its infancy. No paths had been blazed and no established programs existed in Minnesota.

"Project Turnabout started receiving calls for gambling help in the late '80s," says Sandi, a unit coordinator for the Vanguard program at Project Turnabout. "We looked around for places that provided those services, but couldn't find any."

*continued on page 3*



Cathie Perrault  
Executive Director  
NPGA

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### *A Season of Change*

*As you look outside and see leaves flying by the window (hopefully the snow flakes will take their time), you know that things are changing in Minnesota. And just as with the seasons, there is much change in the state's gambling landscape as well.*

*One of the more significant developments was the debut of the electronic pull tab last month. Minnesota's nearly 3,000 charitable organizations that offer gambling, primarily through pull tab sales and Bingo, became eligible to add electronic versions of pull tabs to their gambling offerings. Played on handheld devices similar to iPads and Kindles, the electronic games were approved earlier this year by the state legislature as part of the comprehensive funding bill for the Vikings new stadium. As of this writing, the electronic games are ready to go, with a few charities starting to test their use.*

*This new form of gambling comes with additional risk for gambling addiction. To address this potential, Northstar, working in collaboration with the Minnesota Gambling Control Board, helped develop a "play responsibly" message that can be programmed into each handheld device. The message reminds players that gambling can evolve into an addiction, and provides the phone number for the state's problem gambling helpline (1-800-333-HOPE). Also, as part of the bill, some additional funding from charitable gambling tax revenues will be allocated for gambling treatment and awareness efforts.*

*Another change took place on Oct. 1, when Invitation Health Institute (formerly the Minnesota Institute of Public Health) assumed operation of the Minnesota problem gambling helpline from a Chicago-based EAP. The helpline will be directed by staff from the Institute and carried out in partnership with Canvas Health through its Crisis Connection center in Richfield. The helpline will field requests for information and referrals for gambling treatment. The Institute will provide project oversight, play an advisory role to the state, offer content expertise and training to call center staff, and conduct evaluation of the helpline.*

*While there is great uncertainty about the impact of new electronic game options on problem gambling in Minnesota, we are confident that the team at Invitation Health will be ready and able to provide the best possible support to callers with potential gambling addictions.*

### 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](http://www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org) to join us.

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*

## Minnesota's Sandi Brustuen Wins Prestigious Award from National Council on Problem Gambling

*continued from page 1*

As a result, Sandi took it upon herself to learn about problem gambling. Along with a handful of others, she worked to create awareness about gambling addiction along with a framework to help gamblers overcome their addictions.

"It was rather lonely in the early days," remembers Sandi. "We went to high schools, senior citizen conferences and many other places to create awareness. Sometimes nobody or just one or two people would show up." The sparse attendance reflected the lack of interest and knowledge about problem gambling in the early '90s.

Back in those days, Sandi always kept a suitcase packed in case she had to go to St. Paul to testify before the legislature about problem gambling. Her efforts eventually brought more attention to the field.

Until 1995, Sandi and other recipients of the state's six original problem gambling grants gathered monthly to hold informal conferences and training among themselves. "We talked about what was working and what wasn't, and often supported each other through phone calls. It wasn't a very formal training arrangement."

Sandi has been instrumental in the significant changes that have occurred since the mid '90s. Since that time, gambling participation has grown considerably, but there's also been an increase in gambling treatment professionals, both in the state of Minnesota and nationwide. Sandi has played a large role in the state's effort to train and certify gambling counselors.

What has not changed through the decades is Sandi's commitment to the field and her empathy for those who struggle with gambling addictions. "What really got me

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"What really got me going was the stories of desperation I heard ... how gambling had taken people down financially, emotionally and with their relationships. I don't think people realize how desperate gamblers can feel."

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What keeps Sandi so actively engaged in the field after all these years? "It's exciting, and there's always something new to be discovered about addiction. There are always new tools being developed to help people." Sandi estimates that she's been involved in the treatment of approximately 4,000 pathological gamblers during her career.

Sandi sees many challenges ahead for the problem gambling treatment field. "We have to continue to build awareness. There seems to be a block for so many people to recognize this addiction called pathological gambling."

"Gambling is not going away and neither are the problems associated with it," says Sandi. "But there are many people in this field who are willing to continue with the work that needs to be done. And really, that work has just started."



### \$200 to 250 million

The gambling financial impact of the controversial officiating decision made in the Monday Night Football game between Green Bay and Seattle.

### 39

Percent of gambling industry leaders who expect online gambling to be legalized in the U.S. within 2 years. (American Gaming Association 2012)

### 24

Years since the U.S. congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (*Las Vegas Review-Journal 2012*)

### 1

Minnesota was the first state to negotiate a compact with tribal nations under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (*Las Vegas Review-Journal 2012*)

### 1998

First year the American Gaming Association established its annual *Responsible Gaming Education Week*



# REAL *Voices*

*The effects of someone's gambling can extend to well beyond just the gambler. They can effect a partner, child, parent or friend.*



I remember asking him why he couldn't just gamble every few months or so. But he couldn't stop. He couldn't go more than three weeks without gambling.

**The idea of addictive gambling is something I'd never even thought about.** I'd always thought gambling was just a fun activity that people enjoyed ... sort of a night out and a form of entertainment. I didn't know what a compulsive gambler was and had no reason to think about it. When you're in love with someone, it's the last thing you think about.

That changed after I learned more about my husband. The first sign that something was wrong was when he asked me to lend him some money so that his dad could get a new water heater for his car. At first, I didn't give it a second thought. But a few weeks later when I saw my father-in-law I asked him how his car was working. He gave me a surprised look. I explained that my husband had told me about his car problem and that I'd given money to help out. He told me that never happened ... and so I began to wonder what was going on.

After that, I started noticing that my husband spent increasing amounts of time gambling at the casino. I remember asking him why he couldn't just gamble every few months or so. But he couldn't stop. He couldn't go more than three weeks without gambling.

Sometimes, he would spend his whole paycheck on gambling. When that would happen, he'd have a hard time facing me so he would stay at his father's. And when he finally did come home he would be very remorseful and tell me how sorry he was and he would promise me that it wouldn't happen again.

His gambling got worse. We had made special plans for a trip to celebrate my fiftieth birthday and saved up some money. But then I learned that he'd spent the trip money on gambling. It seemed that anything that was stressful was a trigger for him to gamble.

## NORTHSTAR RECEIVES TWO AWARDS FROM NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

I convinced him to attend Gambler's Anonymous while I started going to Gam-Anon. That experience really opened my eyes to the extent of the problem and what had been going on. However, it didn't help my husband. He said he didn't fit in and that he was really going for me and not for himself.

"I've learned a lot through this experience. For one, people think they can change other people, but they can't. All you can do is keep encouraging them."

I was told at my first Gam-Anon meeting that it would get worse before it got better. The group also taught me about "enabling" the gambler. I realized that I was enabling him by lending him money after he lost all of his so he could get through the week buying gas and work lunches. So the next time he asked to borrow money I said, "No," and he had a fit. He actually went into a rage and threw away his wedding ring, which we never did find. So yes, it did get worse instead of better, and we eventually separated.

My husband finally admitted that he did have a gambling problem but promised me he was done gambling. He also told the clergy (his cousin) that the whole marriage breakdown was due to his gambling and that he was not going to gamble anymore because he loved his wife. But just four days later I learned that he left work early to go to Treasure Island.

I also learned that his trips up north to visit his brother were trips to the casino. I discovered this when he called me from

a casino and didn't actually hang up his phone completely. I heard the sounds of the casino.

We eventually got divorced. I still love him and I know he still loves me, but he also understands what he put me through and he knows there is no way we could have a life together given that he still gambles. He has told me over and over how sorry he is. I have forgiven him and understand that it's an illness. I also understand that there is help for those that want to stop gambling.

There have been nights when he's called me in tears about his gambling. I've told him that he needs to get into a 30-day program and I've even given him the phone number. But when he wakes up in the morning, he's changed his mind and says he just needed to talk to me. I know it's something he can't allow himself to sleep on. He has to go when he feels the need.

I've learned a lot through this experience. For one, people think they can change other people, but they can't. All you can do is keep encouraging them.

It's very difficult being the spouse of a person with a gambling problem. You're afraid to leave your husband for a weekend to spend time with your girlfriends. That's no way to live. I could not live in crisis day in and day out, always knowing there was a little calm before the storm, having to hide my money and never knowing if what he said was the truth or a lie.



*Cathie Perrault, Northstar executive director, receives award at the NCPG's annual conference.*

The Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, Minnesota's affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), received two awards at the NCPG's annual conference in Milwaukee in July. Northstar received the 2012 Newsletter Award and the 2012 Awareness Award.

"We're proud of our efforts to raise awareness about the issues related to compulsive gambling," says Cathie Perrault, Northstar executive director. "Recognition from the national council means that we're doing things well and is a tribute to our staff and communication partners."

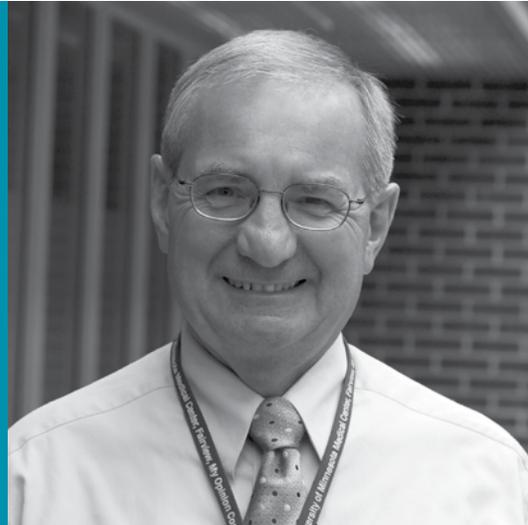


## Provider Profile:

# FAIRVIEW COMPULSIVE GAMBLING PROGRAM



**FAIRVIEW**  
Fairview Health Services



David Keoplin,  
program manager and  
lead counselor at the  
Fairview Compulsive  
Gambling Program.

**The Fairview Compulsive Gambling Program is one of the oldest and most comprehensive gambling programs in Minnesota, dating back to the early 1990s.** It consists of group therapy, individual counseling and group therapy for families and other concerned persons.

“With group therapy, it quickly becomes apparent to gamblers that they are not alone,” says David. “When they see others with the same struggles, they realize they’re not exactly crazy.”

One of the program’s prominent features is the 16 weeks of intensive outpatient therapy, which takes place in two phases. The first portion, consisting of primarily group therapy, includes four sessions per week for six weeks. The second phase includes group meetings twice a week lasting approximately 10 weeks. Research has shown that the longer a gambler receives treatment, the better the outcome tends to be.

Participants are encouraged to use the 12-step recovery approach and consider a church affiliation of their choosing to find a spiritual message and to learn about service opportunities. “We encourage practicing and implementing what’s talked about, including an emphasis on exercise, sleeping and eating,” says David Keoplin, MSE, NCGC II, LADC, program manager and lead counselor at Fairview. “The goal is to get people to replace gambling activities with healthy behaviors.”

Group therapy has particular advantages for problem gamblers. “With group therapy, it quickly becomes apparent to gamblers that they are not alone,” says David. “When they see others with the same struggles, they realize they’re not exactly crazy.” A professional counselor directs the process, helping to point out fallacies, giving ideas and providing support that’s helpful for recovery. Individual therapy is seen as supporting group therapy.

In comparison to residential programs, there are some advantages to intensive outpatient therapy. “Gamblers are able to deal with issues as they come up in the real world,” says David. “They can apply what they’re learning in therapy right away and address the issues as they stay in recovery.”

There are times, however, when inpatient programs may be more appropriate. In those cases, Fairview refers patients to residential treatment programs such as the Vanguard Center for Compulsive Gambling in Granite Falls.

Fairview takes care to ensure a smooth transition for patients after the period of intensive therapy concludes. Counselors connect patients with resources such as Gambler’s Anonymous. They also help patients find therapists, psychiatrists and other resources, such as consumer credit counselors to assist with financial problems.

In addition to therapy, the compulsive gambling program at Fairview consists of video presentations and guest speakers. Speakers share their experiences and emphasize the importance of GA and other resources, while videos highlight the stories of other compulsive gamblers.

A staff of four carries out the program, including a primary counselor, a family counselor, an aftercare counselor and a licensed social worker that performs Medicare assessments. At any given time, there may be two to 12 people enrolled in the program.



# NORTHSTAR REACHES OUT TO LAWYERS

## *to Spread Problem Gambling Awareness*



Joan Bibelhausen, executive director for Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers.

**Perhaps the biggest challenge facing those in the problem gambling field is creating awareness about the addiction.** One of the more productive ways to increase understanding of gambling addiction – and ultimately to provide help to those who need it – is to reach groups of professionals who may come into contact with problem gamblers. These groups include bankers, healthcare professionals and lawyers.

Through its relationship with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL), Northstar is working to make more lawyers aware of behavior that suggests a problem with gambling. LCL is an organization that serves lawyers, judges, law students and their immediate family members who have mental health disorders or addictions, including compulsive gamblers.

“Depending on the type of law a lawyer practices, they might be more or less likely to be aware they have clients with gambling problems,” says Joan Bibelhausen, JD, executive director for LCL who also serves on the Northstar board. “Bankruptcy lawyers often are tuned into the potential for gambling addiction in their clients, but in the case of family lawyers or business lawyers, there may be less awareness of gambling as the reason for the breakdown in the family or problems in a business. It’s a hidden addiction in the law as everywhere else.”

“I think the educational sessions we give to lawyers are helpful,” says Susan Campion, training manager at Northstar. “When we ask for a show of hands as to how many lawyers have clients with gambling problems, the number is always higher at the end of the session after they’ve learned more about the warning signs and symptoms.”

LCL receives calls from individuals or their affected others who seek help for a variety of addictions including gambling. “We get a lot of calls from people seeking help and it’s great when we can direct them to a resource,” says Joan.

Still, lawyers themselves are not immune to developing their own gambling problems. “Given that lawyers are generally considered to be risk takers, it’s logical to assume they’re at greater risk,” says Joan. In the event that lawyers become compulsive gamblers, it can be particularly concerning because they have access to client funds. “Though accessing a client’s funds would be the most unethical thing a lawyer can do, it can happen.” In fact, the book “Never Enough” by Michael Burke is a first-person account of a lawyer who gambled his career away by using client funds.

One limitation that lawyers, like bankers, have in “airing” a client’s gambling problems to family, employers and others is the client-attorney privilege, which limits what a lawyer can share with others. However, in situations where “diminished capacity” (a legal term which brings into question someone’s mental abilities) may be present, the lawyer has options to provide protections for the client’s interests. ★

### GAMBLING HELP IS ONE CALL AWAY ★

If you think you may have a gambling problem or are concerned about someone else’s gambling, the Minnesota gambling helpline can provide assistance. Call 1-800-333-4673 (HOPE) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### GAMBLING AWARENESS ADS TARGET U OF M STUDENTS

Students attending basketball and hockey games at the University of Minnesota this fall and winter will see ads (at right) in game programs promoting awareness about problem gambling. It’s one of Northstar’s efforts to raise awareness about gambling addiction to a younger audience.

## What’s Your Game Plan?

Win

Win it Back



**Do you have a game plan when gambling? Learn the risks and how to play responsibly.**  
Visit [www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org](http://www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org).  
Need help now? Call 1-800-333-HOPE.





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#### UPCOMING EVENT

Allied Charities of Minnesota  
(ACM) Annual Conference

Duluth, MN

Nov. 15-17, 2012



scan to visit  
[www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org](http://www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org)

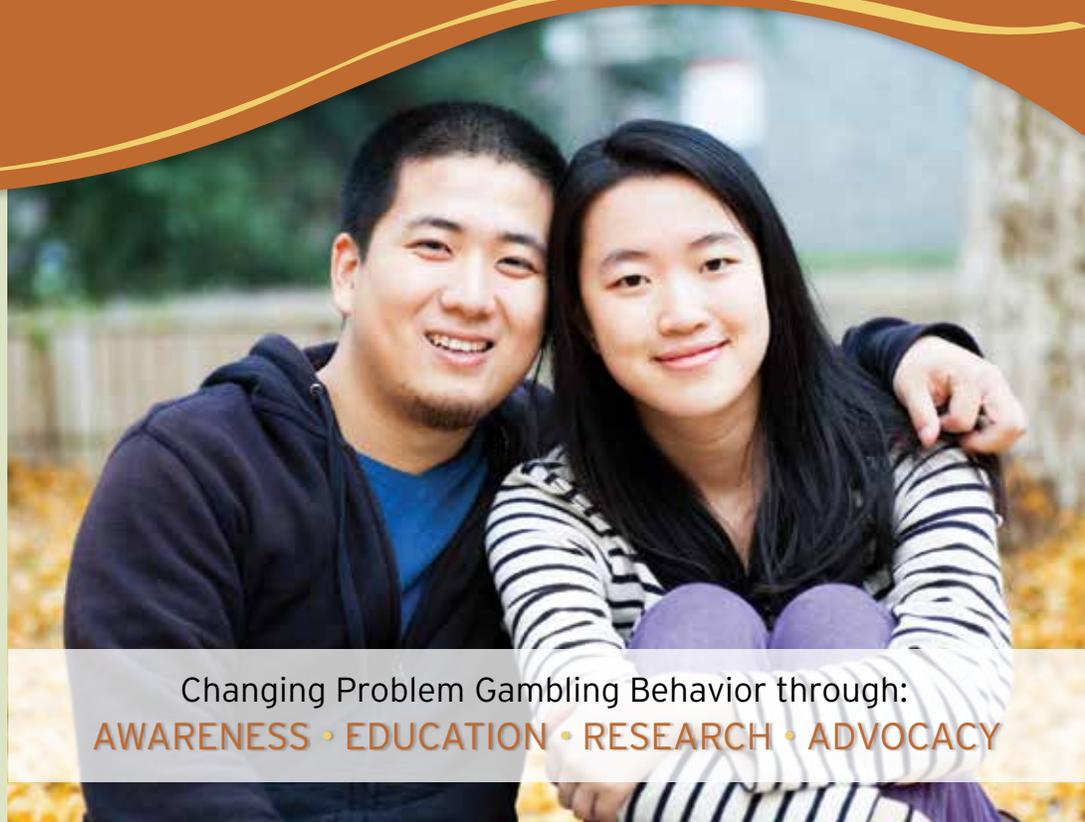
# Northern Light

NORTHSTAR PROBLEM GAMBLING ALLIANCE

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Changing Problem Gambling Behavior through:  
**AWARENESS • EDUCATION • RESEARCH • ADVOCACY**