

FIRST U.S. RESEARCH STUDY OF INTERNET GAMBLING PLANNED



The Center for Gambling Studies at the Rutgers University School of Social Work will be conducting the first comprehensive investigation of Internet betting behavior in the U.S. The project will begin in January 2015 with a statewide baseline prevalence survey of 3,500 New Jersey residents. A follow-up survey 18 months later will evaluate any changes in past-year prevalence of Internet gambling and problem gambling, as well as changes in the characteristics of Internet gamblers.

The goal of the study is to identify the type of person who chooses to gamble online, who is most likely to develop problems, and how those problems differ from other forms of legalized gambling. The global online gambling industry is one of the most rapidly expanding markets.

The Center for Gambling Studies was created in 2007 and serves as the only gambling research, policy, and training center in a school of social work in the nation. The center is a non-partisan resource for clinicians, legislators, academics, students and other policymakers in New Jersey and internationally on gambling-related issues.

NEW VIDEOS EDUCATE LOTTERY STAFF AND RETAILERS *About Problem Gamblers*

Among those affected by problem gamblers and in a position to offer help and assistance, lottery staff and lottery retailers are often overlooked. However, thanks to new training videos produced jointly by lotteries across North America, more people will be able to help gamblers in need.

Separate videos address the needs of two distinct audiences: lottery staff who answer the phones and those who administer the lottery at retail locations. The goal is to train staff on how to be comfortable taking the first step in getting someone the help they need.

The videos are a joint project of the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries and the National Council on Problem Gambling. The original concept came from the North Carolina Lottery and the videos were produced by the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling with additional input provided by the Minnesota Lottery.

The 20-minute video for lottery staff depicts three different scenarios: 1) responding to a phone call from the spouse of a gambler, 2) a lottery employee discussing a problem gambler with a retailer, and 3) a visitor to the lottery office who becomes abusive and violent.

“Fortunately, these situations are not common,” says Don Feeney, research and planning director at the Minnesota Lottery and Northstar board member, “but when they occur, we want staff to feel comfortable knowing how to handle them and how to get someone appropriate help.” The video was shown to all lottery staff at an August



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meeting, which included a question and answer period with Northstar Executive Director Cathie Perrault. The video will also be shown to every new lottery employee.

“It’s frightening for people to be on a call with someone who is potentially suicidal and to fear that they’ll say something that would make the situation worse,” says Don. Staff are encouraged to be good listeners and to have resources nearby that can help the caller, such as the state problem gambling helpline number or information from Northstar.

A second, shorter video targets lottery retailers who may be apprehensive about how to handle a customer they feel is gambling excessively. The video displays a scene where a customer walks into a store

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Cathie Perrault
Executive Director
NPGA

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Possible Turning Point

I've often expressed the concern that gambling disorders are not included in federal substance abuse and mental health programs. Likewise, there's been no federal funding to support problem gambling education and awareness efforts, despite the significant amount of gambling-related taxes collected by the federal government. This issue has been a primary focus of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) in Washington in its efforts to create more awareness about gambling disorders and to get gambling addiction treatment integrated into the national behavioral health system.

The cause for greater support and recognition of problem gambling received a strong boost in July, when H. Westley Clark, MD, director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment within SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) spoke at NCPG's annual conference. Dr. Clark spoke about the significance of problem gambling's reclassification to DSM-5 in his presentation, DSM-5, ACA, & Gambling Disorders: Opening the Door Wider To Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery. (This presentation has been uploaded to the Public Policy section of NorthstarProblemGambling.org under Resources for Professionals.)

*Dr. Clark stated, "SAMHSA recognizes the interdependencies of gambling disorders, mental health disorders and substance abuse disorders, **and** the importance of addressing these co-occurring disorders in a cogent, coordinated, comprehensive manner." He went on to review the impact of DSM-V on problem gambling and touched on implications for future insurance and Medicare coverage. Keith Whyte, executive director of the NCPG, called Dr. Clark's very public and positive recognition of gambling addiction extremely valuable.*

After Dr. Clark's speech, SAMHSA asked NCPG to come to the table with other Washington agencies to discuss how to keep discussion about gambling addiction moving forward. Hopefully, this is a turning point in gaining federal support of problem gambling as an addictive disorder.

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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COUNSELOR'S Corner



LANA NELSON

Psychotherapist
CentraCare



“Counselor’s Corner” is a regular feature of Northern Light that focuses on common questions raised by counselors seeking to learn more about problem gambling. Lana Nelson, a psychotherapist for CentraCare, addresses this issue’s question.

Q: I’m a drug and alcohol counselor. What client behaviors might suggest a gambling problem?

A. Problem gambling often stems from a complex mix of issues that your client may be experiencing, including interpersonal, intrapersonal and health challenges. The comorbidity rate for some disorders among problem gamblers may be as high as 90 percent.¹ Therefore, it’s worth probing your client’s behavior to determine if gambling addiction may be present.

Gambling addiction is referred to as the *invisible disease* or *hidden illness* because unlike other diseases or addictions, there are no obvious tell-tale symptoms; there are no physical signs, no needle marks, no evidence from blood or breath tests, and no dilated pupils. Problem gamblers typically deny or minimize the problem. They also go to great lengths to hide their gambling. For example, problem gamblers often withdraw from their loved ones, sneak around, and lie about where they’ve been and what they’ve been up to.

Some of these subtle warning signs are well protected by the gambler. The following are a few red flags² (Cutter & Smith, 2008):

1. Secrecy over money and finances
2. New desire to control household finances
3. There are overdue or unpaid household bills
4. Unexplained loans or cash advances
5. Lack of money, despite the same income and expenses
6. Unusual increase in credit card activity
7. Stealing or embezzling from work
8. Bouncing of checks
9. Refinancing
10. Missing jewelry, cash or valuables from the home
11. Borrowing money from friends, co-workers and family members
12. Dwindling savings or assets
13. Missing bank or credit card statements
14. Calls or letters from bill collectors
15. Unexplained cash

“The comorbidity rate for some disorders among problem gamblers may be as high as 90 percent. Therefore, it’s worth probing your client’s behavior.”

While problem gambling involves a pattern of repeated gambling behavior that disrupts the gambler’s life, pathological gambling, addictive gambling, gambling dependence, disordered gambling or compulsive gambling is a progressive disorder causing a psychologically uncontrollable preoccupation and urge to gamble. Individuals eventually lose the ability to control the impulse to gamble. This results in excessive gambling, which can compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or educational/employment/retirement pursuits. Problem gambling is currently recognized by the American Psychological Association as an addictive disorder.

(1) McCormick, Russo & Ramirez, et al., (1984). Affective disorders among pathological gamblers seeking treatment. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, pp. 141, 215 - 218.

(2) Source: Cutter, D. & Smith, M. (2008). Gambling addiction and problem gambling: signs, symptoms and treatment.



IN THEIR *Own Words*



I know there are a lot of gamblers out there still suffering. My goal is to let them know that help is out there before it totally dominates their life.



When I won, I'd spend my money on unhealthy things. For me, gambling was like a drug – it calmed me down and numbed the pain.

Growing up, I wanted to be a professional gambler. I studied the Texas Hold'em Poker Bible and my goal was to be the World Series of Poker champion.

It's something I set my sights on since I began playing poker at age 8. In fact, back then, I remember everyone thinking, "Hey, look at this kid who can play poker." It was a cute thing.

I played a lot in junior high and high school. I taught my friends how to play and set up a lot of tournaments. It was a big part of my lifestyle.

Eventually, I started going to the Canterbury card club. First, I went with my brother-in-law, and then later I went by myself. I lied about how often I would go there and how long I would stay. Sometimes I would stay all night. This went on for years.

If I'd have followed the path to professional gambling, I think it would have left me emotionally and spiritually empty. When

I won, I'd spend my money on unhealthy things. For me, gambling was like a drug – it calmed me down and numbed the pain. I justified my gambling because it was something I was good at. On television, when they show the World Series of Poker champion, they don't show the dysfunction that goes on behind the scenes.

I was also addicted to alcohol and would "ping-pong" back and forth between addictions. Sometimes I wouldn't drink but would still go to the casino. Other times, I didn't gamble but would still drink. Later, I would learn more about the danger of switching addictions.

The impetus for my recovery was a crisis with my wife. After a series of events with drinking and gambling, she said, "Do you want to be a good father for our kids or do you want to be a poker champion?" For a number of months, I thought the poker possibility was going to win out. But, thankfully, it didn't.

In my recovery I've come to understand addiction and how my past trauma was being dealt with or covered up by gambling and drinking. Addiction is the solution to a problem that the individual can't deal with. If it is an unhealthy behavior and is repeated enough, the solution to the problem becomes the problem and the addiction process begins and is very difficult to stop because the underlying problem is still there when the addiction is taken away.

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This is why we have so many cases of long-term chronic relapse. The body becomes addicted and the problem appears to be the addiction. While that's true on the surface, underlying trauma or self esteem issues are what fuel the addiction. Until these issues are addressed, addiction never really goes away.

I'm so passionate about addiction that it's a field I chose to go into eight years ago. I talk to a variety of groups about addiction and the various ways it manifests, including compulsive gambling. I talk to various groups of people — seniors, people in treatment centers and those who have been ordered by a court to have counseling and who may not want to talk about it.

I know there are a lot of gamblers out there still suffering. My goal is to let them know that help is out there before it totally dominates their life.



One of Northstar's primary goals is to provide problem gambling awareness training and education throughout Minnesota. One way it achieves this mission is through a speakers network that provides community presentations on the topic of problem gambling.

The newest addition to the speakers network is John VonEschen, MA, LMFT, a state problem gambling counselor at Pathways Counseling. His first involvement with Northstar came during National Problem Gambling Awareness Month last year when he spoke to a class of high-risk youth at Hopkins High School. John is in recovery from gambling and alcohol addiction and has worked as a counselor for eight years.

"I know there are a lot of gamblers who are suffering," says John. "I want to reach as many as possible to make sure they know that help is available before their addiction takes over their lives."

John integrates existing curriculums and programs into his talks, but much of his presentation is sharing his personal story. "John's message is powerful because he's speaking both from his own experience as a recovering gambler and as an informed and practicing counselor," says Cathie Perrault, Northstar executive director.

"I try to be honest about my own situation," says John. "It's a tough thing to admit where your money went when you're 38, but part of recovery is letting go. With addiction, each story is as unique as the person. There's no 'this is how it normally goes.'"

Speakers from the Northstar speakers network are available to discuss problem gambling with community groups and organizations.



Past programs have included talks to Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, the Optimists Club, colleges and universities, professionals (such as lawyers), addiction counselors and corrections officials.

Programs are generally free of charge, though donations to the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance are always appreciated. If you're interested in having Northstar make a presentation about problem gambling to a professional or lay audience, please call Linda Bisdorf at (612) 424-8595 or email linda@northstarproblemgambling.org.

\$3.2 Billion

The amount of money wagered in sports casinos in Nevada in 2011. Forty-percent was football-related. (Source: Nevada Gaming Commission)

March 12, 1964

The date of the first legal lottery in the twentieth century – the New Hampshire Sweepstakes. (Source: American Gaming Association)

75

The percent of problem gamblers who had an alcohol disorder, according to a research study. The study also claimed that 38% had a drug use disorder, and 60% were nicotine dependent. (Source: addictions.com)

4-5

The approximate percentage of youth, ages 12-17, who meet one or more criteria for having a gambling problem. (Source: National Council on Problem Gambling)

800-333-HOPE

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

ONLINE GAMBLING:

How Addictive Is It?



A recent article appearing in *The Atlantic* shed light on the comparative addictive qualities of gambling in casinos vs. online. The article suggests that the physical design of casinos may be more enticing to gamblers than the convenience of gambling from their favorite computer or mobile device. It cites various studies detailing the habits of online gamblers and casino gamblers. You can find a link to the article on the Northstar blog at NorthstarProblemGambling.org/northstar-blog/.

New Videos Educate Lottery Staff and Retailers About Problem Gamblers *continued from page 1*

showing signs of difficulties. Options are presented for how a sales clerk can handle the situation.

The retailer videos are distributed to the retailer via the lottery's website. Lottery sales reps also take them to stores or encourage staff to look at them. With approximately 3,000 retailers and multiple employees at each retailer, the reach of the

videos is significant. The retailer video can be viewed at www.mnlottery.com/retailers (click on "Problem Gambling" link).

"As a group, we want to ensure that the lottery is a fun recreational pursuit," says Don. "By providing this training, we'll be better able to identify individuals who are in distress from their gambling and who can benefit from outside assistance."



Resource: **AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR CHARITABLE GAMBLING STAFF**

Can You Pick Out the Problem Gambler?
AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR CHARITABLE GAMBLING STAFF

PROBLEM GAMBLING
The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that 2 million to 5 million Americans have a gambling problem. This term "problem gambling" refers to a behavior, which "compulsive" or "pathological" is a period of time to resist the urge to gamble.

A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY
Just as a bartender might offer to help someone who is too intoxicated to drive home, there are also ways to help a problem gambler. No matter how you help, you're simply being a good neighbor.

THE WARNING SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM
Given the subtle nature of gambling problems, how can you identify someone who is at risk for compulsive gambling? Here are eight warning signs of a gambling problem:

- Increased frequency of gambling activity
- Increased amount of money gambled
- Gambling for longer periods of time than originally planned
- Bragging about wins, but not talking about losses
- Pressuring others for money as financial problems arise
- Lying about how money is spent
- Escaping to other activities (alcohol, drugs, sleep, etc.)
- Denying there is a problem

YOUR ROLE AS A CHARITABLE GAMBLING OPERATOR
Simple actions can be very beneficial. Make the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline phone number clearly visible in your establishment. Display the educational brochure "Warning Signs and How to Help" available from the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance (www.northstargambling.org). This informational brochure helps people explore their own gambling choices. Working together, everyone in the state of Minnesota can help prevent the negative impacts of problem gambling while supporting the charitable work in our communities.

There's help for problem gamblers • **1-800-333-HOPE**

Northstar has produced a brochure for staff that provide charitable gambling for their patrons. The brochure is geared to those who work on the front lines, including servers, bartenders, bingo callers and pull-tab sellers. It lists warning signs and details actions that staff can take if they think someone may have a problem. If you'd like to obtain the brochure, please call Linda Bisdorf at (612) 424-8595 or email linda@northstarproblemgambling.org. You may also view and download the brochure from NorthstarProblemGambling.org (listed under Resources for Professionals).

Changes to NORTHSTAR BOARD

*There have been a number of changes to the Northstar board over the past months.
We are pleased to introduce three new members.*



JOHN RUNDQUIST

John is now president of the Northstar board. He first joined the board in July 2011. John is the marketing director and senior addictions counselor at Crossroads Aftercare Program. Prior to working at Crossroads, John worked as an alcohol and drug counselor at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview.

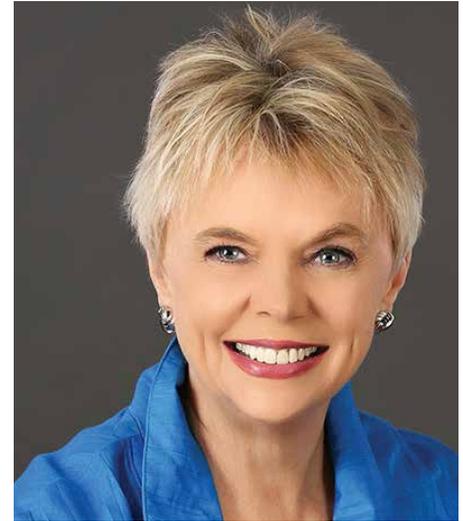
John learned about the devastating effects of gambling after spending a week as a professional in residence at Project Turnabout for the Vanguard Compulsive Gambling Program in Granite Falls, Minnesota. He's since become a state-certified gambling provider in Minnesota and has obtained a national gambler counselor certification. John is also a member of the Minnesota Problem Gambling Advisory Council.



SUNNY CHANTHANOUVONG

Sunny is the executive director of Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, whose mission is to enhance the quality of life of Minnesota Lao families. The Center assists with basic needs such as general support services, health outreach, housing, economic development, civic engagement, leadership institute, youth advancement, elder empowerment, arts and cultural engagement.

Sunny was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Bush Foundation. He was also a co-principal research investigator at the University of Minnesota for colorectal cancer screening disparities and a hepatitis B study. Sunny serves on the state of Minnesota Problem Gambling Advisory Board.



MARSHA KELLY

Marsha Kelly is a veteran of nearly forty years in strategic communications, reputation management and business development.

Prior to entering private practice in 1989, Marsha served in the Office of Governor Rudy Perpich (D-MN) as press secretary and communications director for Lieutenant Governor Marlene Johnson, where her duties included media relations, speechwriting and communications.

Since 1992, Kelly has served as communications counsel for the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association (MIGA), with primary responsibility for the association's media and community relations, online communications, materials production, research and strategic positioning. In addition to MIGA, her portfolio includes clients in transportation, health care, agriculture, entertainment and the pet industry.



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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

Northern Light

NORTHSTAR PROBLEM GAMBLING ALLIANCE

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