



NFL Launches Comprehensive Responsible Betting Education and Awareness Initiative

The National Football League (NFL) will be launching an extensive, integrated league-wide responsible betting public awareness program designed to educate fans who choose to engage in sports betting to do so responsibly. The key message encourages people to play responsibly by sticking to a game plan, including setting a budget to know their limits, using licensed, regulated operators, and asking for help if they need it. The core message of the campaign's creative is **“Stick to Your Game Plan. Always Bet Responsibly.”**

As part of this initiative, the NFL has made a multimillion-dollar, multi-year commitment to significantly expand its long-standing partnership with the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). The NFL's funding will enable the NCPG to launch a national grant program to fund enhanced services offered by local and statewide providers, as well as innovative prevention programs, including expansion of youth-facing curricula. The league's support will also transform the national problem gambling helpline system and

allow for the development of improved communications tools, including a new website, www.responsibleplay.org, that will provide the public with quick tips about betting safely and support resources for those in need.

“The National Council on Problem Gambling is pleased to partner with the NFL to shine a light on the importance of responsible betting,” says Keith Whyte, executive director of the NCPG. “With this partnership, we are able to exponentially enhance the NCPG's ability to provide advocacy, awareness and assistance on problem gambling. The NFL's far-reaching initiative demonstrates its strong commitment to being an industry leader in raising awareness. The league's support of our advocacy efforts will help fund new communications initiatives, such as ResponsiblePlay.org and a PSA about problem gambling, expand gambling prevention services where they are most needed, and modernize our National Problem Gambling Helpline operations with updated capabilities.”

The NFL is providing support to upgrade the National Problem Gambling Helpline system by raising criteria, improving call center technology, data collection, reporting, training and certification. A national helpline is crucial for prevention and safety, as well as connecting callers automatically with the appropriate state call center.

In addition to supporting impactful programs such as the helpline, NFL contributions will provide a wide range of additional benefits, including:

- Critical investment in the foundation of a national safety net to prevent gambling addiction.
- Providing agility grants to state NCPG affiliates, nonprofits or other community organizations that can implement innovative problem gambling prevention programs in their local communities.
- Ongoing initiatives such as the league's awareness and education marketing campaign to help fans and the public understand and use responsible betting techniques, and know where to get help.



Susan Sheridan Tucker
Executive Director
MNAPG

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Forging Ahead with a New Name

Significant anniversaries provide an opportunity to take stock and assess our history and our hopes for the future. As we considered how to mark our 20th anniversary, we recognized that our name and logo needed to be refreshed.

Since our creation in 2001, a number of treatment centers have included Northstar in their names. This has created some confusion in the addiction field and for those seeking help. While we always rerouted misguided calls to the appropriate facility, we thought that reducing that confusion was a worthy consideration. Additionally, as we engage in more activities on the national level, many don't know what Northstar refers to. Thus, reclaiming our Minnesota identity was also an important thought.

We were also very intentional in retaining "alliance" as part of our core identity. We were the first state affiliate to adopt a model in which all stakeholders with connections to problem gambling were invited to the table. And, in fact, as gambling expands, we continue to identify new stakeholders who really should be at the table, such as university mental health services, sports teams, the banking industry and employee assistance programs.

A new name provided us the opportunity to redesign our logo. Given our desire to make Minnesota more prominent in our identity, we felt including an image of the state was key. As the state advocate for problem gambling, we want everyone to know that our work covers the entire state. The colors used in the logo represent the natural beauty of our state as reflected through land and waters. We also wanted the logo to depict the diverse connections and intersections we make in our work. Thus, circles are included to represent community and inclusiveness, key elements of our mission.

As part of our 20th anniversary, we asked members of our board to reflect on our history, the challenges we face, our hopes and the work ahead of us. You can view the video here. <https://vimeo.com/643633691/681d2a5270>

I look forward to seeing what's in store for our next 20 years.

Sincerely,

Susan Sheridan Tucker

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.



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

Asian Media Access

In the second of a series profiling organizations receiving grants from Minnesota's Department of Human Services (DHS), this issue of Northern Light features Asian Media Access.

Asian Media Access (AMA) is a comprehensive community media arts education agency supporting creative solutions for problems facing the Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) community through education, production, information technology and community organizing. It's bringing its resources and mission to bear on the issue of problem gambling to this community.

AMA's effort began with research to understand more about the cultural impacts creating different problem gambling behaviors. They conducted interviews with 25 members of the AAPI community representing different ethnicities and social status.

"We found that our communities share the secrecy surrounding problem gambling like other communities," says AMA founder and executive director Ange Hwang. "There is the challenge of people recognizing that they have a gambling problem and seeking help."

According to Ange, approximately 25% of those interviewed say they gamble because they want more money. In one instance, a woman with low income explained she

hoped to get more money to support newborns. "This type of thinking was a surprise to us as we thought they might gamble because they needed an escape from the stress of trying to speak English."

"Many think that gambling, even in small amounts, is the best route to get more money," says Ange. "We need to change that mindset so that people understand that if you lose a little, it's still a large percentage of their assets. We're trying to find a new way to discuss this with the community."

The AAPI community uses a communication style that's different than the Eurocentric way of contacting a hotline and talking to a counselor. Thus, the goal is to create messages that can become immersed in the environment so that it starts to build context and trust.

Another emphasis is to educate members of the community about the importance of financial management. "Many people don't have exposure to mainstream society and don't understand the complex financial structure present in the U.S."

AMA is working to share messages in a variety of ways, including brochures, educational workshops and in-person. "From past experience, we know it's hard for people to come and say, 'Yes, I'm a problem gambler and need this workshop,'" says Ange. The use of creative materials to



Asian Media Access

open up community discussion is part of a four-year process.

AMA will also be creating YouTube videos that they can present at events and share through social circles. They've also started a youth group of "cultural brokers" that will use the heritage language to create postcards and other items that will be circulated to the community. "Communication through heritage language is a key for members who don't know English," says Ange.

AMA is collaborating with various organizations to educate the community about problem gambling. These include Asian temples in the Twin Cities, local chambers of commerce, restaurant owners and other organizations that help those new to the area.



In Their Own Words

Jean's Story

"If somebody hears my story and they're sitting on the fence, I hope they do some reflection and use whatever resources are available to them and not go as deep in the addiction as I did."

I'm hardly the person you'd expect to develop a gambling addiction. I wasn't a video gamer, didn't like football pools and didn't play the stock market. I didn't even start gambling until I was almost 50. And even then, I took a roll of quarters to the casino, spent it in 15 minutes, and that was the extent of it.

But within a year, I fell fast and hard. I had a big win at the casino when I bet \$20 and won \$2,000 in a video poker game. Then I thought maybe I could win \$20,000.

I got money from wherever I could. I maxed my credit cards and used the overdraft protection from my bank as a loan. And since I managed the finances where I worked, I started juggling the books and accessing funds, convincing myself I would "borrow" the money, keep track of it and pay it back.

My job performance eventually suffered because I spent so much time at the casino. I remember falling asleep at my desk one day because I gambled for the majority of a weekend, getting very little sleep. I ended up getting fired from my job because of poor performance, tardiness and absenteeism.

I knew it was a matter of time before I got caught for what I did with the organization's books. The fateful day came a month after I was fired when detectives knocked on my door and went through every corner of my house. After I was arraigned, bail was set at

a whopping one million dollars because I had previously gone on a cruise to the Grand Cayman, a place where people are known to hide money. I ultimately received a 51-month sentence, spending 34 months in prison and 17 months on parole.

I know that today there are specialty gambling courts in some states where people can avoid prison time if their offenses are related to their gambling addiction. I don't know that that would have served me well. I think I needed all the time I spent in prison to come up with a plan for the rest of my life. A wrist slap, at least in my case, may not have been enough.

Once I became resolute in my recovery, I was amazed at how many times the "system" wasn't really in step with my addiction. Once on parole, I was told not to drink or do drugs, though that was never an issue for me. I was subjected to urinalysis to make sure that I wasn't doing either, but the test somehow came back positive for ecstasy (later determined to be because of a medication I was taking). Another time, while on parole, I was suspected of stealing cash from my employer, but the theft was later traced to a coworker. It's at these times — when I was getting healthier in my recovery — that I felt sort of framed as a felon or criminal. It's at these times — when you feel knocked down — that it's tempting to turn back to the addiction. The key is continuing to work your recovery program.

Now I focus on sharing my story with others at outpatient centers and

conferences.

I talk about what it was like to be an addict and how I was able to overcome my challenges. I want to give back.

I look back on the lies I told and can't believe how intricate they were. I once told my employer that I was gone for three hours for lunch because I was at a gas station and someone's car caught on fire — and that my phone was lost in my act of trying to help them get out.

I came from a middle-class Christian home. I was raised to not lie, cheat and steal. Yet that's what I became. Everything takes a back seat to the gambling addiction, which is what's truly driving the bus.

If somebody hears my story and they're sitting on the fence, I hope they do some reflection and use whatever resources are available to them and not go as deep into the addiction as I did. I feel physical pain when I hear of people that suspect they have a gambling addiction but continue to plunge deeper.

The message I want to leave people with is not to think that it can't happen to you. It can. No matter your background or how good a person you are, these things can happen to good people.

Introducing the Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling

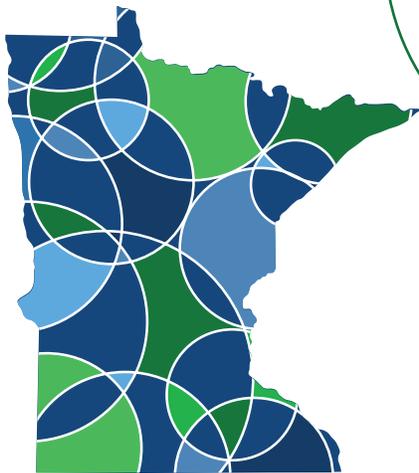
Our new name and logo reclaims our central identity as Minnesotans and speaks to our goals of building coalitions throughout the state.



Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling

Visit Us at
MNAPG.org

Contact Us at
info@MNAPG.org



Find Us at @mnapg

MNAPG



We Went Virtual!

In keeping with safe practices relating to the pandemic, we decided to hold a virtual conference this year. We had a great line up of presentations, all relating to the theme of minimizing harm. We'll be following up with some stories in upcoming issues to continue to explore this topic.

Status of Telehealth Counseling Uncertain

Minnesota's Department of Human Services continues to follow the federal health emergency guidelines for providing telehealth services. The current three-month approval will end in November. As of mid-October, there was no indication from DHS — one way or the other — as to whether this will continue.

Given the success of telehealth counseling and Minnesota's expansive geography and often-hazardous winter weather, MNAPG will continue to advocate for this service becoming a permanent tool for counselors and therapists. With only 18 certified problem gambling providers in the state of Minnesota, most located in the Twin Cities metro area, we believe

telehealth counseling is an essential tool in helping those experiencing harm from gambling, whether a gambler or a family member. While in-person will always be the gold standard, we think the accessibility of telehealth counseling can be extremely helpful for those seeking to begin their recovery.

MNAPG in the News



Playing to Win

A *Star Tribune* article highlighting how youth sports organizations manage the complexities and risks of gambling to achieve lower participation fees, enhancements to their programs and more kids playing sports included comments from Susan Sheridan Tucker,

executive director of MNAPG, emphasizing the need for gambler protection.

Pandemic, Technology and Gambling Expansion are Perfect Storm for Problem Gamblers

Susan Sheridan Tucker authored an Opinion in the September 24, 2021 edition of *Minnesota Reformer*. The commentary detailed the factors coming together to produce gambling addiction, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the expansion of legal gambling and technological advances that are making games more attractive than ever.

Spreading the word

One of our goals is to educate mental health and substance use disorder providers about the need to screen for problem gambling among their clients and to encourage them to learn more about this addiction. As part of our mission, we travel to a variety of conferences, either presenting or exhibiting many of the resources we make available to the public. It's an opportunity to have conversations and to learn what treatment providers are seeing on the front lines. Unfortunately, we learn — all too often — that those with problem gambling issues are not seeking the help available to them.

This quarter, we made presentations or presided over a table at:

- The Minnesota Alliance of Rural Addiction Treatment Programs conference in Wilmar
- The Faith and Addiction Conference in Bloomington

- The St. Louis County Health and Human Services Conference in Duluth
- The Minnesota Corrections Offices Conference in Nisswa
- The Minnesota Prevention Sharing Program Conference (virtual)
- The Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH) in St. Paul
- The St. Cloud StandDown (a program for Veterans), and
- Allied Charities of Minnesota in St. Cloud.

MNAPG in the Community



New Feedback Tool for All Minnesotans

MNAPG Announces



Minnesotans now have the ability to see how their gambling behavior compares with other residents of the North Star State. MNAPG now provides a survey that will provide both feedback and useful information.

The survey, produced in partnership with Evolution Health, provides information on a respondent's gambling habits and attitudes in comparison with other

Minnesotans. Survey takers are asked to provide their first names, basic demographic information and answers to questions about their level of engagement with gambling.

As answers are provided, a pie chart graph pops up so that the viewer can see how other Minnesotans participate in that particular form of gambling. The respondent will also receive a personalized report identifying where they fall in the problem gambling spectrum as well as tips and resources. The report is private and is not held by Evolution Health or MNAPG. Aggregate data will be collected and will not be identifiable by name, IP address or any other identifying method. Our hope is that as an individual is considering whether they are experiencing negative consequences relating to gambling that this will be the start of further personal awareness and opportunities to seek helpful resources. The survey can be found at www.MNAPG.org.

New Additions to MNAPG Staff

It's been a busy late summer and early fall at MNAPG. We're pleased to announce the following additions to our staff.



**Sonja Mertz,
Community Educator**

Sonja joined MNAPG in August as our new community educator. She will provide an MNAPG presence at conferences and in various other outreach efforts.

Sonja worked as a prevention research specialist for the Minnesota Prevention Resource Center for four years and previously worked at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. She brings a passion for sharing information with people so they're educated and are aware of resources that can help them.

Sonja's first impressions are that awareness about gambling addiction is an obstacle. "I think there is a big barrier of information and facts," says Sonja. "Most people don't even know what types of gambling are legal in Minnesota and I don't think there's a good understanding of what gambling disorder is. Ultimately, I think most people don't know what they don't know."

Sonja received her Bachelor's of Science in Sociology and Theater Arts at North Dakota State University and her Master's of Library and Information Science at St. Catherine University. She previously worked in professional theatre as a stage manager.



Eboun Wibourn, Office Manager

Eboun joined MNAPG in September as our new office manager. She will perform a variety of duties and help ensure that MNAPG runs smoothly.

Eboun has experience in operations, communications, podcasting and video production, and worked for more than ten years at the Minneapolis Television Network. She most recently worked at BCT Corporation.

Eboun is pleased to come back to the nonprofit world where she hopes she can make a difference in helping people. Eboun was raised in the Lao community, which has struggled an inordinate amount with gambling addiction, and is familiar with gambling addiction.

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.

SILVER



Treasure Island Casino

GOLD



Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community



Canterbury Park



Running Aces



Minnesota State Lottery



Mille Lacs Band
of Ojibwe



Gamblers Anonymous Meetings

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



Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling

1935 County Road B2 West
Suite 420
Roseville, MN 55113-2795

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Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling

Northern Light



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Understand Problem Gambling through:
AWARENESS • EDUCATION • RESEARCH • ADVOCACY