To the MNAPG Community,

Fiscal year 2022 was another year of transitions. It marked our first year operating as Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling, a new identity we created to bring more clarity to our name and function. We also welcomed new staff who have already made a significant impact on our organization. And, as we have since early 2020, we continue to navigate the barriers presented by a not-so-post-COVID world.

Not surprisingly, Zoom continued to be the choice for most of our outreach, with a select few conferences dipping their toes back into the waters of in-person meetings, the preferred way for MNAGP to educate and advocate.

The Minnesota legislature — primarily the House — seriously considered legalizing sports betting. In the end, neither the House nor the Senate bill moved forward, but it did provide MNAPG opportunities to share our recommendations for improving this bill as expansion of any form of gambling was considered.

We continue to be committed to building the public’s awareness of the multiple harms of gambling disorder. Minnesota needs to see this as the public health issue that it is. We will continue to advocate for that and work toward creating an improved system of care for gamblers and their families as we strive to reduce the number of Minnesotans harmed by this addiction.

As I reflect on our past year, we are making some progress in drawing attention to this addiction even as gambling access becomes easier amid advancing technology. Plenty of challenges remain and we’re motivated to help the tens of thousands who suffer silently due to stigma.

I am grateful to our board of directors and our membership organizations, who support our efforts, and to our staff who strive each day to bring us closer to meeting our goals.

Respectfully,

Susan Sheridan Tucker
Mission Statement
The Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling (MNAPG) is dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by problem gambling through advocacy, education, training and research.

We do this by:

- Bringing together those with a professional or personal interest in problem gambling.
- Providing complete, accurate and unbiased information.
- Advocating for public policies that assist problem gamblers and their families and raising public awareness of problem gambling.
- Identifying those whose professions might bring them in contact with problem gamblers and their families and educating those professionals on appropriate interventions.
- Advocating for, conducting and disseminating research that furthers our understanding of problem gambling.
- Developing, delivering and supporting programs to prevent problem gambling.

Core Values
We work toward our mission, upholding these core values:

- **Neutrality**: As an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling, we are neither for nor against legalized gambling.
- **Accuracy**: We strive to ensure that all information we provide is accurate and complete.
- **Compassion**: We recognize that problem gambling does not result from moral failings and that people with gambling problems are not inherently bad people.
- **Inclusion**: We believe that those affected by problem gambling are best served by inclusion of a wide range of interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, those in recovery, family members, treatment professionals, the gambling industry, those having professional contacts with problem gamblers, and those in other helping professions.
While it’s not there yet, cryptocurrency trading is gradually approaching in the investing world, but its safety is questionable. While some people have made millions buying cryptocurrency, others have lost everything.

Is cryptocurrency trading a form of gambling? A strong argument can be made that the answer is yes. According to Kevin Davis, a leading financial community educator, they’re doing it not to make a payment but because they believe someone will be willing to pay them the amount of crypto currency they paid for it. Davis says that it’s different from other forms of gambling, where the outcome of a horse race or a game of cards is not something that can be predicted with certainty.

With excessive cryptocurrency trading, an individual could experience a rush of dopamine. Regular “hits” of dopamine stemming from the volatility of the market can be highly addictive. The market has a market that’s less volatile and has limited trading hours. This can make it difficult for individuals to engage in trading.

Cryptocurrency addiction according to Family Addiction Specialist (familyaddictionspecialist.com) can manifest in several ways:

1. Taking on increased risk without much strategy or needing to make bigger wagers in order to receive satisfaction or excitement.
2. Cryptocurrencies or having a preoccupation once found pleasurable at the expense of other activities.
3. Unsuccessful attempts at reducing time spent trading.
4. Trading compulsively or experiencing trading-related activities.
5. Irritability, insomnia, anger or other symptoms when trading or when unable to trade.
6. Lying or hiding trading or trading-related activities.
7. Stealing, taking loans, selling assets or using activities from loved ones.
8. Continuing to trade despite adverse consequences to financial stability, work, or other important life areas.

If you or a loved one is struggling with gambling, alcohol and drug addiction, or other health care and social service workers, counselors and therapists are available to help. The conference is appropriate for many professional boards.

Rebranding and updating all outreach materials

Realizing our original name (Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance) was causing confusion in the addiction services community, we changed it. Many mistakenly believed we were counselors, as multiple agencies have Northstar in their names. The name change provided the opportunity to think about our relationship with our stakeholders and to assert our Minnesota identity. As MNAPG’s interaction with national and international entities expands, we sought a logo that would immediately reflect the people we serve. The logo incorporates green and blue colors in recognition of Minnesota’s wealth of water and natural resources. The circles represent the interconnectivity we have with a variety of groups and professions, as well as our goal of being a “hub” for all things Minnesota problem gambling. The creative team of Evans Stark Designs produced our inspired logo.

Our marketing and outreach materials were completely reworked. We updated terminology and created pieces for various audiences (professionals, gamblers and their families, the addiction community) about the signs of gambling disorder and the available community resources.

Welcoming new staff

We welcomed two new staff members this year. Sonja Mertz, our community educator, started in August 2021. Sonja represents MNAPG at conferences, community health fairs, schools and treatment centers to provide education about excessive gambling. She also shares the role other addictions and mental health issues play in gambling disorder. Sonja has a background in prevention and appreciates the importance of reaching specific audiences with the appropriate messaging and tools.

Eboun Singhathip Wilbourn joined the organization in September 2021 as our new operations manager. She maintains our ever-growing database and keeps the office running smoothly. Eboun brings several years’ experience working with nonprofit operations.

Northern Light

MNAPG continues to publish Northern Light, our eight-page quarterly newsletter that details current trends in gambling, provides information about the latest prevention efforts, and shares stories of hope from those who have succeeded in their recovery. We have a readership of almost 12,000.
2021 Conference; Finding Footing in a Shifting Landscape

MNAPG held a virtual conference in November 2021. Our theme explored the effects of COVID and the rapid expansion of sports betting and online gambling. We had an excellent lineup of speakers discussing recent research and what counselors might confront in the next few years due to the effects of COVID (including isolation, increased anxiety and depression). We invited Department of Human Services grant recipients to share their progress with their own public awareness campaigns to reflect their cultural and linguistic diversity. We engaged in a panel discussion with peer recovery specialists from Maryland and Connecticut to learn how their programs are helping to encourage individuals to seek gambling treatment. We also had a presentation on the rising interest in cryptocurrency and its relationship with gambling. The daylong event provided participants access to national and international speakers remotely, one of COVID’s unseen benefits.

Community Presentations

With the addition of our community educator, MNAPG expanded our outreach to parents by presenting to a few high school classes and attending the PTA statewide conference and community health fairs. Reaching younger audiences is imperative if we hope to see a decrease in the number of people experiencing gambling addiction. Studies continually show that the younger a person is exposed to gambling, the greater likelihood they will develop an addiction. Gambling disorder is still not recognized in the public school prevention curriculum, yet we know that young people have increasing access to electronic devices and gambling or gambling-like activities. Many parents aren’t aware of the potential problems that could occur if a child's play is not monitored.

Outreach and Education

Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines

MNAPG rolled out the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGG), the product of an international consortium of gambling researchers who sought to devise practical harm reduction standards for gambling. Similar to alcohol guidelines, the LRGG offer quick and easy guidance to minimize gambling harms.

Many organizations around the world are making them part of their consumer campaigns. MNAPG has provided LRGG brochures to most of the Minnesota’s casinos and make it a prominent display when exhibiting. It has proven to be a good attention-getting device and been a good conversation starter with those who visit our table.

Gambling Comparative Survey

Individuals taking this survey receive a report and score based on the PGSI (Problem Gambling Severity Index). This lets them know where they fall on the problem gambling spectrum and provides tips and helpful resources.

Gamban

MNAPG continues to offer free annual subscriptions to anyone in Minnesota who wishes to block online gambling sites from their electronic devices. The tool blocks over 65,000 gambling sites worldwide and can be loaded on multiple devices in a single household. It’s proven to be an effective tool.
Sports Betting Bills
The lure of legalizing sports betting in Minnesota was alive and well in the 2022 legislative session. The House bill proved to be the most active as it moved through the various committees, making mostly favorable changes along the way. MNAPG remains neutral on the topic of gambling but did offer amendments to the bill’s author. The bill still could have benefited from more restrictive language pertaining to advertising and limiting exposure to younger audiences, but it did take the need to fund gambling disorder services seriously. This was not the tack taken by the Senate bill. Time essentially ran out, and while the House approved its bill, the Senate did not act. This leaves another opportunity to revisit the topic in the upcoming session. MNAPG continues to advocate on behalf of the 250,000 Minnesotans impacted by problematic gambling.

Suicide Prevention Task Force
Given that suicide is so prevalent among those with gambling addiction, MNAPG has become active in reviewing the state’s suicide prevention plan, which previously made no mention of gambling addiction as a risk factor. We now have a seat at the table on the task force and offer our perspectives on this addiction.

Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Advisory Council
Recognizing the continued need to provide education on gambling disorder, MNAPG was accepted as a member of the Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Advisory Council. This group meets monthly and has a direct line with staff who seek input from citizens and professionals who deal with mental health issues. With the high co-occurrence of depression, anxiety and ADHD among gamblers, it’s important to include gambling addiction in these conversations pertaining to gaps in county services. As Hennepin County is the state’s most populous county, MNAPG is hopeful that our presence will help to contribute to the larger conversation around integrative care.

DHS Problem Gambling Advisory Council
MNAPG has long served on the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Problem Gambling Advisory Council. The council provides an opportunity for DHS staff working in the problem gambling program to hear from those working in the field and to take recommendations from the council. Unfortunately, there’s been continual turnover in the DHS program staff, making it difficult to initiate some necessary reforms. MNAPG advocates strongly for better integrative care between substance use disorder and mental health, as problem gambling continues to be siloed and much less visible as a peer addiction. We are hopeful that recent hires in the past couple of months will result in positive changes.
AD CAMPAIGNS

For the past couple of years, MNAPG has invested a greater percentage of advertising funds toward awareness and prevention messaging through numerous print and digital media platforms. It’s important for us to continue reaching target audiences, particularly since there’s been a significant decrease in live events. In addition to creating material for our own social media platforms, we purchased ad space throughout the year in the Star Tribune and other digital platforms. Specific messaging was designed to appeal to the gambler, their loved ones, public policymakers and healthcare professionals.

MNAPG participates in the larger national campaigns hosted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). One such campaign is Gift Responsibly – which advises adults not to buy lottery tickets for children. Another is Problem Gambling Awareness Month, which completed its 19th year of promoting responsible gambling. MNAPG amplifies its messaging to promote safer play, national problem gambling screening day and free treatment and other resources during the month of March, when the national college basketball tournament is under full swing. It’s a month of heightened awareness made possible through the concerted efforts of NCPG and all of its affiliates. MNAPG uses some of the materials developed by NCPG as well as our own pieces. Messaging geared towards sports betting is a particular focus. We tap into a variety of methods to reach our targeted audiences, including focused emails, native articles (full-length, fact-based articles that we pay to publish) and targeted digital ads based on an individual’s collected data that identifies them as frequent players.

We also tried a new technique this past year: geo-fencing the capitol complex. Anyone with an electronic device with traceable mobile device identifiers who ventured into the state capitol complex received digital ads from MNAPG informing legislators about gambling addiction facts in Minnesota. With limited access to legislators due to COVID measures, this was a new way to educate lawmakers.

We continued our relationship with The Phoenix Spirit, a newspaper for those in recovery. Their March/April issue is focused on problem gambling/gambling addiction and we have both print/digital ads as well as a full-length article for readers.
Each year, MNAPG receive funding from two statutory sources: the Minnesota Lottery, which provides $225,000, and tax revenue generated by charitable gambling (1/2 of 1%), a variable amount each year. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is the fiscal agent and encumbers the funds we articulate in our annual budget.

**FY22 REVENUE — JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022**
- Charitable Gambling Tax Revenue (.05%) $299,121
- Minnesota Lottery $225,000
- Organizations & Individual Donors $60,454
- Interest $163
- **Total** $584,738

**FY22 EXPENSES**
- Program Activities $311,320
- Operations $223,426
- Misc. Expenses $1,705
- **Total** $536,451
# Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling

**Statement of Financial Income and Expense**

**July 2020 through June 2022**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Jul '20- Jun '21</th>
<th>Jul '21 - Jun '22</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary Income/Expense Income</strong></td>
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<td>Contributed Support</td>
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<td>5490 Miscellaneous revenue</td>
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<td>(-27.90)</td>
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<td>Unapplied Cash Payment Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$584,738.81</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Profit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$584,738.81</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Expenditures</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Net Operating Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,885.49</strong></td>
<td><strong>$48,287.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>$67,173.27</strong></td>
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*Statement of Financial Income and Expense July 2020 - June 2022*
MNAPG is the Minnesota state affiliate for the National Council on Problem Gambling. This relationship is one of mutual benefit. NCPG provides MNAPG with direct access to national and international experts in the field. We share similar missions and core values that guide us in improving the lives of those impacted by problem gambling in Minnesota. It’s a top-down, bottom-up synergy that fosters innovation, creativity and the sharing of information to raise awareness that problem gambling is a public health concern that is both treatable and preventable.

As an affiliate, we communicate regularly with the national office as well as with our counterparts in 35 other states. We come together to advocate for federally led initiatives while NCPG relies on us to lead public policy efforts in Minnesota.

In July 2021, Susan Sheridan Tucker was elected as NCPG’s treasurer. She also serves on its Executive Committee and chairs the Finance Committee and Affiliate Relationship Committee.
Fiscal Year 2022 NPGA Contributors

In gratitude for the individuals and organizations that supported our work throughout the year.

PLATINUM $10,000+

- Draft Kings
- Canterbury Park
- Minnesota Indian Gaming Association

GOLD $5,000 - $9,999

- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Minnesota State Lottery
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Running Aces Racetrack and Casino

SILVER $1000 - $4999

- Competition Cheer
- Spirit Booster
- Minnesota Indian Gaming Association

CONTRIBUTORS/MEMBERS

- Alan Aisenberg
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- Marie Hinton
- Jeff Hudson
- Craig Johnson
- Lester Prairie Lions Club
- Mary Magnuson
- Metropolitan State University
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- John Rundquist
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1403, Benson, MN