

Problem Gambling Information - 2021

Problem gambling directly impacts tens of thousands of Nevadans.

Researchers estimate approximately 180,000 Nevada residents ages 18 and over suffer from a gambling problem. In addition, for each person impacted by problem gambling it is estimated that six others are negatively impacted.

Treatment is effective and saves Nevada taxpayer dollars.

Individuals manifesting a gambling disorder report higher rates of divorce, bankruptcy, suicide and criminal activity. Prevention and treatment are far less costly to taxpayers than the alternatives which include higher rates of incarceration, public safety expenses, bankruptcy claims, and increased use of health and social programs.

Nevada is a leader in the global gambling industry, and its problem gambling programs should reflect this leadership status.

States with far fewer gambling revenues spend many times more on problem gambling services. For Nevada to maintain the gold standard as a leader in the gambling industry it must innovate in all areas of gambling including responsible gambling player protection programs and problem gambling services. Addressing problem gambling is recognized as an important component of legalized gambling. Currently, Nevada's investment in problem gambling services and responsible gambling player protection programs are far below other places throughout the United States and elsewhere in the world.

Nevada ranks 2nd in the nation for gambling revenue per resident age 18 and above yet ranks 13th in the nation in state funding for problem gambling services.

In 2020 sales tax, property tax and gaming tax from Nevada hotel casinos accounted for nearly \$1.4 billion, or approximately 42 percent of State General Fund revenues - more than any other industry. Of these revenues, Nevada invested less than 1/10 of 1% (\$1.3 million) of these funds towards programs to reduce gambling related harm.

Why is funding for problem gambling treatment distinct from other DPBH behavioral programs?

Only about 11% of clients that enrolled in DHHS-supported outpatient treatment for gambling disorder had Medicaid. There are no Medicaid provider types that recognize the Certified Problem Gambling Counselor (the certification most common among gambling treatment providers). That is, most members of the current gambling treatment workforce are ineligible to bill Medicaid.

Let's Lead the Way

Nevada's Gaming Policy Committee and Gaming Control Board has heard testimony from gambling industry experts that a strong problem gambling system must accompany continued expansion of gambling in the state - a perspective that has been met with enthusiasm from both entities.

Nevada has aggressively pursued innovations to gambling services and technologies, including cashless wagering, but there has not been a commensurate effort to address the uncertainty around the future role they may play in contributing to issues related to problem gambling. Nevada's problem gambling system must be prepared for gambling-related problems that may result from these innovations.

Problem gambling is a public health issue, and systemic changes that facilitate and promote the inclusion of problem gambling prevention, workforce development, and research are critical to fulfilling the principles of Nevada's Strategic Plan for Problem Gambling Services.

Characteristics among people who may have a gambling problem:

- Difficulty limiting, stopping, or controlling gambling behaviors
- Feelings of shame, stress, loneliness, or despair
- Preoccupation with getting more money to gamble and gambling opportunities
- Financial problems, higher rates of bankruptcy, difficulty paying bills
- Conflict with family members, loved ones, friends, and colleagues
- Lies, deceit, and manipulation to conceal gambling activities
- Irrational patterns of thinking, unrealistic expectations for winning
- Restlessness or irritability when unable to gamble
- Gambles to escape problems, stress, or other life challenges
- Jeopardizes important relationships, work, education, or other opportunities to gamble