

Why is problem gambling/gambling disorder distinct from other DHHS behavioral programs?



Nevada Department of
Health and Human Services

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- There are no federal grant programs for treatment or prevention of gambling disorder as the federal government largely views issues related to gambling as a state issue rather than a federal one. As a “states’ rights” issue, the federal government stays out of gambling regulation – and out of problem gambling services. As such, the federal government provides no direct grants for state problem gambling services, and nearly all problem gambling services in the U.S. are state-funded.
- Most persons seeking services for a gambling disorder are employed (61%), in debt, and multiple issues have prevented billing insurance (e.g., provider not on insurer’s panel, insurance does not cover recommend level of gambling disorder treatment, client refuses to use insurance due to concerns over negative stigma related to diagnosis combined with fear of exposer).
- 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.

Problem gambling directly impacts tens of thousands of Nevadans

Researchers estimate that between 65,000 and 103,000 Nevada residents ages 18 and over manifest a gambling disorder., In addition, for each person impacted by problem gambling it is estimated that six others are affected.

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 and problem gambling services. Addressing problem gambling is recognized as an important component of legalized gambling. Currently, Nevada’s approach to problem gambling is sub-standard.

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

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 one-tenth of one percent (\$1.3 million) of these funds towards programs to reduce gambling related harm.

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.

How do you know if you or someone you love has a gambling disorder?

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
- Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
- Is often preoccupied with gambling
- Often gambles when feeling distressed
- After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even "chasing" one's losses.
- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.

To learn more, visit: dhhs.nv.gov



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