

February 19, 2021 ACPG Meeting
Treatment Providers Group Summary
Denise F. Quirk

The Gambling Grant Treatment Providers continue to have a once-a-month call and this last quarter all five treatment grantees participated in sharing their experiences and keeping a discussion going about the impact of the pandemic in Nevada.

New Frontier Treatment Center (NFTC) has kept their doors open and improved their status by having positive feedback from a State of Nevada Health Division/Infectious Disease inspection which they passed. Lana reports the installation of a temperature station at their entrance has greatly helped, in that all may approach it, hands free, and get their temperature read without involving NFTC personnel. They are wearing masks, requiring hand washing, and sanitizing. The staff has been offered vaccinations and so far 24 of the 60 who were offered have been vaccinated. NFTC is experiencing increased calls and currently has 2 residential clients.

RPGC has also noticed an increase in calls and an increase in intensity and urgency of the situations callers are requesting help about, especially homelessness and marital problems. One of the four RPGC staff members has been vaccinated to date. Denise is visiting her doctor to inquire about antigen testing since she tested positive for COVID in August 2020 and is weighing her options about vaccination. Clients were pleased to hear the February 8, 2021 announcement that RPGC was again open to the public, having been partially closed since November, 2020. We are now able to offer IOP and Outpatient visits in person, on ZoomPro, or in a Hybrid setting with both ZoomPro and in-person together in the group room. We have reduced seating and continue to use masks, hand-washing and other sanitizing practices. RPGC has seen a general decrease in referrals from Gamblers Anonymous, especially since the onsite GA meeting had to close in 2020 due to the pandemic.

RPGC is awaiting any indication that Donna Meyers and Thom Baltisberger will have their CPGC oral exams scheduled. They are both provisionally certified after passing their written exam. The issue of any treatment providers receiving notice about upcoming Board of Examiners for Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Counselor meetings by email was raised and the Executive Director did not allow it as an agenda item but suggested we mention the request in public comment. RPGC staff is requesting that all treatment providers check the State Board of Examiners website and whoever hears about the next Board meeting first please share it with the remaining treatment providers, as there is no other expeditious way to discover when the virtual meetings are being held and they were not held regularly in 2020.

Bristlecone Family Resources (BFR) currently has two gambling clients in residential treatment and has seen some increase in gambling activity with Tina Marie Bisiaux onboard as CPGC-Intern. COVID has seriously affected their staffing, as whenever an exposure or positive COVID test occurs, staff are out of the office for over a week and this can impact admissions and calls being returned. BFR staff shared that the voicemail message includes the cell number of one of the administrators and the group discussed sharing that number to expedite referrals to BFR.

Mental Health Counseling and Consulting (MHCC) report their inquiries and intakes have been decreasing since the pandemic, and attribute much of this to closure of Gamblers Anonymous meetings in the Las Vegas area, which was their principal referral source. (RPGC agreed the same effect occurred in Northern Nevada and G.A. has only recently begun reopening some meetings.) Dr. Rory Reid is now fully Medicaid certified. He has not had very many inquiries for individual treatment and is working with Kim Garcia and others to access more referrals.

The Dr. Rob Hunter Problem Gambling Center (PGC) reports they have had continuous services in-person for IOP and have only noticed a slight drop in inquiries or client intakes through the pandemic. Their numbers have recently begun to increase. Sadly, due to the pandemic, many individuals have lost their jobs and are turning to gambling as an escape. The isolation has been detrimental, as well. Even the stimulus checks are providing an additional trigger to our clients. An assessment of clients indicates that many individuals are experiencing significant urges and even those who have been in successful recovery are needing relapse prevention services. In response to this we are working to implement a relapse prevention class once a week to service our alumni who may need some extra support during these trying times.