

Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs Testimony

Hearing on Gambling and Internet Gaming

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Presented by:

Ken Martz, PsyD, NCGC-II, CCGC
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs

Thank you, members of the Committee, for giving attention to the important issue of compulsive and problem gambling. This has been an extremely important issue, and one in which significant developments and improvements have been made. It is important to recognize the strides that have been made in increasing public awareness of the risks associated with this disorder. In recent years, our Department has expanded outreach in public education as well as the training and development of a workforce to support those for whom gambling has become a problem.

Background Information

As stated in Act 2010-01, the sum of \$2 million or an amount equal to .002 multiplied by the total gross terminal revenue of all active and operating licensed gaming entities (whichever is greater), must be transferred annually into the Compulsive and Problem Gambling Treatment Fund for the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (Department) compulsive and problem gambling program. From these funds, the Department annually distributes a minimum of 50% of the monies to the Single County Authorities (SCA) to be expended solely for problem gambling needs assessment, prevention programs, outreach, educational programs, and other Department approved services. Act 2010-01 also created a requirement to transfer dollars in the amount of \$3 million annually from the State Gaming Fund to the Department, which are directed to substance use disorder treatment.

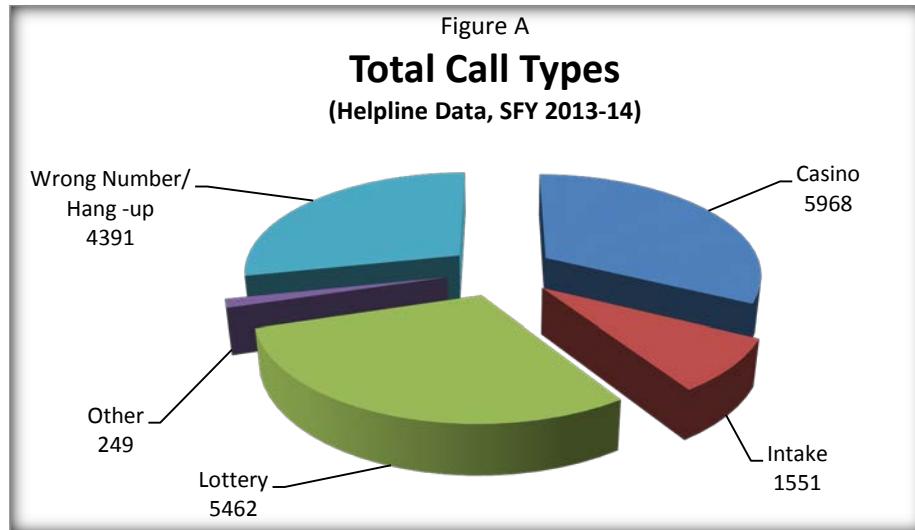
Current DDAP Responses

- **Prevention Media Campaign:** In FY 2013, The Department's problem gambling media campaign consisted of TV, radio, billboards, web banners, gas pump toppers, print advertisements, ATM receipts, and poster panels. The problem gambling media campaign started in December of 2012, and ended in March 2013. We observed a 60% increase in helpline calls, relating to treatment, from February 2013 to March 2013.
- **Problem Gambling Training:** The Department continues to provide problem gambling training through on-site training events, as well as through the Department's specialized training initiative. The Department provides trainings to all interested participants in order to increase the number of problem gambling treatment providers throughout the Commonwealth. By providing these trainings, the Department hopes to increase the number of qualified professionals who are eligible to provide problem gambling counseling services. During FY 2014, there were 10 trainings that took place, and 141 people completed problem gambling treatment training courses. In addition to trainings provided by the Department, 51 individuals received scholarships to attend the Statewide Conferences on Problem Gambling, hosted by the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP).

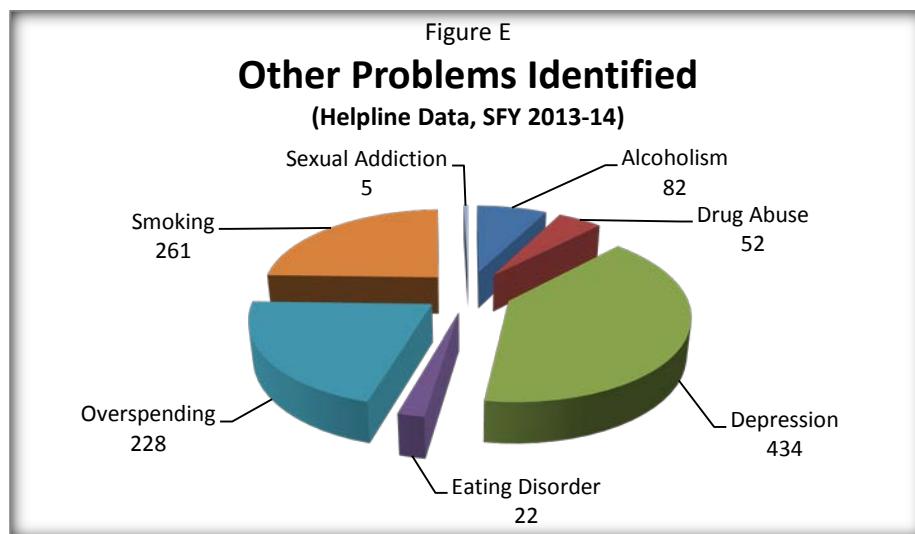
- **Gambling Treatment Supervision:** National Certification standards require that certified gambling counselors have at least four hours of clinical oversight by a board-approved clinical consultant. As such, the Department contracted with the Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions (IRETA) to provide clinical oversight. Clinicians participate in a 1 hour clinical oversight call per month. Consultation oversight calls for gambling clinicians, led by a board approved clinical consultant, have been occurring since June 2010. Sixteen (16) qualified gambling counselors participated in consultation oversight sessions during SFY 2014 and 10 oversight sessions occurred.
- **Problem Gambling Consortium:** The Problem Gambling Consortium was convened in 2006 as a method to work in concert with other state agencies involved in gaming, including DDAP, the Pennsylvania Lottery, and the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB). Other agencies have been added to include the Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP). The purpose of this consortium is to share information about member organizations as gambling develops across the Commonwealth, to learn from each other about the problems the gaming public may face, and to share resources.

During National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, held annually in early March, the Problem Gambling Consortium's collaborative efforts included the CCGP conducting training seminars in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Also, the PGCB and the Department provided an informational booth at Strawberry Square in Harrisburg for information dissemination.

- **Problem Gambling Helpline:** The Department contracts with the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP) to assist in addressing the statewide training needs, and for the problem gambling helpline. In FY2014, approximately 17,600 calls were received. The problem gambling helpline employs professionally-trained operators to take calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a free and confidential manner; calls can be answered in English, Spanish and more than 60 other languages utilizing the American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) language service. The operators collect as much data from each caller as the context of the call allows. Each call is assessed for the most appropriate referral information, and the caller is given names, phone numbers, descriptors, etc., for the resources being suggested. Helpline resources include referrals to Pennsylvania gambling treatment provider network, Gamblers Anonymous (GA) and Gam-Anon meetings. Pennsylvania gambling treatment providers are licensed/certified behavioral health care specialists (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, etc.). Other referrals are available as needed for related resources such as self-exclusion information or consumer credit counseling services.



The helpline data above indicates the majority of callers experience financial problems, which is identified as the precipitating event for seeking help.



The chart above represents helpline data collected for other problems identified. An overwhelming majority of callers reported depression as a problem in addition to gambling.

- **Prevention and education services:** In FY 2014 over 15,000 prevention and education services were provided, which were attended by over 100,000 individuals. These services range from information dissemination to provision of prevention services across a range of populations including primarily adolescents as well as older adults. Additionally, intervention services were provided through

the Student Assistance Program to screen and refer an additional 1,800 adolescents to support services. Based on the 2011 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, 15% of students gambled for money in the past year, across a range of venues.

Table 24. Percentage of Youth Reporting Gambling, Pennsylvania Statewide 2011

	Female %	Male %	6 th %	8 th %	10 th %	12 th %	Overall %
Gambled for money in the past year	6.5	24.6	7.9	13.9	17.6	20.8	15.3
Gambled for money in the past 30 days	3.8	14.1	4.9	7.9	9.5	12.6	8.8
Bet on sporting events in the past year	10.3	31.6	13.5	20.1	23.0	25.0	20.6
Bought lottery tickets in the past year	11.4	16.7	10.9	11.9	13.2	20.1	14.1
Bet money using the internet in the past year	1.9	5.1	2.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.5
Bet money on table games in the past year	6.0	19.4	8.1	12.2	13.4	15.6	12.5

The question regarding internet gambling was not included in the 2013 PAYS report, but replacing it were questions regarding high risk gambling behaviors such as urges and lying about gambling find approximately 2-4% of high school students engaging in these behaviors associated with problem gambling.

Gambling (Past Year)

Grade	Any gambling (% responding to specific past-year question)			Bet on sports?			Played the lottery or scratch-off tickets?			Played cards/dice/dominoes?			Compulsive urge to gamble			Lied about gambling habits		
	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013	State 2009	State 2011	State 2013
6th	8.7	7.9	7.2	14.8	13.5	9.7	11.5	10.9	12.4	9.9	8.1	6.2	n/a	n/a	2.9	n/a	n/a	1.5
8th	16.6	13.9	12.0	23.2	20.1	14.4	12.1	11.9	12.7	16.4	12.2	8.8	n/a	n/a	3.8	n/a	n/a	2.1
10th	20.6	17.6	16.1	25.0	23.0	18.9	14.5	13.2	11.5	17.9	13.4	11.4	n/a	n/a	4.5	n/a	n/a	1.9
12th	22.3	20.8	19.4	25.7	25.0	17.8	19.2	20.1	17.1	18.6	15.6	11.9	n/a	n/a	5.8	n/a	n/a	2.9
All	17.5	15.3	13.9	22.5	20.6	15.5	14.5	14.1	13.4	16.0	12.5	9.7	n/a	n/a	4.3	n/a	n/a	2.1

- **Treatment services:** DDAP has trained and coordinated the development of a statewide workforce of 96 counselors (a 12% increase over last year) to treat problem gamblers representing 39 counties. In FY 2013, there were 166 outpatient treatment admissions for problem gambling. Note that these numbers only include services that were paid for by DDAP, and does not account for additional services provided by insurance or other payment options. Among those treated, 62% were male, 83% were Caucasian, 38% were employed full time, and 31% were making less than \$20,000 annually. 38% of all admissions were in either Philadelphia or Allegheny counties. The most common form of gambling was slots, followed by lottery. Among those discharged from treatment, 52% were no longer gambling at all, and 79% had achieved some or all of their treatment goals.

Internet Gambling

- **Considerations:** There are several specific impacts associated with internet gambling. Internet gambling has greater accessibility, affordability, anonymity, convenience, as compared with other venues (Griffiths, et al. 2006). Online problem gambling is associated with being male, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol while gambling, gambling online for more than 4 hours at a time, and lie about their age (McCormack et al., 2013)
 - **Suicide:** Gambling is known to have the highest rates of suicide among all addictive disorder (National Gambling Impact Commission (NGIC), 1999). 15-20% of problem gamblers have attempted suicide (Ciarrocci, 2002)
 - **Adolescents:** There are two issues specifically relevant to internet gambling and adolescents: access and risk.
 - **Access:** With internet gambling, there is more risk of underage gambling since there is no staff to monitor who enters the facility, and more limited ability to verify identification of the gambler.
 - **Risk:** In areas where online gambling is available, there is a high risk of problem gambling. A study (Olason et al, 2011) in a study of 1,537 adolescents, found 7.7% of internet gamblers were classified as problem gamblers, as compared to 1.1% of non-internet gamblers. Similarly, (Brunelle, et al, 2012) as study of 1,870 adolescents found higher rates of not only problem gambling, but also substance abuse and delinquency among internet gamblers as compared with non-internet gamblers.
 - **Rates of Problem Gambling:** Although slot machine gambling is consistently one of the most common forms of problem gambling, internet gambling is accessible to many more people, so it can quickly lead to a higher number of those with gambling disorder, even if the percentage of the general population is smaller. Research is mixed regarding the effect of introduction of gambling as it relates to the overall rates of problem gambling. In general, there is a trend that upon implementation of a new form of gambling, there is an increase in rates of problem gambling, however that spike seems to reduce over time (Feeney, 2013).
 - **Crime:** There is a clear association of problem gambling and the commission of civil and criminal infractions, which are committed to obtain money due to the addiction, similar to the escalation of criminal activities among other addictive disorders as the disorder becomes more severe.

- Substance Use Disorder: Approximately 35-47% of problem gamblers report drug and alcohol abuse (Maccallum & Blaszczynski, 2002).

Percentage of lifetime and past-year gambler types of substance abuse and other problems								
Problem	Non gamblers		Low Risk Gamblers		Problem Gamblers		Pathological Gamblers	
	Lifetime	Past Year	Lifetime	Past Year	Lifetime	Past Year	Lifetime	Past Year
Emotionally harmful family argument about gambling	NA	0.5	0.1	0.3	15.8	10.5	53.1	65.6
Alcohol/Drug dependent ever	1.1	0.9	1.3	1.8	12.4	13.9	9.9	20
Drug use 5+ times, past year	2	2.4	4.2	5.1	16.8	16.1	8.1	13.9
Any job loss, past year	2.6	4.8	3.9	3.6	10.8	0	13.8	25
Bankruptcy, ever	3.9	3.3	5.5	6.4	10.3	13.8	19.2	10.7
Arrested, ever	4	7	10	11.9	36.3	25	32.3	26.4
Incarcerated, ever	0.4	NA	3.7	NA	10.4	NA	21.4	NA

(NGIC, 1999)

- Child Abuse/Neglect, Domestic Violence: Research suggests that 1/3 to 1/2 of spouses of compulsive gamblers have been abused (NGIC, 1999).
- Homelessness: A survey of 1,100 individuals across dozens of Rescue Missions finds that 18% cited gambling as a cause of their homelessness (NGIC, 1999)

- **Impact on the Workforce:** Gambling in the workplace is can be an issue, since many employees now have personal internet access at their desks. Specific risks include illegal bookmaking, lost productivity in jobs with unaccountable time, and criminal acts in the workplace (e.g. embezzlement from the company or theft from coworkers).

<u>Work related impacts of problem gambling</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Abuses of time</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arriving late ○ Leaving early ○ Gambling on company time ○ Increased absenteeism ○ Sick leave patterns • <u>Productivity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Irritability ○ Poor morale ○ Unfinished projects ○ Telephone misuse ○ Internet misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Financial</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Borrow money from coworkers ○ Owes money to loan sharks • <u>Criminal activity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Higher incidence of illegal activities ○ Theft from coworkers ○ Embezzlement ○ Stolen products from work ○ Bookmaking

(Griffiths, 2009)

Recommendations

- **Continue current initiatives:** The initiatives in place that we continue to perform appear to be successful and effective. We've received many positive responses from treatment providers, and within the community. This comprehensive approach is critical to the success of Pennsylvania's problem gambling approach.
- **Expand the current treatment network:** DDAP is currently editing the guidelines to become an approved provider of gambling treatment. These new guidelines will continue to encourage the expansion of the treatment network to include more providers. Specifically this would hope to expand the current number of psychologists, social workers and counselors. Furthermore, these new guidelines expand the continuum of services to include intensive treatment, so that those with more severe gambling problems may access additional treatment.
- **Continue coordination:** Continued coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders is essential to providing an effective response. This is a significant problem that affects multiple agencies. Effective collaboration between agency

and departmental partners is critical to success, particularly to include collaboration between Department, the Gaming Control Board and CCGP.

- **Marketing and outreach:** This will continually be an area of high importance. Although gambling is a pleasurable leisure activity for most, two to three percent of Pennsylvanians are said to suffer from Gambling Disorder. This would mean that approximately 319,000 Pennsylvanians exhibit tendencies of gambling addiction. Consequently, we will continue to manage our biannual gambling media campaign. We will work with our consortium and other stakeholder groups to prepare the most effective media campaigns possible. With each advertisement, our helpline number and website is prominently displayed, as we continue to raise problem gambling awareness.
- **Implement gambling disorder prevention action steps:** Appendix 1 lists a number of specific action steps that can be implemented to reduce risks associated with problem gambling.

In conclusion, please accept my appreciation to members of the Committee for permitting me to submit written testimony to you on this important issue. Additional information may be found in our Compulsive and Problem Gambling Annual Report found at www.ddap.pa.gov. For those in need of services they can reach help by dialing 1-800-Gambler, or through our website at www.paproblemgambling.com. As a psychologist who has provided specialty treatment services for problem gamblers for over 20 years, and trained internationally on best practices in problem gambling, I would be happy to meet to discuss this information further. I can be reached at kemartz@pa.gov or (717) 547-3323.

Appendix 1

Action Steps to Manage Internet Gambling

- Implement age checks
- Implement age verification checks
- Restrict methods of payment
- Set credit limits
- Include options for self-exclusion
- Include references to controlled gambling
- Include references to help line/treatment resources
- Provide help information
- Accreditation by an external agency
- Confirmation of bets/right to change mind
- Built in pauses and display of amount of time they have been playing
- Include play time limits
- No encouragement to re-gamble

(Griffiths, et al., 2006)