

2007 Fact Sheet:

Help for problem gamblers (1-800-547-6133)

THE BACKGROUND

The Washington State Problem Gambling Program is administered by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in the Health and Recovery Services Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The program was created by ESHB1031, legislation that passed in 2005. It imposed a tax on the state Lottery, the horse racing industry, and all licensees of the Gambling Commission. Funds from the tax were steered to DSHS, which created the Problem Gambling Program to provide prevention and treatment services for problem gamblers and their family members. The legislation also mandated the formation of an Advisory Committee to advise DASA in the planning, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of the program. Some tribal casino operations have contributed voluntarily to the fund, recognizing that the entire gambling industry has an obligation to provide help for addicted gamblers.

Help for problem gamblers and their families

- Washington State supports a toll-free Problem Gambling Helpline that is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number is **1-800-547-6133**.
- The Helpline is operated by staff trained in crisis stabilization. They can provide referrals to treatment available around the state, as well as contacts with local Gambling Anonymous chapters.
- The Problem Gambling Program funds treatment for addicted gamblers at 30 sites around the state.
- Specialized treatment is available for underage addicts, and several sites provide treatment for Asian/Pacific Islanders and Spanish-speaking clients.
- Women make up the majority of those referred to treatment; about 75 percent of the referrals are in the Puget Sound region, with the rest scattered in larger urban areas elsewhere in the state.

Here are "Red Flags" that someone might have a gambling problem

- Am I spending more time and more money on gambling than I used to?
- Am I spending a lot of time thinking about gambling?
- Have I tried to cut back or stop, but can't?
- Am I irritable or restless when I can't gamble?
- Does gambling help me escape the troubles of life and make me feel better?
- Have I gone back another day to win back my losses?
- Have I lied to people I care about to hide my gambling?
- Have I taken money that wasn't mine, written bad checks because of my gambling, or broken other laws?
- Have I neglected my family or job because of gambling?
- Have I borrowed money from others to pay bills?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, you should talk to family members and close friends about your behavior. You should also consider seeking treatment for problem gambling.



Biennial accomplishments of the Problem Gambling Program

- 22-member Problem Gambling Advisory Committee first met in July, 2005. It met 21 times in the first biennium.
- Criteria for having a publicly funded contract for treatment of problem gambling were established for both agencies and sole proprietors.
- Training was provided to provide a basis of knowledge for chemical dependency and mental health counselors to begin providing treatment to problem gamblers
- Clinical supervision requirements and clinical supervisors were enlisted to provide clinical oversight to counselors new to problem gambling treatment
- Public awareness was promoted through a variety of means throughout the states to inform the public that treatment was available for gambling problems
- Twenty-five agencies and sole proprietors currently provide problem gambling treatment at 30 sites across the state.
- A large universal prevention contract for \$750,000 over a 2.5 year period had been executed with Jones Advertising of Seattle.
- Approximately 550 clients had received treatment for problem gambling.
- Of the \$1.35 M that came in from gambling taxation, the Problem Gambling Program was able to spend \$1.33 M, providing prevention and treatment services throughout the state.

If you need help with gambling addictions, call the Problem Gambling Helpline at

1-800-547-6133

The call is free. It's confidential.