



## **Annual Report on Percentage of Gambling Revenues that Come From Problem Gamblers**

**Department of Human Services**

February 2020

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Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 3.197, requires the disclosure of the cost to prepare this report. The estimated cost of preparing this report is \$1,500.

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## I. Executive summary

This report provides information about Minnesota's various gambling revenues and attempts to identify the percentage of revenue that comes from individuals who experience problem gambling. Gambling revenue in the state is reported by the Minnesota State Lottery, Gambling Control Board and State Racing Commission. The proportion of gambling revenue in the state that comes from problem gamblers is neither reported nor collected. To satisfy the requirements of this report, studies from other jurisdictions have been reviewed, and findings from those studies were extrapolated to Minnesota's gambling revenues to estimate the prevalence of problem gambling in the state and the amount of gambling revenues that come from problem gambling. For the purposes of this report, gambling revenue means the total sales receipts as reported by the above named gaming agencies.

In 2019, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) conducted a survey to 1) assess the extent and impact of problem gambling among adults in Minnesota, 2) identify the groups in the population most affected by the problem and 3) provide information which will be the evidence base for the State's education, prevention, outreach, treatment and recovery support planning.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 245.98, DHS administers a program which funds awareness and education campaigns, a statewide helpline, treatment for inpatient and outpatient gambling addiction services, professional training opportunities and research designated to address the needs of Minnesota communities experiencing problems. As with substance use disorders, DHS recognizes a continuum of services which includes education, prevention, treatment and recovery supports to minimize the harmful effects of problem gambling. Prevention initiatives include both individual and population-based education strategies which minimize community risk of the harmful effects of problem gambling. Early intervention and treatment efforts involve both early identification of an individual's risk and treatment to arrest harmful effects of problem gambling.

The Institute for American Values, a body described as an independent, non-partisan group of scholars and leaders formed the Council on Casinos to advocate for informed public policy on gambling through research. A report from the Council on Casinos published in 2013 highlights that governments of Great Britain, Canada and Australia have commissioned comprehensive policy studies of casino gambling, while in the United States the leading funder of gambling research is the gambling industry<sup>1</sup>. A lack of non-partisan research can be seen as a barrier to a thorough understanding of problem gambling, which could be compared to well researched public health problems such as risky drinking or drug use. In order to address any risk to public health we first need to understand the scope of the problem through epidemiology. DHS acted on this recommendation by conducting a 2019 Survey on Recreation and Well-being, Gambling Participation and the Prevalence of Problem Gambling in Minnesota.

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<sup>1</sup> A Report from the Council on Casinos, Thirty-One Evidence-Based Propositions from the Health and Social Sciences, Institute for American Values, 2013.

## II. Legislation

Minnesota Statutes, section 245.981.

...(a) Each year by February 15, 2014, and thereafter, the commissioner of human services shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over compulsive gambling on the percentage of gambling revenues that come from gamblers identified as problem gamblers, or a similarly defined term, as defined by the National Council on Problem Gambling. The report must disaggregate the revenue by the various types of gambling, including, but not limited to: lottery; electronic and paper pull-tabs; bingo; linked bingo; and pari-mutuel betting.

### III. Introduction

Minnesota Statutes, section 245.981 requires an annual report on the percentage of gambling revenues that come from problem gamblers. The report must disaggregate the revenue by the various types of gambling.

The National Council on Problem Gambling describes problem gambling and gambling addiction as "gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits." The essential features of problem gambling and gambling addiction are:

- increasing preoccupation with gambling
- a need to bet more money, more often
- restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop "chasing losses"
- loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting serious and negative consequences

Problem gambling signs and symptoms often go undetected until the problem is severe. When problem gamblers do seek assistance, they likely do so after experiencing related legal, financial or relationship problems. In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide. Notably, no other addiction has a higher rate of suicide than gambling disorder.

Gambling disorder frequently co-occurs with Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and other behavioral health problems. According to the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, of people diagnosed with pathological gambling, 73.2 percent had an alcohol use disorder, 38.1 percent had a drug use disorder, 60.4 percent had nicotine dependence, 49.6 percent had a mood disorder, 41.3 percent had an anxiety disorder, and 60.8 percent had a personality disorder. Other studies suggest that between 10 percent and 15 percent of people with an SUD may also have a gambling problem. People who have both an SUD and pathological gambling have high rates of attention deficit disorder and antisocial personality disorder.

Clinicians use The South Oaks Gambling Screen along with criteria found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) to identify the extent of an individual's gambling problem. Problem gamblers who do not meet full criteria for gambling disorder might still have significant symptoms and problems related to their gambling. Problems related to problem gambling and gambling disorder may include psychological, financial, emotional, marital or legal difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

Although problem gambling and gambling addiction has been clinically defined and is easily identified when an individual is clinically assessed, less clear to policy makers in Minnesota is the prevalence of gambling disorders in the state and how much of the total revenue from gambling in the state is derived from problem gamblers.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncpgambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Gambling-Addiction-An-Introduction-for-Behavioral-Health-Providers-SAMHSA-2014.pdf>

In 2019, DHS conducted a survey to assess the extent and impact of problem gambling among adults in Minnesota, identify the groups in the population most affected by the problem and provide information which will be the evidence base for the State's education, prevention, outreach, treatment and recovery support planning. The contractor performed an analysis to determine:

- Rates of gambling participation by adults and determined sub-populations (types and frequency of gambling activities);
- Prevalence and characteristics of at-risk, problem, and disordered gambling among adults;
- Attitudes toward gambling;
- Risk factors for problem gambling, including socio-demographic factors, other related issues such as substance use, mental health and physical health issues;
- Additional research questions that were addressed:
  - Information about social and economic impacts of gambling
  - Impact of gambling expansion on rates of problem gambling
  - Awareness of and barriers to treatment and other gambling related services

## IV. Prevalence of Problem Gambling

2017 findings of studies conducted in other jurisdictions<sup>3</sup> estimate that between 15 and 33 percent of gambling revenue are generated by individuals with problem gambling. Extrapolating these findings to Minnesota's demographics from 1994 suggests the reported gross gambling revenue in Minnesota for state fiscal year 2018, generated by individuals who have gambling problems, ranged between \$408,576,053 and \$898,867,316.

The first adult data of problem gambling prevalence in Minnesota was provided by a survey sponsored by the Department of Human Services in 1994. In 2019, the Department requested proposals to conduct a survey on gambling among adults that will provide critical information for the development and provision of problem gambling services (see section V for additional information on the 2019 survey).

The 1994 study found 65 percent of the general adult population had participated in gambling activity during the previous year. Among those who reported gambling during the previous year, about 6.7 percent were categorized either as individuals experiencing problem gambling or probable pathological gambling. This number decreases to 4.4 percent when adults who have never gambled are included<sup>4</sup>.

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) currently reports that between 3 and 4 percent of U.S. adults would be identified as problem gamblers (meeting criteria either for gambling disorder or problem gambling).

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<sup>3</sup> Park, K. & Losch, M. (2016). Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans. Prevalence of Gambling. Cedar Falls, IA: Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa. [https://www.standupca.org/reports/CA\\_Problem\\_Gambling\\_Prevalence\\_Survey-Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.standupca.org/reports/CA_Problem_Gambling_Prevalence_Survey-Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Adult Survey of Minnesota Problem Gambling, 1994

NCPG also cites that approximately 60 percent of U.S. adults have gambled in the past year<sup>5</sup>. Of those reporting past year gambling, the rate of problem gambling is between 5 percent and 6.5 percent.

A 2015 survey<sup>6</sup> report that studied gambling attitudes and behaviors in Iowa found the following:

- 87.6% of adult Iowans have ever gambled
- 68.1% of adult Iowans have gambled during the past 12 months
- 39.1% of adult Iowans have gambled during the past 30 days
- The prevalence of gambling in the state declined from 2013 to 2015
- At-risk gamblers is estimated in 2015 at about 13% and this is slightly lower than in 2013

Problem gambling in the past 12 months was assessed using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) or symptoms of the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). The National Opinion Research Center's DSM Screen for Gambling Problems, commonly referred to as the NODS (Gerstein et al., 1999), was used to provide information about whether respondents would likely meet these criteria if screened by a clinician, counselor, or gambling treatment service provider.

- 1.25% in the past 12 months were classified as problem or pathological problem gambling using the PGSI and/or NODS

In a study of problem gambling in California, researchers estimate that between 296,500 (1.1%) and 490,100 (1.9%) of California adults can be classified as lifetime pathological gamblers. Another 449,700 (1.7%) to 713,300 (2.7%) of California adults can be classified as lifetime problem gamblers. An additional 2.2 million (8.6%) to 2.7 million (10.4%) of California adults can be classified as lifetime at-risk gamblers. At a minimum, three-quarters of a million California adults have experienced moderate to severe difficulties related to their gambling. The researchers added: "If we consider that each problem gambler is responsible for social and economic impacts that ripple out to their families, employers and communities, the proportion of the California population affected by gambling-related problems is even higher." <sup>7</sup>

The MN 2019 Survey of Recreation and Well-being among Minnesotans, Gambling Participation and the Prevalence of Problem Gambling in Minnesota, found that about 1.3% of Minnesota adults are problem gamblers and generate approximately 26% of the total revenue for state-regulated gambling activities. These findings indicate problem gamblers generate a disproportionate share of these activities<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> NCPG website 2014

<sup>6</sup> Park, K. & Losch, M. (2016). *Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans. Prevalence of Gambling*. Cedar Falls, IA: Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa.

<sup>7</sup> 2006 California Problem Gambling Prevalence Survey, Volberg, RA, Nysse-Carris, KL and Gerstein, DR, University of Chicago, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Preliminary findings from the DHS 2019 Survey. Final results to be available February 2020.



# V. The 2019 Survey on Gambling among Minnesota Adults

## Background

The Problem Gambling Program in the Department of Human Services is in charge of prevention and treatment services for problem gambling in Minnesota. MN Statute, section 245.98 tasks the Department of Human Services to conduct prevalence studies for adults to identify those at highest risk, this is to include a summary of available data describing the extent of the problem in Minnesota and the likely impact on compulsive gambling of each form of gambling. To establish and manage statewide strategy to prevent problem gambling and minimize the related problems, it is critical to determine the number and characteristics of people in the population who are at risk of problem gambling and those who are in need of treatment for problem gambling.

Information is also needed about attitude towards and awareness of treatment services for problem gambling as well as the barriers to seeking treatment. This survey project is being planned to gather data which would provide critical information for the development and provision of problem gambling services. The latest statewide survey on gambling was conducted in 1994<sup>9</sup> and there have been many changes, including the definition of problem gambling. We are in need of a new data set for more timely and accurate estimates for problem gambling in Minnesota.

The term “problem gambling” encompasses a range of problems and issues related to gambling that span a continuum. In the field of gambling studies, there have been many terms used to describe gambling problems, such as pathological gambling, gambling addiction, problem gambling and compulsive gambling. This leads to some confusions and inability to cross-check study results.

For this project, gambling disorder refers to pathological gambling. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)<sup>10</sup> defines gambling disorder as a “persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior” leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as indicated by at least four of the nine symptoms, such as tolerance, withdrawal, escaping, chasing losses, lying, risking relationship and problematic financial situation. The DSM-5 reclassifies gambling disorder as an addiction disorder rather than a disorder of impulse control as it was in the past. Research supports that the effects on the brain and neurological reward system identified in those with substance use disorder are similar to the changes found in the brains of individuals with gambling disorder.

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<sup>9</sup> Emerson MO, Laudergeran JC (1996). Gambling and problem gambling among adult Minnesotans: Changes 1990 to 1994. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 12(3), 291-304.

<sup>10</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC.

While a vast majority of the adult population (85%) reported to have gambled at least once in the past year<sup>11</sup>, gambling disorder is a relatively low base-rate phenomenon. This provides challenges for a population-based survey project on gambling. The first national U.S. survey on gambling was conducted in 1975 by a commission on the review of the national policy toward gambling and estimated 0.77% of “probable” compulsive gamblers with an additional 2.3% as “potential” compulsive gamblers.<sup>12</sup> The 2001 National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC) found that the respondents meeting criteria for past-year pathological gambling were too few to analyze.<sup>13</sup> More recently, based on a meta-analysis, it was estimated that there were about 5.8 million disordered gamblers (roughly 2.2% of the adult population) in the U.S. in need of treatment.<sup>14</sup>

While the prevalence of gambling disorder may be low, the harms related to problem gambling may affect people who don’t meet the strict criteria for gambling disorder. Gambling problems exist on a continuum and a substantial proportion of these problems may occur in people who engage in gambling in ways that may pose a risk of harm to the gambler or others, but has not produced effects that would result in a clinical diagnosis. This underscores the importance of expanding our focus beyond diagnostic criteria.

To establish an empirical base for a statewide plan for various problem gambling services in Minnesota, it is important to gather information on people in need of early intervention and prevention as well as treatment. By definition, individuals with gambling disorder would be categorized to be in need of treatment. Two additional groups will be examined in this project: problem gamblers as the target group for early intervention, and those at-risk of problem gambling as the possible target for prevention. Following some of the previous studies’ definitions<sup>1516</sup> and modifying them to the new criteria in the DSM-5, problem gambling is categorized by two or three positive symptoms out of nine DSM-5 criteria.

To identify the so called at-risk subgroup it may be necessary to examine factors other than the DSM criteria, such as the onset age of gambling, risky gambling behaviors (binge gambling and/or gambling alone) and other contextual factors (gambling problem by a close friend or family member, stressful life event and/or other health issues). The final definition and operationalization for this subgroup will be developed by the vendor in consultation with the State.

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<sup>11</sup> 2014 SAMHSA podcast on gambling, accessed online on May 2, 2017 at SAMHSA’s website.

<sup>12</sup> Kallick M, Suits D, Dielman T, et al. A survey of American Gambling Attitudes and Behavior. Ann Arbor (MI): University of Michigan Press; 1979. (Accessed online at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015040497235;view=1up;seq=50> May 1, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Petry NM, Stinson FS, Grant BF. Comorbidity of DSM-IV pathological gambling and other psychiatric disorders: results from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2005;66(5):564-574.

<sup>14</sup> Marotte J, Bahan M et al. (2014) 2013 National Survey of Problem Gambling Services. Washington D.C: National Council on Problem Gambling.

<sup>15</sup>Volberg R, Nysse-Carris K, Gerstein D. (2006) 2006 California Problem Gambling Prevalence Survey-Final Report. NORC at the University of Chicago.

<sup>16</sup> Welte, J, Barnes, G, et al. (2008). The Prevalence of Problem Gambling Among US Adolescents and Young Adults: Results from a National Survey. *J Gambli Stud*. 24, 119-133.

## **The MN 2019 Survey of Recreation and Well-being among Minnesotans, Gambling Participation and the Prevalence of Problem Gambling in Minnesota**

The Minnesota Department of Human Services requested proposals from qualified responders to provide professional and technical services to evaluate and report on gambling behaviors among adults in Minnesota. The primary purpose of the survey is to assess the extent and impact of problem gambling among adults in Minnesota, identify the groups in the population most affected by the problem and provide information which will be the evidence base for the State's education, prevention, outreach, treatment and recovery support planning. The contractor was required to perform analysis to determine:

- Rates of gambling participation by adults and determined sub-populations (types and frequency of gambling activities);
- Prevalence and characteristics of at-risk, problem, and disordered gambling among adults;
- Attitudes toward gambling;
- Risk factors for problem gambling, including socio-demographic factors, other related issues such as substance use, mental health and physical health issues;
- Additional research questions that may be addressed:
  - Information about social and economic impacts of gambling
  - Impact of gambling expansion on rates of problem gambling
  - Awareness of and barriers to treatment and other gambling related services

The population was non-institutionalized adults in Minnesota who are 18 years or older. The contractor selected a representative sample from the population, developed a questionnaire and conducted a survey to gather data that will be used to provide the foundation for planning and implementing evidence-based prevention, early intervention and treatment services to address gambling problems in Minnesota. The final product will be a detailed technical report and a data set with a codebook.

The vendor conducted a mailed survey from a random sample of 35,000 households across the state and oversampled an additional 10,000 households in geographic areas (census tracts and block groups) with higher densities of American Indians. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions and the potential social undesirability of admitting gambling behavior, we believe the anonymity of the mailed survey will elicit the most valid responses about these behaviors from respondents. The final survey report will be completed and available in February 2020.

## VI. Gambling Revenue

Minnesota Statutes, section 245.981 requires an annual report on the percentage of gambling revenues that come from problem gamblers. The report must disaggregate the revenue by the various types of gambling. Gambling revenue in the state is reported by the Minnesota State Lottery, Gambling Control Board and State Racing Commission. However, the proportion of gambling revenue in the state that comes from problem gamblers is neither reported nor collected. For the purposes of this report, gambling revenue means the total sales receipts as reported by the above named gaming agencies.

2017 findings of studies conducted in other jurisdictions estimate that between 15 and 33 percent of gambling revenue are generated by individuals with problem gambling. Extrapolating these findings to Minnesota's demographics from 1994 suggests the reported gross gambling revenue in Minnesota for state fiscal year 2014, generated by individuals who have gambling problems, ranged between \$266,082,658 and \$585,381,848.

Nationally in 2013, \$60.6 million dollars of public funds were invested into problem gambling services<sup>17</sup>. In Oregon in 2008, they found that every \$1 spent on treatment saved more than \$2 dollars in social costs<sup>18</sup>.

Several of the high risk populations identified in the current SAMHSA Strategic Plan have been found to be at higher risk for gambling problems. Gambling addiction is an emerging public health priority given the unprecedented amount of existing and expanding gambling. The estimated six million adult problem gamblers are five times more likely to have co-occurring alcohol dependence, four times more likely to abuse drugs, and three times more likely to be depressed<sup>19</sup>.

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) Executive Director Keith Whyte notes: "When gambling addiction is integrated into health systems, treatment for gambling problems will reduce social costs and increase savings for states through improved recovery rates and decreased demand on traditional public sector substance abuse and mental health systems. By providing recovery and therapeutic approaches that are appropriate for problem gamblers and their families alongside other addiction services as called for in the report, recovery rates will increase for a wide variety of health and substance abuse disorders<sup>20</sup>."

### Gambling Revenue Information

Gambling revenue information is collected by the state through the Gambling Control Board, the State Lottery and the State Racing Commission. The percentage of gambling revenues that come from problem gamblers is not identified in revenues reported, nor is it collected. For state fiscal year 2018, the three agencies reported total gross revenue of \$2,723,840,354. These agencies could not report what percentage of the revenue was from people who have gambling problems. The following information was provided through reports from each agency:

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ncpgambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2013NationalSurveyofProblemGamblingServices-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.calpg.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Cost-Benefit-of-Problem-Gambling-Services.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ncpgambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Surgeon-General-Landmark-Report-Addiction-Nov-2016.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ncpgambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Surgeon-General-Landmark-Report-Addiction-Nov-2016.pdf>

- Minnesota State Lottery reported \$596.5 million for fiscal year 2018<sup>21</sup>.
- The Gambling Control Board reported gross receipts of \$1,530,054,000 in fiscal year 2018<sup>22</sup>. The fiscal year sales of each type of gambling activity is listed below:

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>
Pull-Tabs	\$1,866,729,000
Bingo	\$90,001,000
Paddlewheels	\$19,169,000
Raffles	\$12,274,000
Tipboards	\$12,328,000
Total:	\$2,000,548,000

- The Gambling Control Board reports an increase in all forms of charitable gambling from FY 2017 to FY 2018.
- The State Racing Commission reported Fiscal Year 2018<sup>23</sup> revenues of \$126,792,354:
  - Card club operations overseen by the Minnesota Racing Commission accounted for \$70,373,608
  - Live Horse Racing Wagering by Persons Outside of Minnesota: \$43,866,663
  - Live Racing Wagering On-Site: \$12,552,083
- FY 2018 marks the 8th year in a row for increased sales with a 15.6% increase over FY 2017.
- There are approximately 2,804 sales locations in Minnesota (primarily bars and veteran posts).
- Pull-tabs make up the bulk of total sales with 93% of \$2 billion in sales.
- All forms of charitable gambling show increased activity. From FY 2017 to FY 2018, bingo increased 15.7%, paddlewheels 5.5%, pull-tabs 15.9%, raffles 9.6%, and tipboards 6.0%.
- On June 30, 2018, there were nearly 1,000 sites with electronic pull-tabs (36% of total sites). For FY 2018, gross sales from electronic pull-tabs were over \$360 million. Electronic pull-tab sales increased 80% from FY 2017.
- Paper pull-tab manufacturers have also increased their sales and marketing efforts, rolling out an average of 528 new games each month.
- A record \$1.6 billion was paid to players in prizes. The average prize payout was 84.3% of gross receipts. That left 15.7%, or \$314 million, in net receipts for expenses, charitable contributions, taxes, and other lawful purposes such as property taxes and building expenses for veteran’s posts and fraternal clubs.
- After prizes, expenses, and state gambling taxes were paid, over \$83 million was available for lawful purpose contributions. These funds benefit military veterans programs and youth activities, such as youth hockey and soccer, as well as other civic groups and outdoor activities, such as snowmobile trails and environmental programs.

Researching the revenues derived from problem gambling in other jurisdictions helps policy makers in Minnesota estimate revenue from problem gambling in this state. The Minnesota Department of Human Services is hopeful that the 2019 survey data will serve as the basis for future problem gambling prevalence surveys in Minnesota.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.mnlottery.cms.assets/Annual-Report/FY18-Annual-Report-LR>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2018/mandated/181068.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2019/mandated/190460.pdf>

## VII. Community Engagement

### Listening Sessions

The mission of the DHS Problem Gambling Program is to ensure the availability and accessibility of culturally-responsive and recovery-oriented compulsive gambling education and treatment for individuals and families affected by compulsive gambling and gambling addiction. The Department of Human Services (DHS) collaborated with the Lao Assistance Center over a 2 and a half year period from July 2014 to July 2016 to conduct focused listening sessions aimed at developing a community engaged process to understand the impact of gambling on the individual, family and the community. Community engagement allowed opportunities to learn and understand the values and perceptions on gambling and gambling prevalence in the Lao, Cambodian and Vietnamese communities of Minnesota. As this collaboration continues, DHS will work towards the development of a continuum of care service system that is responsive to the beliefs, languages, and cultures of Minnesota’s diverse communities.

Participants in the listening sessions convened by DHS in the fall of 2015 and 2018 communicated that gambling is pervasive throughout their communities. According to the findings of the subsequent report “betting is widely participated in, and held at nearly all major community functions, including weddings, birthday parties, after dinner, funerals, etc.” Common forms of gambling include card games, casino gambling and sports betting. Although gambling was described as a social event, participants also mentioned that members of their communities gamble despite the risk for financial loss. Youth in particular recognize the financial risk, but also risk social isolation if they don’t participate in gambling activities.

When the listening sessions focused on attitudes regarding seeking help for problem gambling, participants were not in favor of seeking professional help. Individuals described lack of trust, a preference to handle their own problems, and minimizing the problems associated with gambling as barriers to seeking help for their problem gambling. The most pervasive attitude revealed was a common belief that gambling is not a problem but part of normal social interaction.

### Community Engagement: Lao Community Capacity Development

In 2018, the DHS Problem Gambling Program partnered with the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, Lao Assistance Center and Dr. Serena King as the Primary Researcher and Project Consultant for a program that studied gambling addiction in the Lao community and provides support services to affected individuals and their family<sup>24</sup>.

The program had two phases:

1. Building the survey and research design

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.minnpost.com/new-americans/2017/11/why-gambling-so-prevalent-minnesota-s-lao-community-and-what-s-being-done-addr>

2. Training Lao Assistance Center staff to identify gambling issues, and provide education about the difference between “responsible gambling” and “problem gambling<sup>25</sup>.” The education program includes peer or health care worker led gambling groups.

## Survey

An online survey of gambling behavior in the Lao community was distributed within community networks and online. The survey examined:

1. Extent of gambling involvement, gambling types;
2. Age and gender differences in gambling and gambling problems;
3. Barriers to accessing care (cultural, financial, language, etc.);
4. Preferred educational and outreach/intervention approaches;
5. Impact on financial, emotional and physical health in the Lao community;
6. Casino involvement and perceptions, survey of types of gambling (for example, house betting, culturally specific games, lottery, sports betting, fantasy sports);
7. Pathways for providing services and education to the community about gambling;

## Education

Because of the stigma and resistance to accessing mental health care among the Lao (and other SE Asian groups), an educational program may fill an important need and bridge access and openness to seeking out services. The education is not a replacement for therapy, however, this type of program has the advantage of reaching a larger number of people because of how it is packaged: the development of a gambling education program would be informed by the literature (albeit limited) on Asian gambling and by the results of the survey; it will be delivered by a health outreach worker in the community who can speak both English and Lao.

In 2019, DHS issued a Request for Proposals soliciting proposals to increase problem gambling initiatives in diverse communities including expanding on the work conducted in partnership with the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota.

## Peer or Health Care Worker Led Gambling Groups: Lao Community

The educational program will include Peer or health care worker led gambling groups. For research purposes and to focus efforts around a specific subpopulation, participants will be screened using the South Oaks Gambling Screen translated in Lao and given to group participants in the educational program. Only participants with mild to moderate levels of gambling will be selected for eligibility in the group. The program will be aimed to address those who may not have evidence of a full blown pathological gambling diagnosis.

Educational program materials will include information regarding referrals to gambling treatment programs, but the program is intended to look more like a self-help group educational program than therapy itself. In fact, the

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.minnpost.com/new-americans/2017/11/why-gambling-so-prevalent-minnesota-s-lao-community-and-what-s-being-done-addr>

program will make clear to all participants that the group is educational, and is not therapy and cannot substitute for therapy. The program will provide all group leaders and participants many resources to access care as part of their packet of information.

After the training of the bilingual group leader, the leader(s) will engage a small group of individuals on a psychoeducation program around gambling that has foundations in prevention and intervention techniques.

There will be a three to five part series including a professionally-produced video (and voiceover in Lao) educational training, and self-help talks. The video will be used with the manual and worksheets.

If the program produces good data on outcomes, it will have the potential to be translated into other languages including Hmong, Cambodian, Thai, etc. All materials will be developed in an oral educational format (video training for the participants and the leaders), and 20 minute videos will be presented on the below topics with accompanying handouts and discussion starters in small groups.

<http://www.uclagamblingprogram.org/treatment/workbook.php>

## Substance Use Disorder Reform

In June 2016, the Department of Human Services convened a core stakeholder workgroup for the first of five 3-hour work sessions to continue efforts to modernize Minnesota's substance use disorder (SUD) treatment system. The workgroup incorporated and built on the recommendations of the 2013 Legislative Report: Minnesota's Model of Care for Substance Use Disorder and the input collected in the fall of 2015 and 2018 DHS listening sessions.

Problem gambling recommendations included the following:

- **Cross-addiction education.** Support increased education regarding the risks of cross-addiction when treating gambling disorder or substance use disorder. Support increased cross-referral, integrated treatment services and continuing care when providing services to individuals with gambling and substance use disorder.
- **Ensure best practices.** Work with stakeholders to enhance the current requirements to ensure the use of best practices and person-centered recovery-driven outcomes.
- **Telehealth.** Support increased use of telehealth to expand access to problem gambling treatment. Increase awareness of telehealth technical assistance opportunities and the availability of teleconferencing services.
- **Invest in Culturally Informed Prevention and Intervention Services.** Dedicate funds to support racial and ethnic community informed collaborations that provide valuable information about how gambling impacts disparate communities and develop prevention, education, and early intervention services to respond to community needs in a culturally responsive manner.
- **Research.** Establish and develop research to provide data-driven decision-making, such as the 2019 MN Survey of Recreation and Well-being, Gambling Participation and the Prevalence of Problem Gambling in Minnesota.



## VIII. Report recommendations

1. Support increased education regarding the risks of cross-addiction when treating gambling disorder or substance use disorder. Support increased cross-referral, integrated treatment services and continuing care when providing services to individuals with gambling and substance use disorder.
2. Expand community engagement collaborations that provide valuable information about how gambling impacts at-risk cultural and ethnic communities and develop prevention and educational materials and other types of resources to respond to community needs.
3. Invest in Culturally Informed Prevention and Intervention Services. Dedicate funds to support racial and ethnic community informed collaborations that provide valuable information about how gambling impacts disparate communities and develop prevention and intervention services to respond to community needs in a culturally responsive manner.
4. Invest in primary prevention initiatives that will use the information gained from research and community engagement projects in order to develop the most effective types of primary prevention and early intervention strategies that are data-based and data-driven to better affect problem gambling at the community level using culturally responsive approaches.
5. Support increased use of telehealth to expand access to problem gambling treatment. Increase awareness of telehealth technical assistance opportunities and the availability of teleconferencing services.
6. Invest in research to ensure that service delivery systems for problem gambling are not compromised by perceived economic incentives and prevent industry interests from influencing resources intended to address problem gambling.