



PRESS RELEASE

Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance Participates in Problem Gambling Awareness Month | March 2016

“Problem Gambling; Have the Conversation”

Roseville, MN, (February 25, 2016)—Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance and the National Council on Problem Gambling recognize Problem Gambling Awareness Month in March 2016. The campaign theme, “Problem Gambling: Have the Conversation,” is intended to encourage the community to be open to discussing gambling problems and to learn about resources to get help. To raise awareness, Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance will extend its outreach efforts through a media campaign, public service announcements, and by advertising the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline and online resources.

“‘Problem Gambling: Have the Conversation’ is a terrific theme for the awareness month. People who get in trouble with gambling are very secretive. Their shame, and that of their families, prevents them from exploring the issue and seeking help,” said Cathie Perrault, executive director of the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, the Minnesota affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling. “We want to tell people that gambling can become an addiction just like alcohol and drugs. It is important to seek help early before things get too far out of hand, and treatment is available at no cost.”

Gambling addiction is often difficult to detect because its outward signs may not be obvious. However, it is estimated that there are 6–8 million Americans who are compulsive gamblers, and each of them affects the lives their families, friends, employers and communities. Most gamblers struggle in silence until job, family problems, or even legal issues finally bring the addiction into the open.

RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE FOR MINNESOTANS

As with the rest of the country, gambling addiction impacts Minnesota. “We estimate that over 200,000 Minnesotans struggle with some level of gambling problem or gambling addiction,” said Perrault. “Most struggle in silence due to the shame in their inability to stop gambling, and they live in fear as they go further and further into debt. They don’t realize that there is a way out.”

In Minnesota, Problem Gambling Awareness Month will draw attention to the local resources available. According to a recent poll conducted by Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance, 67 percent of Minnesotans do not know that the state of Minnesota pays for

treatment of individuals with a gambling problem (source: NPGA survey, fall 2014). “This is a treatable condition,” said Perrault. “Minnesota residents just have to call 1-800-333-HOPE and they can begin to heal.”

One of the roles of the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance is to help Minnesotans understand problem gambling and to encourage gamblers and family members to seek help earlier, before an addiction gets out of hand. “The state’s 24-hour helpline can be a lifeline for family and friends concerned about someone’s gambling, as well as for gamblers themselves,” said Perrault.

Locally, there are a number of helpful resources for Minnesotans dealing with problem gambling:

- Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline (call 1-800-333-HOPE): Available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Resource for both those struggling with gambling problems, but also those who know someone who is struggling. Helpline counselors will discuss options and provide referrals to treatment providers in the area.
- The website www.GetGamblingHelp.com provides information.
- [Minnesota Gamblers Anonymous](#) and [Gam-Anon](#) (1-888-HELP1MN and 1-888-GA-HELPS): Offer free Twelve Step support meetings and other resources.
- [Department of Human Services](#): Lists of Minnesota State Problem Gambling Treatment Network counselors, therapists, support groups, and inpatient and outpatient treatment programs.
- [Minnesota Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance](#): This site includes educational information for numerous audiences and provides links to other resources, research and newsletters that deal with gambling issues in Minnesota.
- [Minnesota State Lottery](#): Additional information on local resources; includes contact information.
- For additional information about the “Problem Gambling: Have the Conversation” campaign, visit <http://www.ncpgambling.org/programs-resources/programs/awareness-month/>

ABOUT NORTHSTAR PROBLEM GAMBLING ALLIANCE

The Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance (NPGA) is a nonprofit, gambling-neutral organization dedicated to improving the lives of Minnesotans affected by problem gambling. Staff, board members and general members speak to community groups and engage in advocacy at the state and federal level for funding to support problem-gambling prevention and treatment. NPGA is the Minnesota Affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling and works with the National Council and other affiliates across the country to help prevent and treat problem gambling. NPGA represents an alliance of individuals and organizations with one common belief: that problem gambling is a serious public health issue that is both preventable and treatable.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

From the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), the Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) campaign is a grassroots public awareness and outreach campaign. The goal is to educate the general public, health care professionals and legislative leaders about the warning signs of problem gambling and raise awareness about the help that is available both locally and nationally. The campaign was previously held during the first week of March to coincide with March Madness, one of the most widely bet upon events in the U.S. Now, the campaign takes place during the entire month of March!

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