

# NEWS RELEASE



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***Governor Kulongoski proclaims  
Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Oregon***

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Problem gambling is a significant public health problem that affects thousands of Oregonians, their families, communities and employers. In recognition of this major issue, Governor Ted Kulongoski proclaimed March 7-13 as “Problem Gambling Awareness Week” in Oregon to coincide with the nationally declared awareness week.”

More than 74,000 Oregon adults, or 2.7 percent, are believed to meet the criteria of a problem or pathological gambler. Yet only a fraction of these men and women seek treatment. Of the 1,861 Oregon problem gamblers that received publicly funded treatment in the fiscal year of 2008-2009, the average debt was \$32,000. More than 100 clients reported gambling debts in excess of \$100,000. In addition, about 38 percent of clients reported committing illegal acts to obtain gambling money; nearly 48 percent had suicidal thoughts; and 9 percent had attempted suicide in the past six months.

Treatment is available and it works. Oregon is recognized nationally as a leader in the field of problem gambling services. Treatment and counseling services are available to any Oregon resident at no charge to the individual. Services are also available to the family of the problem gambler at no cost. Nearly 40 outpatient treatment clinics across the state administer services. Oregon invests nearly \$4.5 million annually to reduce and/ or prevent the negative effects of gambling.

**(more)**

“Most people can gamble without harmful consequences,” said Paul D. Potter, problem gambling services manager at the Oregon Department of Human Services. “But for anyone who develops a problem, it is important for them to be aware of the resources that can help them into recovery.”

If you or someone you know is gambling too much, you can call the Oregon Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-877-MY-LIMIT or chat live online with a certified gambling counselor at [www.1877mylimit.org/](http://www.1877mylimit.org/). Each year the statewide helpline receives more than 2,000 calls.

During the week of March 7-13, communities nationwide are working to raise awareness of the consequences of problem gambling and the resources available for individuals whose gambling is causing disruption in their lives.

For events in your area, log onto the National Problem Gambling Awareness Week at [www.npgaw.org/participants/otherpartners.asp#OR](http://www.npgaw.org/participants/otherpartners.asp#OR).

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