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MEDIA CONTACT

DHS.Press@illinois.gov

State of Illinois Recognizes March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Confidential hotline and text line offers support, art contest raises awareness of gambling issues

CHICAGO—Governor JB Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and the Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) recognize March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in Illinois and are highlighting ways the state is working to prevent gambling disorder and support those in need of recovery.

To raise awareness around gambling disorder and honor those in recovery, participating buildings in downtown Chicago will be lit teal, and a statewide art contest will shine a spotlight on the power of recovery. Throughout the month, IDHS will also partner with providers across the state to raise awareness around treatment options for those in need.

“Individuals who struggle with gambling disorder often hide their behavior from family and friends, but we want all Illinois residents to know there is hope and a path to recovery,” **said Dulce M. Quintero, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services.**

“Problem gambling awareness and responsible gambling education demand our attention, effort, and action,” **said Illinois Gaming Board Administrator Marcus D. Fruchter.** “The IGB maintains its commitment to the safety of Illinois gaming and is pleased to collaborate with IDHS, Building Owners and Managers Association of Chicago, and other entities during this month and throughout the year, to encourage and facilitate responsible gaming, address problem gambling head on, and ensure that those who need help get the support, resources and services they deserve without stigmatization and undue barriers.”

During March, the Illinois Lottery will raise awareness about problem gambling across the state through radio spots, billboards, digital and social media, and direct outreach to players and lottery retailers.

“March is the month when the concentrated efforts of the state can amplify and bring attention to this important issue and is a continuation of the work we do all year round.

In collaboration with ICPG and IDHS, our focus is to raise awareness and show people where they can go to seek help,” **said Illinois Lottery Director Harold Mays.**

IDHS’s Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) continues to work with gambling providers to expand outreach and raise awareness for the problems gambling can cause.

As part of its "Are You Really Winning?" Campaign, IDHS/SUPR has launched the third annual gambling disorder art contest to raise awareness of gambling issues and to deliver a sense of hope to those who are struggling.

Open to all Illinois residents ages 14 and over, the art contest highlights Problem Gambling Awareness Month. Accepted media include drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, collage, digital art, fiber art, textiles, glass art, photography, ceramic art, assemblage, sculpture, graphic design, and illustration. The winning submissions will be unveiled in June and will be featured in several public exhibits throughout the state. To learn more, [click here](#).

According to research by Health Resources in Action, 4%, or nearly 400,000, of Illinois residents, have a gambling disorder, and another 7%, or 700,000, are at risk of developing a gambling disorder. To meet this need, IDHS/SUPR has helped providers prepare for an increase in problem gamblers coming in for treatment. Illinois is now the fourth largest state in terms of total calls/texts/chats to the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline. In State Fiscal Year 2024, 57,478 screenings were conducted by treatment providers, representing a 19% increase over the previous year.

Over the past five years, there have been over 815 clinicians trained to provide gambling disorder treatment services in Illinois. This year, IDHS/SUPR will provide monthly webinars focused on gambling disorder, a two-day Summit on Problem Gambling, a 30-hour Gambling Counselor Training, three community and culturally focused conferences (Black/African American, Latinx, and Asian cultures) on gambling disorder, a physician focused conference on gambling disorder, as well as a virtual introduction to the Eisenberg Disordered Gambling Emphasized Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (EDGE SBIRT) tool. To learn more, [click here](#).

IGB hosts the State’s Self-Exclusion Program for Problem Gamblers which allows individuals who have determined they are problem gamblers to exclude themselves from all casinos and sports wagering in Illinois. As of February 2025, a total of 15,590 individuals were on the self-exclusion list. For more information on the program, [click here](#).

If gambling has become a problem for you or someone you know, call 1-800-GAMBLER. Help is also available through the website AreYouReallyWinning.com and by texting GAMB to 833234.

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