

IDHS Recognizes March As Problem Gambling Awareness Month

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CHICAGO - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) today recognized March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) in Illinois. To raise awareness around gambling disorders 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.

"This month is an extremely important time for IDHS and our providers to raise awareness for the recovery support services available for gambling disorder. We would like to thank BOMA Chicago for helping us in our efforts to raise awareness by lighting the city skyline teal from March 25-31 during the 2024 men's and women's NCAA basketball tournaments," said Dulce M. Quintero, Secretary Designate of the Illinois Department of Human Services. "Individuals who struggle with gambling disorder often hide their behavior from family members and we want all Illinois residents to know there is hope and a path to recovery."

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. IDHS launched an art contest, open to all residents of Illinois age 14 and over, to highlight Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The program is part of the new "Are You Really Winning?" Campaign.

The juried art program aims to raise awareness of gambling issues and to deliver a sense of hope to those who are struggling. 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 displayed in June. To learn more, [click here](#).

According to research by Health Resources in Action (HRiA), four percent, or nearly 400,000, of Illinois residents have a gambling disorder, and another seven percent, or 700,000, are at risk of developing a gambling disorder.

SUPR has also helped providers prepare for an increase in problem gamblers coming in for treatment. Illinois is now the 4th largest state in terms of total calls/texts/chats to the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline. In State Fiscal Year 2023, 48,513 screenings were conducted by treatment providers, representing a 110% increase over the previous year.

Over the past four years, there have been over 679 clinicians trained to provide gambling disorder treatment services in Illinois. This year, 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 (Black/African American, Latinx, and Asian cultures) focused conferences on gambling disorder, as well as a virtual introduction to the Eisenberg Disordered Gambling Emphasized SBIRT (EDGE SBIRT) screening tool. To learn more, [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.