

Problem Gambling Services: A Lifesaver

I woke up and I was in the intensive care unit. I heard voices and realized they were my daughters. They were crying. What was going on? Why was I here? As I began to regain my thoughts, it started coming back to me. I had taken an overdose of pills. I wanted to die. I couldn't face my family or myself for that matter, because of the shame, embarrassment and guilt, all due to my compulsive gambling. I had promised I'd never do it again. But I did. They had bailed me out so many times. How could I tell them that I was in debt again, all of my utilities were going to be turned off, the IRS was looking for me, and I risked the repossession of my car? The only answer was to kill myself. So that's what I tried to do. That was over a year ago. And now, listening to my family, I wonder, what was I thinking? I have been through countless hours of therapy at Problem Gambling Services. I attend Gamblers Anonymous, participate in a weekly Women's Recovery Group, meet with a therapist weekly, and my daughters meet with a therapist also. Most importantly, I haven't gambled and I am repairing my financial, spiritual and family life with lots of help from the folks at Problem Gambling Services.

Anonymous Problem Gambler

DMHAS Problem Gambling Services (PGS) is the statewide organization responsible for problem gambling treatment, prevention and intervention services at multiple locations throughout Connecticut. As the nation's oldest continuously operating outpatient treatment service for problem gamblers, it is a well-recognized leader in the development and delivery of services for problem gamblers and their families. With annualized funding of about \$1.7 million, PGS funds and operates treatment services at 16 outpatient sites and one site for brief residential treatment. Each year about 750 gamblers and family members receive help through these services. In addition, PGS funds and provides a variety of other services, including prevention, counselor training, a gambling-specific helpline, advocacy and outreach, and research. More than \$1.1 million is allocated to fund services at non-profit treatment agencies, such as the Wheeler Clinic, and Regional Action Councils, such as the Regional Youth/Adult Substance Abuse Project in Bridgeport.



PGS Clients' Preferred Forms of Gambling:

- ✚ Slots- 29%
- ✚ Other Casino games- 31%
- ✚ Sports Gambling- 8%
- ✚ Scratch tickets- 10%
- ✚ Animal Races/OTB- 6%
- ✚ Lottery Draw Tickets-3%
- ✚ Miscellaneous- 13%



How we spend our funds:

- Treatment: 59.9 percent
- Prevention: 16.4 percent
- Administration: 11.6 percent
- Helpline: 8 percent
- Training and Education: 2.3 percent
- Outreach: 1.6 percent
- Research: 0.2 percent



**For help with problem gambling, call
 800-346-6238**

Currently the DMHAS PGS, in collaboration with the Department of Education, is developing a comprehensive approach to school-based youth problem gambling prevention. This project, funded by a one-time appropriation of \$200,000., includes a Yale University survey of more than 4,000 high school students. The Yale study, the largest and most detailed study of youth gambling behavior yet conducted in this region, complements a concurrent analysis of school readiness to address youth gambling. In addition, we have funded four replicable pilot prevention programs that can be readily adopted by motivated schools.