



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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The March Madness of Problem Gambling

For Immediate Release

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(Green Bay, WI) – Conference tournaments are wrapping up and the bracket will soon be set for the drive to the Final Four. March Madness is approaching full swing with the action on the court coupled with gambling action, both legal and illegal.

Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director Rose Gruber says March Madness involves a few dollars in an office pool for most people. Yet for those with a gambling addiction, the pressure of March Madness may be too much.

“No doubt there’s a lot of excitement when it comes to the college basketball tournament,” Gruber said. “But add March Madness to the recent stress of the holidays and the Super Bowl, and the tournament may be the last straw for some gamblers. It’s definitely a very busy time of year for the Problem Gambling Helpline in Wisconsin.”

Gruber also notes that college basketballs “Big Dance” also appears to be a big draw for young gamblers. “In the past, gambling was viewed primarily as an adult activity,” Gruber said. “Gambling today, however, has become more and more popular among teens.” She notes that an estimated five percent to seven percent of Wisconsin’s population may be problem or compulsive gamblers. That percentage is far higher, six percent to 12 percent, for young people.

The good news is that help is available and compulsive gambling is treatable. “Certainly, those who have a gambling problem or feel they may be headed that way are encouraged to call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5,” Gruber said. “We put people in touch with resources to help them deal with the problem.”

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling also holds its annual statewide conference during March Madness. This year’s conference is March 19-20 at the Kalahari Resort and Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells.

For more information about problem gambling, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling or the 11th Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference, visit www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling is funded by a public awareness grant from the State of Wisconsin and additional funding from donors, including Wisconsin Native American Tribes. The Council operates a 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, distributes informational brochures, organizes an annual statewide conference, makes presentations on problem gambling and conducts training sessions for treatment providers interested in the special requirements for working with compulsive gamblers and their families. For more information, visit www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5 for confidential help.

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