



A Potential Link Between Youth and Gambling

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SPOKESPERSON: *Available for comment*

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(Green Bay, WI) – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction released its 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey recently and it includes information that should give Wisconsin school districts pause when they consider cutting extracurricular activities.

“Extracurricular activities give a student somewhere safe to be and something fun to do with their peers,” says Rose Blozinski, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling. “If those activities go away, the students will be looking for something else to do. Some might turn to online gambling, sports betting, cards, and gaming.”

The facts on youth gambling: (Information taken from www.youthgambling.com)

- 4-6% of high school students are addicted to gambling and another 10-14% are at risk of developing an addiction
- Gambling is readily accessible via computers and cell phones
- Gambling problems can affect all aspects of a person's development; social life, academic or professional life, mood, personality, physical and mental health, and personal relationships.
- 60-80% of teens have gambled in the past year

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG) is urging parents to take some time and talk to their children about the risk factors of gambling.

“Parents and others should be aware that teens and young adults are among the highest risk groups for developing gambling problems,” said Rose Blozinski. “Youth rates of being at risk for problem gambling are 2 to 3 times higher than adult rates,” Rose Blozinski says parents should be talking to their middle school and high school age kids, as well as those heading off to college.

WCPG offers in class presentations on gambling disorders. This interactive presentation is designed to fit the class schedule. As with other addictions, our youth are at high risk to become addicted to gambling. We believe awareness, education, and providing them with the tools to recognize gambling disorders will help prevent future problems.

A video alternative is available if an in person presentation doesn't work for the teacher. We recognize that nothing can compare with an actual person delivering a topical message; however, we believe that this video will educate, garner discussion, and serve as a basis of information on the risks of gambling for students.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-426-2535, Text at 1-850-888-4673 or Live Chat through the WCPG website at 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 1-800-426-2535, Textline at 1-850-888-4673, and Chat available on www.wi-problemgamblers.org, 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.*