



Iowa Department of Public Health
Gambling Treatment Program
October 2017

Gambling and Gaming in Iowa

Iowans seeking to gamble can choose from 19 casinos licensed by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, three tribal casinos, 2,400 lottery outlets, and over 2,700 licensed social, charitable and amusement games. In addition, Iowans have access to a broad range of social media and smartphone gambling-like games and applications, as well as an expanding number of internet-based and other illegal gaming.

Problem Gambling Defined

For most people, gambling is recreational; however, for some people, gambling leads to serious problems. Problem gambling means participation in any form of gambling activity that creates one or more negative consequences to the gambler, their family or loved ones, employer or community. The adjacent table lists signs and symptoms that can help determine if an individual should seek help for gambling behaviors.

Gambling Disorder – Diagnostic Criteria¹
1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling.
4. Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
5. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing one’s losses”).
7. Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve financial situations caused by gambling.

Overview of Services

Services funded through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Problem Gambling Program are guided by a public health approach that considers the biological, behavioral, economic and cultural determinants that influence gambling and health. This approach incorporates a balance of outreach, education, prevention, treatment and recovery support efforts that work together to minimize the potential negative impacts of gambling on individuals, families and communities, and recognizes gambling’s availability, cultural and social acceptance, as well as monetary appeal.

¹ American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

IDPH contracts with 11 local agencies to provide problem gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services in 11 service regions that together encompass all 99 Iowa counties.

Problem gambling treatment programs must be licensed by IDPH and are selected for contracting through a competitive request for proposals process.

Problem gambling services include:

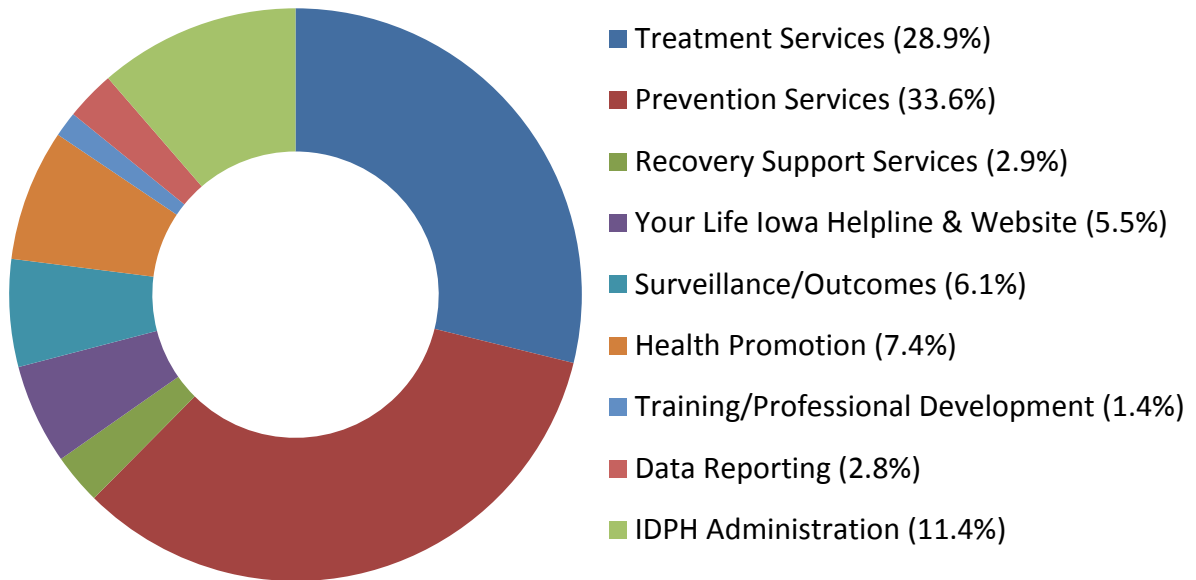
- **Counseling** for problem gamblers and those affected by the gambling of a family member. This includes e-therapy (phone, secure web-based portals and video-conferencing), which is available for eligible persons with barriers to accessing face-to-face treatment services.
- **Prevention Services** providing information and education on the risks and responsibilities of gambling and assistance for individuals at increased risk of problem gambling.
- **Helpline referral and education** through 1-800-BETS OFF helpline and website which have been integrated into the new Your Life Iowa helpline and website (yourlifeiowa.org/gambling), and offers online chat as well as a new text option.
- **Recovery Support Services** providing helpful supportive services like transportation assistance for persons receiving problem gambling counseling.
- **Training and professional development** for counselors providing treatment for problem gambling and common co-occurring conditions like substance use and mental health disorders.

Problem Gambling Services – Utilization				
State Fiscal Year	# of Prevention Hours	# of Clients Treated	# of Gambling Calls to 1-800-BETS OFF	Traffic to www.1800BETSOFF.org
2007	5,963	1,146	3,613	-
2008	4,814	940	3,820	-
2009	5,816	905	3,435	-
2010	9,077	948	3,942	-
2011	7,435	789	3,695	6,156
2012	6,602	728	4,029	13,599
2013	7,682	678	4,122	14,353
2014	7,710	602	5,417	11,208
2015	8,781	888	6,311	9,524
2016	9,282	697	5,792	9,689
2017	7,458	590	5,771	18,140

Funding - IDPH receives an appropriation from the State General Fund for problem gambling services.

Problem Gambling Services - Expenditures				
Activity	2018 Budget	2017 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2015 (Actual)
Treatment Services	776,315	557,209	640,305	771,557
Prevention Services	904,118	886,300	956,104	921,933
Recovery Support Services	76,778	42,181	45,636	57,024
Your Life Iowa Integrated Helpline/Website	152,337	211,853	87,580	114,100
Surveillance (BRFSS)/Outcome Monitoring	163,400	158,471	170,580	90,591
Health Promotion	200,012	316,159	375,829	122,372
Training/Professional Development	38,360	67,590	107,383	121,958
Data Reporting System	75,108	158,913	231,196	106,679
IDPH Administration Costs	305,686	247,382	271,697	268,408
TOTAL	2,692,114	2,645,058	2,886,310	2,574,622

SFY 2018 IGTP Budget



Gambling Prevalence in Iowa

In SFY 2016, IDPH funded the [Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans](#) by the University of Northern Iowa Center for Social and Behavioral Research (UNI-CSBR). The purpose of the survey, a follow-up to similar 2011 and 2013 reports, was to collect data from adult Iowans about:

- Types and frequency of gambling activities;
- Prevalence of problem gambling; and
- Awareness and opinions of publicly-funded gambling treatment services.

The survey was completed by a random sample of 1,825 adult Iowans, weighted to reflect the Iowa adult population. The survey provided the following information:

- Gambling rates among adult Iowans: The 2015 prevalence rates of gambling among adult Iowans were: 87.6 percent lifetime (ever), 68.1 percent during the past 12 months, and 39.1 percent during the past 30 days. The rate of gambling behavior in the past 12 months in 2015 was lower than 2013, but comparable to 2011 (68.1 percent vs. 68.9 percent). It is estimated that almost 1.6 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months.
- At-risk problem gambling prevalence among adult Iowans: 12.6 percent of adult Iowans (294,222) reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with problem gambling during the past 12 months. Of these at-risk Iowans, 6 percent reported they were currently having gambling problems.
- Gambling activities in the past 12 months: The most common gambling activities in the state were lottery (38 percent) and raffle tickets (37 percent), followed by scratch tickets and pull tabs (32 percent), slot machines (24 percent), and card games with friends or others (not at casinos) (14 percent).
- Impact of problem gambling on others: The negative physical, emotional and financial consequences of problem gambling can affect family, friends, coworkers and others.

- About one in five adult Iowans (22.6 percent) said they know a person whose gambling may be causing problems (financial, physical, emotional).
- 15.2 percent (355,325) reported being negatively affected by other's gambling behaviors.

In SFY 2017, IDPH funded the [Iowa Youth Survey 2016: Problem Gambling Report](#) by the Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation (University of Iowa). The report, which is a follow-up to the 2012 and 2014 reports, addresses five questions on youth gambling behaviors using 2016 Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) data gathered from more than 84,000 sixth, eighth and 11th graders:

- Who gambles among sixth, eighth, and 11th graders in Iowa? 25 percent of all students reported gambling at least once and males were more than two times more likely to demonstrate lifetime gambling than females (35.9 percent vs. 13.8 percent).
- What are the significant types of gambling among youth? 14.1 percent reported playing cards with friends or family for money/possessions, followed by sports (10.7 percent), skill games (9.8 percent) and video games (8.1 percent).
- Where is the highest rates of gambling among youth? The percentage of students who won or lost over \$25 in a day was nearly the same for counties with (4.8 percent) and without (4.4 percent) a casino.
- Is youth gambling related to other factors? Lifetime substance use had a very strong association with lifetime gambling and was most highly associated with alcohol use. Students who reported depressive thoughts and thoughts of worthlessness were also more likely to gamble. Youth who reported gambling reported higher incidence of feelings of worthlessness, depression and thoughts of suicide.
- Have youth gambling outcomes and other gambling related factors changed from 2012 to 2016? For the most part, youth attitudes and behaviors related to gambling have remained unchanged between 2012 and 2016.

Treatment Effectiveness

IDPH contracts with UNI-CSBR to monitor and analyze problem gambling treatment outcomes. The [IGTO: 2015 Report](#) found significant improvements for persons who received state-funded treatment.

Highlights:

- Clients who received four or more services within the first 30 days after admission were more likely to complete their treatment plan compared to those who did not.
- Clients who received e-therapy were more likely to complete their treatment plan than were those who did not.
- Clients who received one or more Recovery Support Services (RSS) were more likely to complete treatment compared to those who did not.
- Clients who received one or more RSS received significantly greater numbers of services overall and had longer lengths of services compared to those who did not.
- The average number of days from first contact to admission was 7.4 days. Interestingly, the number of days waiting for services was not associated with retention (length of service) or outcome (discharge status).
- 92 percent reported fewer signs and symptoms of problem gambling at discharge.
- Among those who entered treatment having gambled during the past 30 days, the mean number of days gambled decreased from eight days at admission to less than one day at discharge.

IDPH has again contracted with UNI-CSBR to collect and monitor data in preparation for the Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes 2017 report, which will be completed in the Spring of 2018.

Education and Prevention First

Problem gambling education and prevention services inform Iowans about the risks and responsibilities of gambling. This work encompasses the six strategies identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention which include: community-based process, environmental, information dissemination, education, alternatives and problem identification and referral. Examples include:

- Health promotion campaigns to encourage Iowans to evaluate their gambling behavior and seek help if they have a problem. Includes collaborative health promotion activities with the Iowa Lottery and Iowa Gaming Association during:
 - Problem Gambling Awareness Month – each March
 - Responsible Gaming Education Week – each August
- Educating employers about the cost of problem gambling to their businesses ([Gambling in the Work Place Tool Kit](#)).
- Partnering with state-regulated casinos to train employees and educate and inform patrons ([Self Exclusion Tool Kit](#)).
- Partnering with the Iowa Lottery to inform players that help is available for problem gambling.
- School-based prevention efforts for high risk youth (www.idph.iowa.gov/igtp/prevention).
- Educating the problem gambling treatment and prevention workforce on regional, statewide and national trends and best practices to improve service delivery and outcomes.

The effectiveness of IDPH education and prevention efforts can be seen in the following:

- About nine in 10 adult Iowans said they are either slightly (20 percent), moderately (42 percent) or extremely confident (28 percent) that they would recognize the signs of gambling problems.
- Almost nine in 10 Iowans (88 percent) are aware of the 1-800-BETS OFF helpline; however, only 41 percent were aware of the www.1800BETSOFF.org (now part of the new Your Life Iowa website at yourlifeiowa.org/gambling).
- 90 percent of Iowans reported it was important to have public funding to educate adults about the risks of gambling.
- 94 percent admire the courage of people who seek help for a gambling problem.

IDPH Efforts to Increase Service Accessibility and Efficiency

In SFY 2017, it is estimated that approximately 29,155 adult Iowans met criteria for a gambling disorder. State-funded problem gambling services were provided to approximately 2 percent of those Iowans. While this is greater than the national average (0.25 percent)², it suggests there is a gap between the number of Iowans who need services and the number who receive those services. IDPH continues to work with providers to support an efficient network of care that reaches all Iowans in need. One example of those efforts is the continued enhancement and expansion of the use of recovery support services and e-therapy services (phone, video and web-based treatment options). While it may not be feasible to offer treatment in every Iowa community, use of e-therapy helps Iowans with barriers to accessing and attending face-to-face treatment regularly participate in treatment, and receive the help and recovery support they need.

² Marotta, J., Hynes, J., Rugle, L., White, K., Scanlan, K., Sheldrug, J., & Dukart, J. (2017). *2016 National Survey of Problem Gambling Services*. Boston, MA: Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators.

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