



## ***Betting on the Big Game Can be a Problem*** *Super Bowl is biggest wagering event of the year*

**For Immediate Release**

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(Green Bay, WI) – Super Bowl Sunday is the biggest “gambling day” of the year for sports bettors. Billions of dollars will be wagered on the big game on February 5<sup>th</sup> as the New York Giants take on the New England Patriots in Indianapolis.

With millions of Americans placing bets, most will be able to do it just for fun. But Rose Gruber of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling says the Super Bowl can actually send some gamblers over the edge.

“For problem and compulsive gamblers, Super Bowl Sunday can be very difficult,” Gruber said. “We hear from problem gamblers who look at the championship game as their big chance to catch up on their losses after a season of losing bets. We do typically see a spike in calls to our Helpline this time of year.”

Gruber also says the losses faced by problem and compulsive gamblers usually go well beyond the actual money. “By the time they make the decision to reach out for help and contact the Helpline, the monetary losses can be tens of thousands of dollars or even much more, not to mention the impact on families, friends and even the workplace,” Gruber said. “All-too-often, family members aren’t even aware of the gambling addiction and mounting debt until it’s a serious situation.”

Gruber notes that a simple bet on the big game is not a problem for most people. It’s estimated that five percent to seven percent of Wisconsin’s population are believed to be problem or compulsive gamblers.

Gruber urges people to watch for signs of a gambling addiction, including:

- Thinking constantly about gambling
- Using your income or savings to gamble while letting your bills go unpaid
- Feeling depressed or suicidal because of gambling losses
- Arguing about your gambling habits with those who care about you

*(more)*

Gruber adds that any gambler who feels they may have a problem should contact the Problem Gambling Helpline. The 24-hour, statewide Helpline is a place for problem gamblers to turn for assistance and referrals. The Helpline is staffed by trained volunteers and professional staff who work with a statewide database of qualified treatment providers, Gamblers Anonymous and Gam/Anon (for family members) chapters to which callers can be referred.

The Helpline, at 800-GAMBLE-5 (800-426-2535), received a total of 13,528 calls in 2011.

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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](http://www.wi-problemgamblers.org). WCPG is now on Facebook. Log on to Facebook, search for “Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling” and then click “like.”*

***The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling is proud to host the 26<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Problem Gambling, July 13-14, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee.***

**Media Contact:**

Scott Stein

Leonard & Finco Public Relations

(920) 965-7750

[sstein@LFpublicrelations.com](mailto:sstein@LFpublicrelations.com)