



WISCONSINCOUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

1423 Kellogg Street • Green Bay, WI 54303
800-426-2535 • 920-437-8888

Wisconsin's Problem Gambling Helpline Remains Busy Helpline receives 14,380 calls in 2010

For Immediate Release

January 12, 2011

(Green Bay, WI) – It was another busy year for the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](#) (WCPG) Helpline, which took 14,380 calls last year. The 2010 total represents a slight decline from 2009 when Helpline calls reached a record 14,604.

“It’s certainly significant that Helpline call activity remains brisk,” said [WCPG Executive Director Rose Gruber](#). “But the total number of calls is really only part of the story. There are other significant numbers in our annual Helpline report that show how devastating a gambling addiction can be.”

Among the other numbers in the Helpline report:

- The average gambling debt of callers was \$43,800 in 2010, up from \$36,000 the previous year
- 68 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- 21 callers reported having to file for bankruptcy due to their gambling problem

Because of confidentiality, the Helpline report statistics are based on callers who are willing to share such information.

“There are probably several factors affecting the rate of calls to the helpline,” Gruber added. “For one, there’s increased public awareness of gambling addictions and the services available to help problem and compulsive gamblers. Other factors include the tough economy and the increased access to gambling.”

Monthly calls to the Helpline in 2010 ranged from a low of 831 in December to a high of 1,583 last February.

WCPG estimates that five percent to seven percent of Wisconsin’s population – roughly 338,000 people – are believed to be problem or compulsive gamblers. The rate of problem or compulsive gamblers is thought to be about double those figures for teens and young adults.

(more)

“We’ve found through the years that most problem gamblers are pretty good at hiding their addiction since there are no outward signs that are typically seen with a drug or alcohol addiction,” Gruber said. “Mounting debt, bankruptcy and other problems eventually get them to make the call for help. By then, the gambling problem has typically affected many others, including the gambler’s family, friends and even co-workers.”

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.

###

*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. WCPG is now on [Facebook](#). Log on to Facebook, search for “Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling,” and then click “like.”*

Media Contact:

Scott Stein

Leonard & Finco Public Relations

(920) 965-7750

sstein@LFpublicrelations.com