



## *Calls to Problem Gambling Helpline*

**For Immediate Release**

**January 21, 2019**

**SPOKESPERSON:** *Available for comment*

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(Green Bay, WI) – During 2018, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling received 13,869 calls to its 24 hour Helpline.

WCPG is a statewide organization with a mission is to provides resources, public awareness and education on gambling disorders while maintaining strict neutrality on the issue of legalized gambling.

Blozinski says, “While the total number of calls is important, it really only tells part of the story. There are other significant numbers in our annual Helpline Report that show how devastating a gambling addiction can be.” The calls in 2018 included:

- A woman from Brown County gambled away \$10,000 which was supposed to be a down payment on a house.
- A disabled person called the Helpline stating that they just blew their whole paycheck two weeks ago. They stated that they had a “breakdown” recently.
- A Clark County man called the Helpline looking for a treatment provider. He has had a gambling problem for 5 years.
- A man called needing to talk. He gambles when he is upset. He is overdrawn at the bank, has no friends because he works so much and goes to the casino every day. He is worried that he will be out on the street. He gambles to take his mind off things and maybe will win enough to get out of his situation.
- A man from Milwaukee County “won \$1,000 and got hooked.” He says he gambles so he has extra money to live on.

- A mother called the Helpline about her 37 year old daughter who is causing issues between her and her husband because her husband enables their daughter and keeps bailing her out. The mother was looking for resources to help her family.
- A gambler from Racine County who plays the slots is expecting financial and legal problems “down the road. My dad was a gambler.” Caller was looking for resources.
- Caller says, “I wrote out bad checks and I am behind on my mortgage.”
- A woman from Kenosha County called about her gambling problem. She’s been living with her parents who are in their 80’s and will have to go to assisted living. Caller is worried that she will end up homeless.

Because of confidentiality, the Helpline report statistics are based on callers who are willing to share such information. Monthly calls to the Helpline in 2018 ranged from a low of 996 in March to a high of 1,483 in October. Among the other numbers in the Helpline report:

- 10 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- 2 callers reported having to file for bankruptcy as a result of their gambling problems
- Average debt of \$76,821. Median debt of \$23,500

“In March our Helpline received a call from a person who owes \$500,000 in taxes and in December two people lost their homes due to their gambling,” Blozinski said. Looking ahead, Blozinski says we expect to see a continued increase in usage of our chat and text lines.

***If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, Text at 1-850-888-Hope or Live Chat through the WCPG website at [www.wi-problemgamblers.org](http://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 1-850-888-HOPE Textline, and Chat available on [www.wi-problemgamblers.org](http://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.*

*For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin-council-on-problem-gambling.org) website, visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling) or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpgambling>*