



Calls to Problem Gambling Helpline

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(Green Bay, WI) – During 2017, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling received 12,674 calls to its 24 hour Helpline.

“Nationally problem gambling call centers report their call numbers have decreased. While our calls have experienced a decline, we have seen an increase in use to our chat and text line,” said Rose Blozinski, Executive Director of the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](#). “It tells us that we need to continue to be diligent at spreading the word about the resources that are available for those who are challenged by a gambling addiction.”

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 the total number of calls only tells part of the story. The calls in 2017 included:

- A woman from Outagamie County called to find gambling treatment options for her husband who was recently released from hospitalization after a suicide attempt.
- A man from Dane County called to get information for GA meetings in his area. He thinks his wife will leave him if he doesn’t get help. He spent \$40,000 in two weeks.
- A Substance Abuse Counselor from Milwaukee County called fro information on GA meetings for herself. She is a professional who doesn’t want her clients to see her at a meeting.
- A widow in Taylor County admits to using gambling as a means to escape the grief and troubles since the loss of her husband a few months ago.

Because of confidentiality, the Helpline report statistics are based on callers who are willing to share such information. Monthly calls to the Helpline in 2017 ranged from a low of 854 in September to a high of 1,205 in February. Among the other numbers in the Helpline report:

- 15 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- 7 callers reported having to file for bankruptcy as a result of their gambling problems
- Average debt of \$34,078. Median debt of \$16,834

‘We typically see a spike in calls this time of year as holiday bills come due,’ Blozinski said. ‘There’s also the temptation of trying to get a big win during the pro football playoffs, the Super Bowl and March Madness.’ 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 1-920-888-Help 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-GAMBLE-5 1-920-888-HELP Textline, 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.*

For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](#) website, visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling](https://facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling) or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpgambling>