



## *Calls to Problem Gambling Helpline*

**For Immediate Release**

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(Green Bay, WI) – During 2020, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling received 16,779 calls. WCPG is a statewide organization with a mission is to provide 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 2020 included:

- A Milwaukee County woman called the Helpline. She loses \$4000 per month at the casino. She is a nurse and has 3 children.
- A treatment provider called for resources for a patient who is \$500,000 in debt due to their gambling problem.
- A husband called asking for help for his wife, who he found had over \$100,000 in gambling losses over the past 12 months.
- A mom called for her son, who is 31 years old. “He started gambling at 16 years of age playing poker in the basement.” He is currently \$50,000 in debt and depressed. He is engaged to be married.
- A young man called asking for resources – he is in a Master’s program, but due to the pandemic and stress he has been gambling.
- Parents called regarding their college-age son who has been online sports gambling. He knows he has a problem but can’t stop and is extremely depressed and suicidal.
- A successful business owner called for help. He has lost everything – business, home, marriage, children. Lost between 500,000 to 1 million dollars over the last 40 years. He has had thoughts of suicide.
- A man called – his mom sent him the WCPG website and phone number. He has lost \$60,000 and spent his 401K. Has 2 small children.

\*Please Note: The Helpline is confidential and all calls have been modified to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of callers.

Because of confidentiality, the Helpline report statistics are based on callers who are willing to share such information. Monthly calls to the Helpline in 2020 ranged from a low of 1107 in May to a high of 1,865 in November. Among the other numbers in the Helpline report, 7 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.

With the Super Bowl coming up, Blozinski says, “If you plan to bet, don’t bet more than you can afford to lose. Looking ahead, we expect to see a continued increase in usage of our chat and text lines.”

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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>*