



The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009

We have helped over 8,000 West Virginians since August of 2000. We specialize in providing real help to problem gamblers and their loved ones. Our program is nationally recognized for our helpline protocol, our unique data driven approach to treatment, and our high client recovery rates.



Losing it all?

Make the call....

**24 Hour, Free,
Confidential Help**



1800 GAMBLER

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

- Nationally Certified Gambling Counselors
- Over 90 Treatment Professionals Statewide
- Face-to-Face or Distance Treatment
- Traditional or Outpatient Therapy
- Weekend ReTREATment Experiences
- Family Interventions
- High Success Rate



A First Choice Health Systems Inc. company

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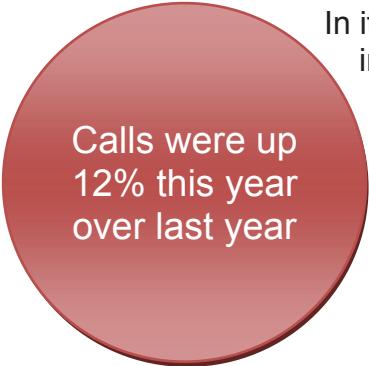
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Program History

Since 2000, First Choice Health Systems, Inc., has operated The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia to serve problem gamblers and their loved ones throughout the state. From 2000 through June 2008 the program provided this service via a contract with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, through funds from the West Virginia Lottery.

For over eight years, the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia has successfully met or exceeded the needs of outreach, assessment, and treatment for West Virginians affected by a gambling problem. Additional accomplishments of the program include collection and aggregation of demographic statistics as well as other clinical data relating to problem gambling. The program recruits and trains new treatment providers each year, and offers continuing education and ongoing clinical supervision. The program has also conducted six-month, one-year, and two-year follow-up interventions in order to track long-term outcomes and measure efficacy of the various help and treatment interventions offered.



Calls were up
12% this year
over last year

In its first nine years, the program has provided initial therapeutic intervention, screening, referral and information services to almost 8,000 callers concerned about a gambling problem. One thousand and thirty-six (1,036) people called the help-line in FY 2009. This report includes clinical and demographic data on the FY 2009 callers, as well as a seven-year summary (TAB 4).

"I hope to continue email/phone contact with Michele. She is personable and supportive and I hope she won't mind hearing from me from time-to-time."

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Program Professional Staff

After eight years in operation, the Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV has recruited, trained, and retained an experienced staff of clinical professionals. The program currently employs a full time program director, a full time administrative assistant, three full-time help-line counselors, a part time director of quality assurance, and two part time help-line counselors. Clinical staff members receive extensive training in all facets of treating problem gamblers and their families. Although the first priority of clinical staff members is to answer the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline, they have many other duties, including:

- Completing help-line intake and scheduling appointments
- Managing client referrals and services
- Documenting all clinical contact
- Mailing personalized packets to callers
- Doing reminder and follow-up calls after initial appointments
- Doing long term follow up calls at six months, one year, and two years
- Keeping the Gamblers Anonymous list current
- Helping to grow Gamblers Anonymous
- Reviewing and pre-authorizing treatment
- Providing support and assistance to network counselors
- Writing and distributing the quarterly newsletter
- Participating in outreach efforts, including exhibiting and presenting at many conferences and civic organizations
- Designing and coordinating basic and advanced training for clinicians
- Recruiting and retaining network counselors
- Coordinating advertising campaigns
- Producing monthly, quarterly, and annual reports for the WV Department of Health and Human Resources
- Updating and maintaining 1800GAMBLER.net website
- Communicating with media and issuing press releases
- Planning and participating in weekend treatment programs
- Developing and monitoring intensive outpatient therapy programs

"Michele was very understanding. I was so upset and she made me feel like I wasn't alone and made me realize I could get the help I needed. My husband listened on speaker phone and he really liked her attitude and help she gave both of us."

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia staff members are:

Steve Burton, MSW, LCSW, Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor
Program Director

Sheila Moran, MSW, LSW, Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor
Director of Quality Assurance

Michele Gordon, MSW, LGSW, Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor
Help-line Coordinator

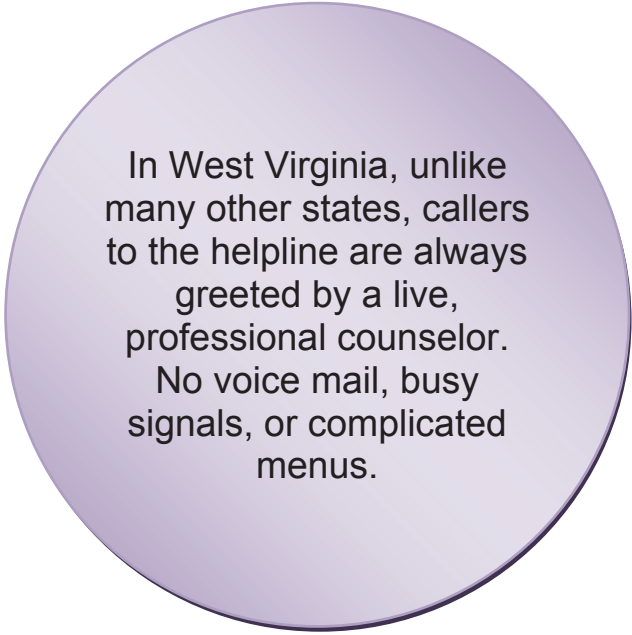
Jane Reynolds, BA, (National Certification pending)
Help-line Counselor

Julie Osborne, MSW, LSW
Help-line Counselor

Jennifer Davis Walton, MA, Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor
Help-line Counselor

Kathleen O'Neil, MA, Nationally Certified Gambling
Counselor
IOP Coordinator

Gloria Kirk
Administrative Assistant



In West Virginia, unlike many other states, callers to the helpline are always greeted by a live, professional counselor. No voice mail, busy signals, or complicated menus.

"Jane, you did a very good job. At that moment in my life you actually saved my life. If I hadn't had anyone to call I would have died that night."

-Help-Line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Outreach and Public Awareness

The program conducted a multi-pronged approach to create public awareness about problem gambling and how those affected can access help. Callers were asked how they learned about the program.

How Callers Learned about the Help-line

Top ten sources of referrals in FY 2009 were:

Billboards	230
Previous call to help-line	211
Sticker on VLT's/slot machines	86
PGHNWV Counselor	67
Yellow Pages	50
Family or friend	49
TV	48
Website	36
Follow-up calls made by staff	32
Direct Mail from PGHNWV	30

Other sources of referrals included, directory assistance, lottery retailers, lottery commission, employers, employee assistance programs, schools, Gamblers Anonymous, churches, racetrack advertisements, Alcoholics Anonymous, out of state casinos, general program brochures and posters, the legal system, trade show exhibits or presentations, targeted program mailings, and the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia newsletter.

Public Information Campaign

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia staff and counselors are frequently interviewed on radio, television, and in print about problem gambling. Press releases and media contact provide a free way to draw attention to the issue of problem gambling and the help available for the disorder. Some examples of stories generated by the network include:

- *“Problem Gamblers Can Find Assistance”*
 - Herald Star Online, Weirton WV/Steubenville OH
- *“Mental Health Officials Say Need is Up”*
 - News and Sentinel, Parkersburg WV
- *“Holidays Not So Bright for Problem Gamblers”*
 - Hampshire Review, Romney WV
 -
- *“Problem Gamblers Can Receive Help”*
 - The Journal, Martinsburg WV

- *“Gambling Addicts Can Get Help, Showell Tells Rotary”*
 - Mountain Messenger, Lewisburg WV
- *“Problem Gambling Help-Line Data Released”*
 - Calhoun Chronicle, Grantsville WV
- *“Program Offered for Problem Gamblers”*
 - Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Bluefield WV
- *“Help-Line passes 7,000 Gamblers After Eight Years”*
 - The Charleston Gazette, Charleston WV
- *“Gordon discusses Gambling Addiction at Aug 21 Meeting”*
 - Coal Valley News, Madison WV
- *“Gambling Addiction Program to Start”*
 - The Journal, Martinsburg, WV
- *“Rotary Learns About Problem Gambling”*
 - Weirton Daily Times, Weirton WV
- *“WV Help-Line Says Gambling Puts Many in Debt”*
 - Charleston Daily Mail, Charleston WV
- *“Gambling in Wood County”*
 - WTAP-TV, Parkersburg WV
- *“National Problem Gambling Awareness Week”*
 - Williamson Daily News, Williamson WV
- *“Numbers Released for Gambling Hotline”*
 - WVNS TV, Beckley, WV
- *“Bad Economy Doesn’t Slow Neighborhood Slots Gambling”*
 - Charleston Daily Mail, Charleston WV
- *“Do You Have a Gambling Problem?”*
 - Wheeling News Register, Wheeling WV
- *“Gambling Awareness Week Starts Today”*
 - The Record Delta, Buckhannon, WV
- *“Gambling Help-Line Offers Resources for Addicts, Families”*
 - The Dominion Post, Morgantown WV

Outreach Campaign

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia staff members work statewide in an effort to educate those who may be able to recognize a person with a gambling problem and make a referral. Staff members also attend community organization events and provide free screenings for problem gambling. Professional workshop presentations and/or informational displays were offered to attendees at the following conferences and meetings:

- West Virginia Counseling Association
- West Virginia Psychological Association
- West Virginia University Institute on Aging
- WV Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors Annual Conference
- Governors Summit on Wellness
- West Virginia Family Physicians Conference
- Share the Vision Prevention Conference
- West Virginia Probation Officers Annual Conference
- NASW-WV Continuing Education Spring Conference
- Senior Expo
- Children's Home Society Conference
- Special Olympics of WV
- West Virginia University Student Services
- West Virginia Primary Care Association Annual Conference
- National Council on Problem Gambling Annual Conference
- WV Chamber of Commerce Human Resources Conference
- WV Limited Video Lottery Association Conference
- Wheeling Island Racetrack exhibit for Responsible Gaming Week
- Tri State Casino exhibit for Responsible Gaming Week
- School Counselors Academy
- WV Licensed Professional Counselors Conference
- Huntington VA Hospital
- WV Physicians Assistants' Conference
- Boone Family Resource Network
- Putnam Family Resource Network
- Kanawha Family Resource Network
- WV Primary Care Webinar
- Parkersburg Lions Club
- VVA Conference
- Medical Careers Expo
- WV Division on Rehabilitation Services
- Alliance for Children Annual Training
- Worth Our Care
- School Counselor Association Annual Training
- Social Work Day at the Legislature
- Governor's Summit on Aging
- WV Council of Churches General Assembly
- Charlestown Racetrack exhibit for Responsible Gaming Week
- WVU Addictions Institute

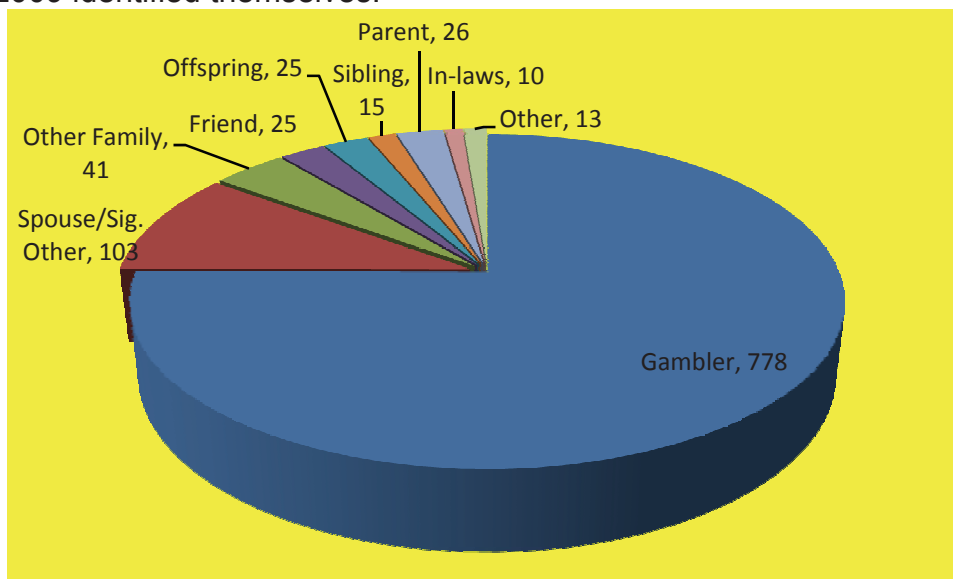
Help-line Intake/Therapeutic Intervention

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia provides a 24 hour, seven days a week, toll free number (1-800-GAMBLER) staffed by trained, credentialed clinical professionals, which are referred to in this report as “help-line counselors.” When a caller accesses the help-line, he or she is asked to complete a preliminary clinical assessment and is given an initial therapeutic treatment intervention by telephone. The help-line counselor also completes intakes from West Virginians who access the help-line by dialing 1-800-522-4700, the national help-line number.

All help-line callers are asked if they have any thoughts of suicide. **During FY 2009, 8% of callers who reached the help-line reported that they were suicidal.** Those who say yes are further assessed for suicidal plan, intent, and means. Those in imminent danger are encouraged to seek immediate help from the local hospital emergency room. For those who are found to be suicidal (or homicidal) and who refuse to commit to safety, the local emergency authorities are notified. Help-line clinical staff members have been trained on how to assess callers for suicidality.

Persons Helped

From July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, **1,036** people seeking assistance for their own or someone else’s gambling problem completed a telephone intake through the Problem Gamblers help-line toll-free number. The help-line clinical staff also answered several hundred **additional** calls during that period that are described as “non-intake” calls (hang-up’s, wrong numbers, media, and legislative inquiries, requests for information for research, etc). These calls are not included in this report. This graph shows how those calling for help with a gambling problem, or calling on behalf of someone else with a gambling problem in FY 2009 identified themselves.



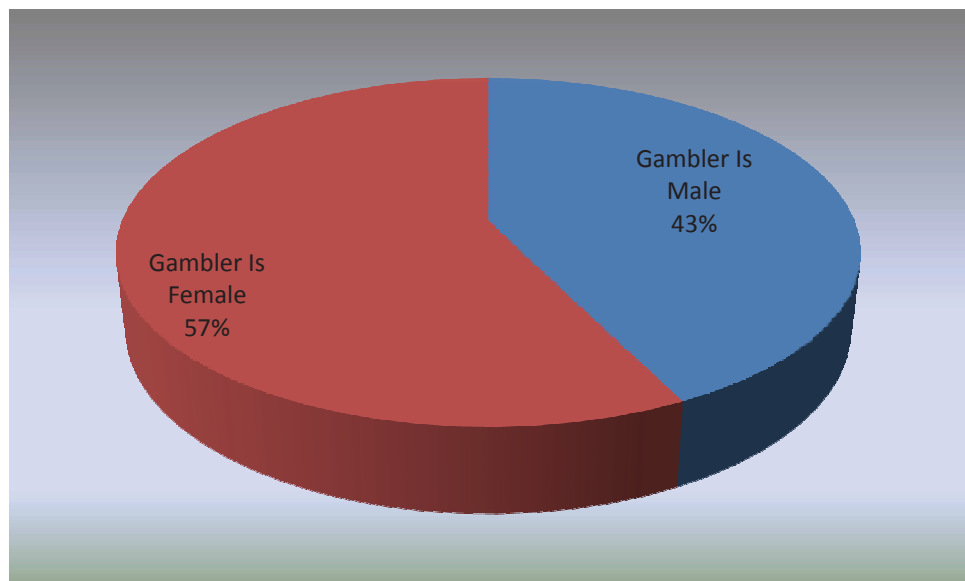
County of Residence

Calls came in from all West Virginia counties. Kanawha County residents completed the most intake calls at 126, followed by Berkeley with 63 calls and Ohio with 58 calls. Counties that had at least 10 residents call for help are as follows:

Kanawha	126
Berkeley	63
Ohio	58
Wood	57
Raleigh	46
Marion	46
Harrison	40
Jefferson	36
Hancock	34
Putnam	31
Monongalia	26
Marshall	25
Mercer	22
Logan	20
Brooke	20
Fayette	19
Mason	19
Randolph	14
Monroe	13
Preston	12
Wayne	11
Lincoln	11
Boone	10
Taylor	10
Mineral	10

Gender of the Problem Gamblers

Although many states report that the majority of their problem gamblers are male, this is not so in West Virginia. In FY 2009, fifty-seven percent (**57%**) of the problem gamblers who called the help-line were female and forty-three percent (**43%**) were male.

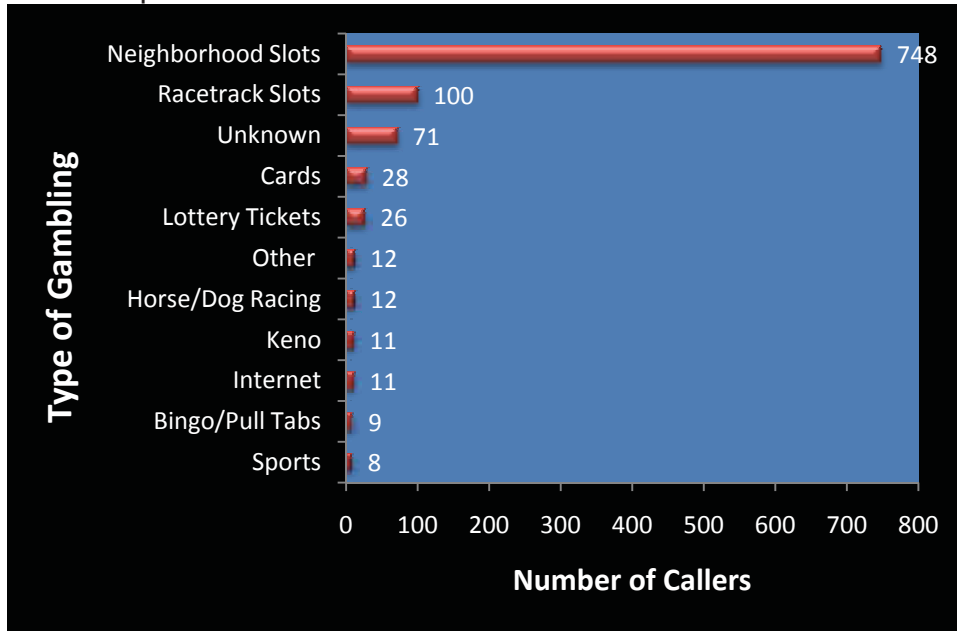


"Michele was very understanding and not judgmental, that helps, because I was mad enough at myself. She let me talk to get some of my feelings out, and she acted like she really did care. Thanks Michele"

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

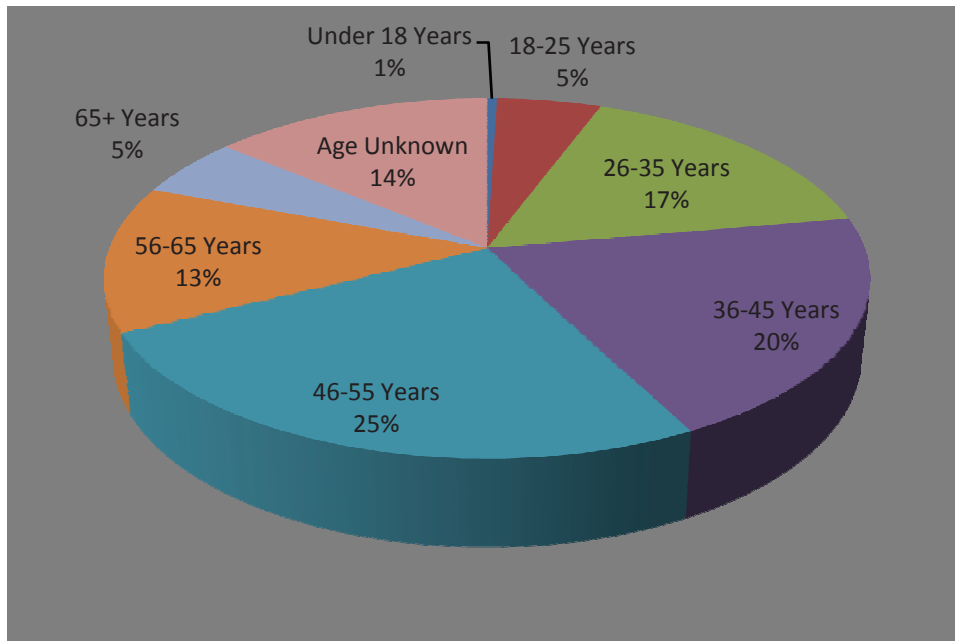
Primary Form of Gambling

The most frequent form of problem gambling reported by callers were Neighborhood Slots at bars, clubs and restaurants (**72%**), followed by Racetrack Slots (**10%**). This graph illustrates the primary form of gambling cited by callers to the help-line in FY 2009.

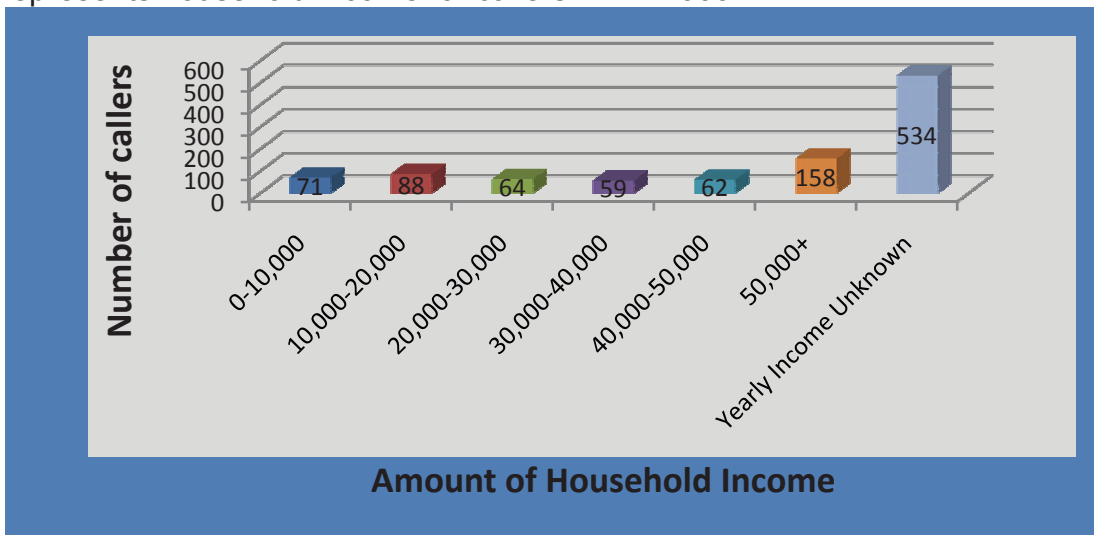


Age of Problem Gambler

This graph represents the age range of problem gamblers who called the help-line in FY 2009.

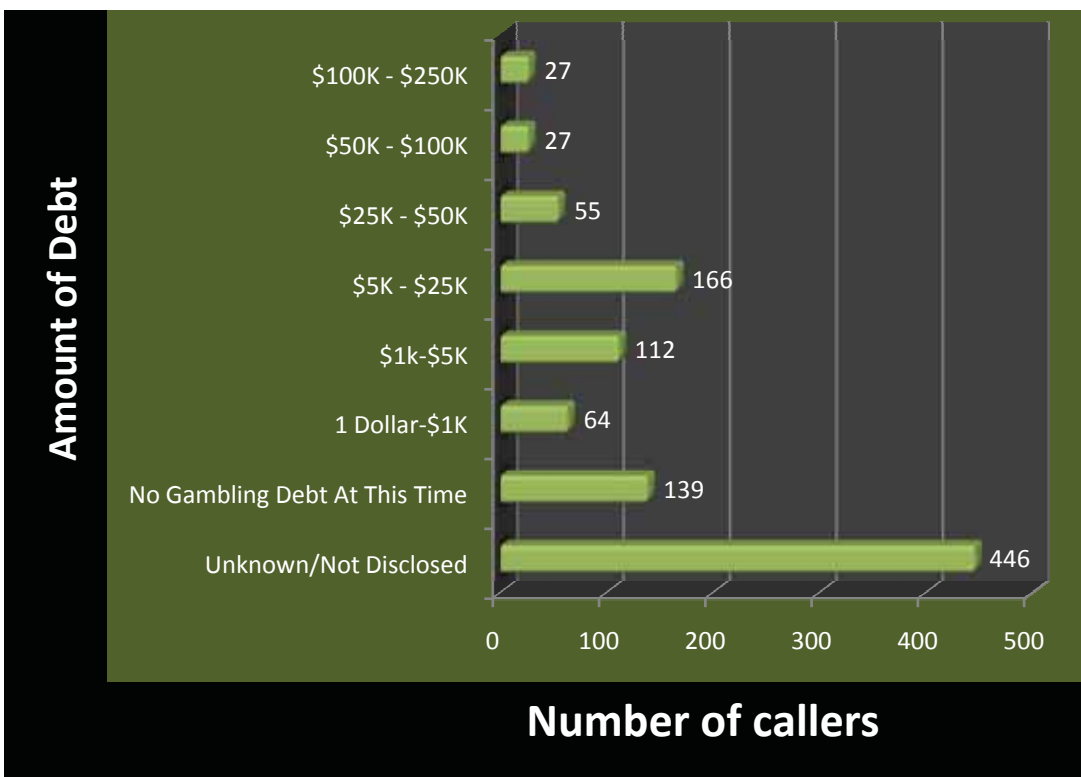


Household Income Callers are asked to give the estimated annual household income of the problem gambler. This includes all adults in the home. Some did not know or refused to provide this information. The following graph represents household income for callers in FY 2009.



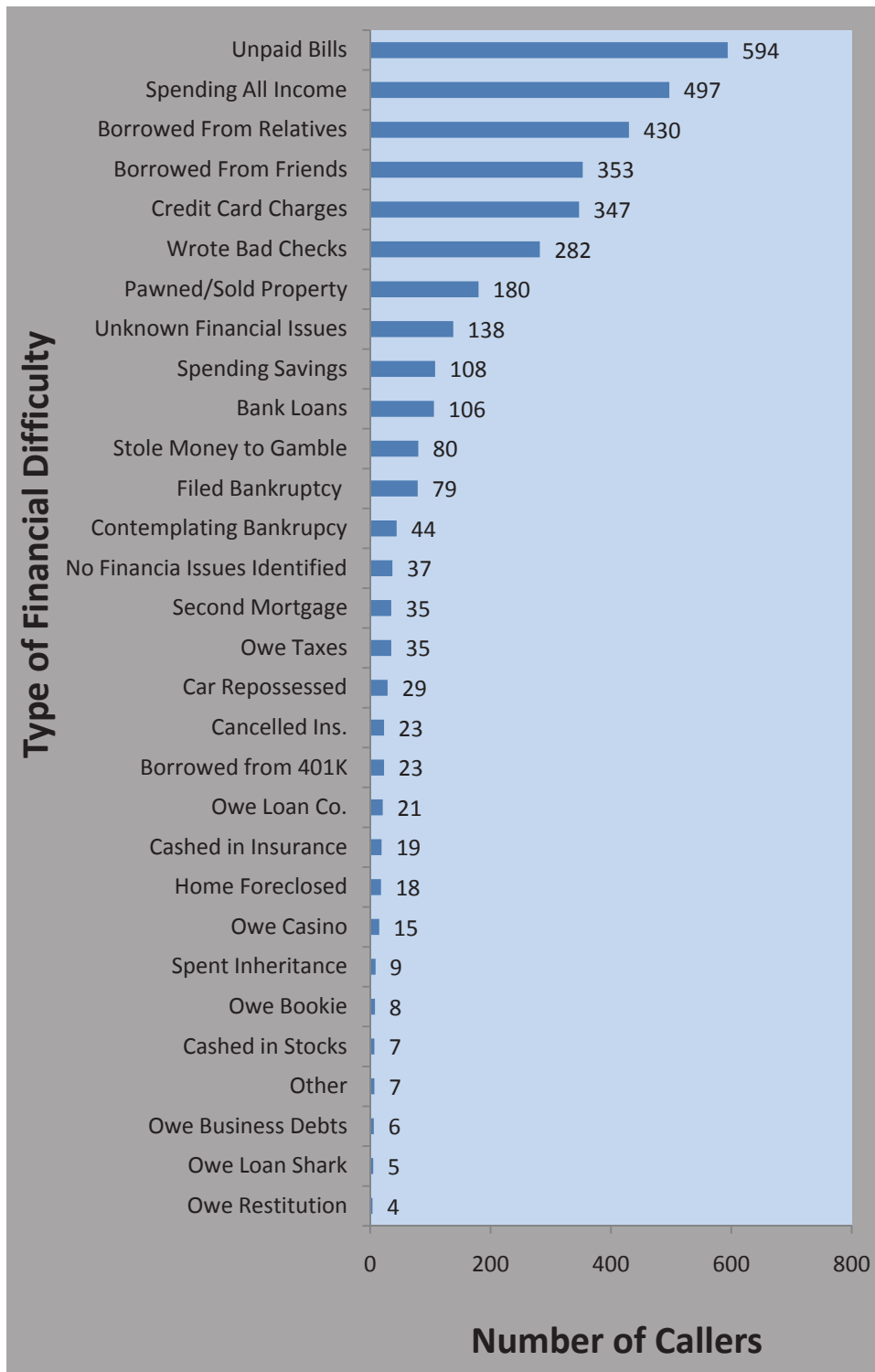
Debt Due to Gambling

Callers are asked how much gambling-related debt they have. Some did not know or refused to share this information. The following is the amount of debt reported from help-line callers in FY 2009:



Financial problems related to gambling:

Callers are asked to self-report the type of financial problems caused by the gambling. Below are frequently mentioned financial problems by help-line callers.



"My husband called the hotline on May 25th which was a holiday. He was given the number to call the next day. He called the next morning and was in counseling by 5:00PM the same day. I contacted the counselor and was seen the next day!! Thank you for your help!! She is seeing both of us and we are making great progress. She is amazing and the hotline has changed our lives."

-Help-line Respondent, FY 2009

Source of Income/Occupation

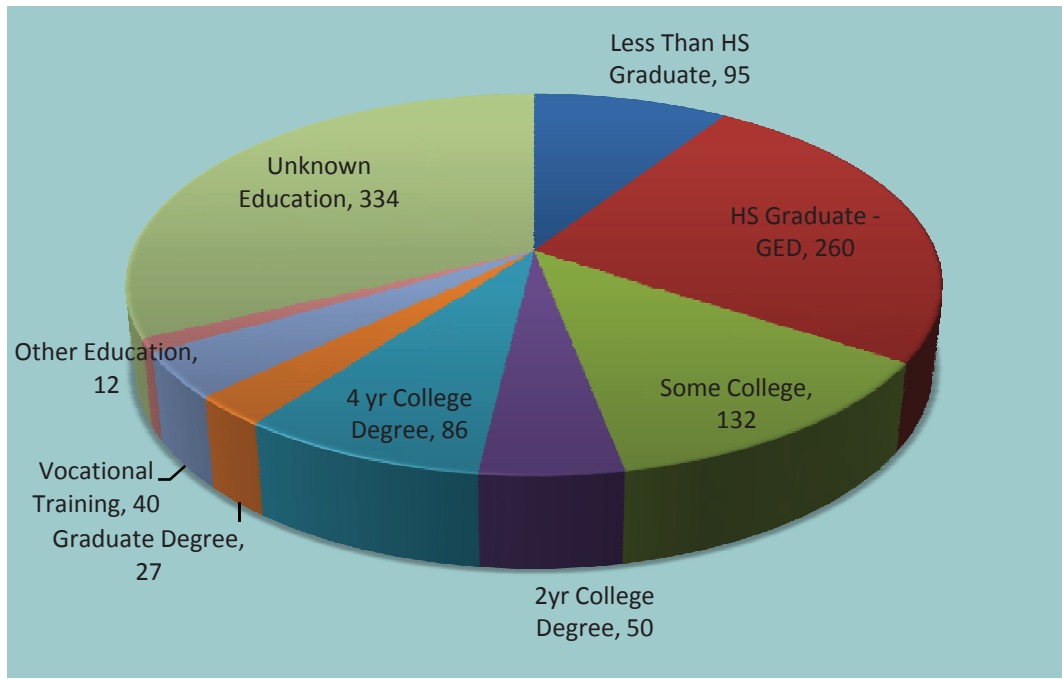
Help-line callers are asked about their source of income. Below are the most common answers. Callers who are employed are then further categorized into one of forty-six different occupational categories. **The most common occupation of problem gamblers who called the help-line in FY 2009 was “Health Care or Social Work”, cited by 70 people.**

Fifty-one people who called for help in FY 2009 said they worked for the gaming industry

Full-time employment	45%
Disability	11%
Unemployment	12%
Retired	8%
Dependent on Spouse	4%

Level of Education

Callers to the help-line are asked about the highest level of education the gambler has attained. This graph illustrates that data for callers who answered this question in FY 2009.

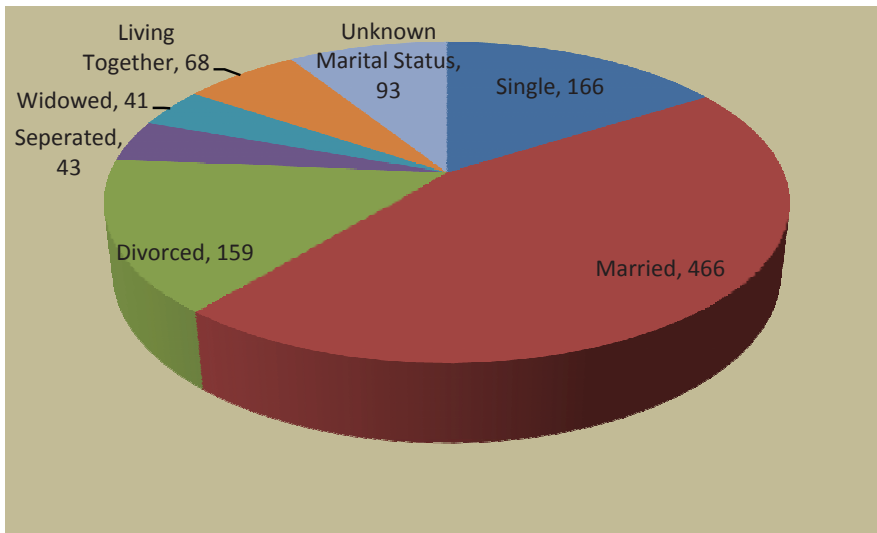


“The material I received in the mail is very helpful!! Jennifer helped to ease my guilt by reminding me others have faced the same problem. That really made me feel better. I needed understanding, not anger. Thank you!”

- Help-line Survey, FY 2009

Marital Status of Gamblers

Of callers providing marital status of the gambler, less than half of the problem gamblers were married. The following graph represents marital status of callers in FY 2009.



Fifty-one helpline callers reported living with their parents, often because financial problems rendered them unable to pay their bills. Forty-one gamblers reported having to move in with their adult children.

"Steve was very pro-active; willing to help in any way possible to get us help for our son's gambling addiction. We only wish we had contacted you sooner. Thanks"

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Symptoms of Problem Gambling

Help-line counselors use ten symptoms outlined in the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition) to do an initial diagnostic screen. Although a total of five symptoms are needed to diagnose someone as a "Pathological Gambler", anyone with as few as one symptom may be considered a "problem gambler." Callers are screened for each of the ten symptoms, and most report at least one, while some report all ten. The following is a definition of each of the ten symptoms, along with how many callers during FY 2009 reported having the symptom.

Preoccupation – Preoccupied with gambling (e.g., preoccupied with reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money to gamble)
574 callers

Tolerance – Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
641 callers

Withdrawal – Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
304 callers

Escape – Gambles as a way of escaping from problems or relieving dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression)
639 callers

Chasing – After losing money gambling, often returns another day in order to get even ("**chasing one's losses**"). Chasing is a classical behavior pattern characterizing pathological gambling. **750 callers**

Lying – Lies to family members, therapists or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
763 callers

Illegal acts – Has committed illegal acts (e.g., forgery, fraud, theft or embezzlement) in order to finance gambling
270 callers

Loss of control – Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling
808 callers

Risked significant relationship – Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
421 callers

Bailout – Has relied on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling
513 callers

Risk Factors

National research indicates there are several factors that alone or in combination with others, may make someone more at risk for developing a serious gambling problem. Of all the risk factor information provided, an “early big win” was the most common occurrence, cited by 54% of the gamblers who later developed a problem. Over half of all helpline callers also reported a significant life event, like divorce, death of a loved one, or retirement, which they believe triggered their gambling. Other factors that correlated with gambling addiction, as reported by helpline callers, are:

- A history of mental health issues, like anxiety or depression (36%)
- A parent or sibling who is an alcoholic (21%)
- A parent or a sibling who is a gambling addict (19%)
- A personal history of alcohol abuse or dependence (16%)
- A parent or sibling who has a mental illness (10%)

“Kathleen was excellent. She does a great job.”

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Referral Status

Many states only offer their help-line callers group meetings, which may be hours away, or a counselor not specifically trained in problem gambling. West Virginia has consistently received praise for the comprehensive services offered by the 1-800-Gambler help-line.

When a caller reaches the help-line, they receive immediate help. Treatment begins as soon as someone dials 1-800-GAMBLER. There is a trained professional available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to offer assistance. The help-line counselor does crisis counseling on the telephone and offers long-term solutions. Each caller is offered a free personalized mail packet including materials such as:

- A self help manual (designed and copyrighted by staff at the Problem Gamblers Help Network)
- A guide on how to help a loved one with a gambling problem
- A brochure detailing the symptoms of a gambling problem
- Applicable newspaper and web-site stories on gambling addiction
- A current newsletter
- Gamblers Anonymous information
- Referral information on Consumer Credit Counseling
- Legal Aid referral information if necessary

During this initial call, the help-line counselor also directs callers to other local help, such as self-help groups (GA, Gam-Anon, CODA, AA, Al-Anon, etc...), mental health agencies, domestic violence shelters and a host of other resources.

However, the primary goal of each call is to set an appointment between the caller and one of the Network's over 100 trained gambling clinicians. Gamblers as well as their family members are offered a free initial appointment. This appointment allows for a full evaluation of gambling symptoms and for development of a treatment plan. **Five hundred and fifty-seven (557) of those who called for help agreed to have a face-to-face clinical assessment and consultation with one of the network's specially trained outpatient treatment providers.** Another 84 callers were referred to Intensive Outpatient or Intense Weekend Therapy. The remaining callers were referred to support groups and/or mailed a self help packet and staff members continued to follow up via telephone.

During the first appointment the network clinician completes an assessment (designed by Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV staff), which gives comprehensive information about the caller's situation. This assessment, along with a diagnosis and recommendations is sent back to the help-line counselor, who enters the information into the caller's record and uses it to assist with decisions regarding the caller's treatment.

When the help-line isn't ringing, the staff stays busy making outbound calls. Each intake mandates calls to coordinate the appointment with the counselor, as well as a reminder call, immediate follow-up call, and long term follow-up calls at 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. Other contacts are necessary for special projects such as GA mailings, Intensive Out-patient Treatment, and Weekend Treatments

Of those referred for an appointment, 426 (76%) completed the initial diagnostic assessment and consultation. This high show up rate may be attributed to the care taken by help-line counselors with each call. The staff takes time to establish rapport with the caller, and build a relationship that often lasts beyond the initial call. While the caller is still on the line, the help-line counselor calls network clinicians in the caller's geographic area to get an appointment. The Problem Gamblers Help Network has worked to establish close ties to all of its clinicians, so they are often willing to stay late or change their schedule to fit in a caller from the help-line. Therefore, callers are usually

offered an appointment within 72 hours of their call, and sometimes even on the same day as their call. Callers are given detailed directions on how to find the network clinician's office. The help-line counselor also calls the caller prior to the appointment to encourage them to keep their appointment and answer any questions they might have. After the appointment, the help-line counselor calls again to see if the appointment went well and to discuss further treatment.

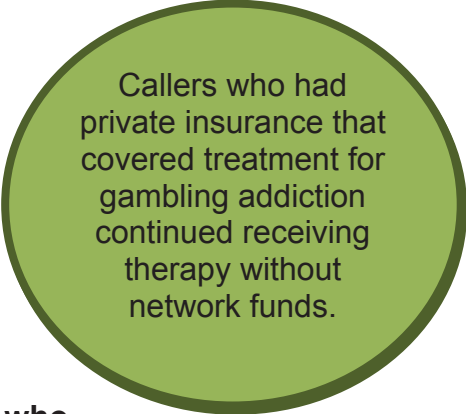
"Jennifer made me feel so comfortable that I could open up and explain all my problems. She even called me back to check on my progress. I really appreciate the help I'm receiving and hope I can live up to my potential. Thank you"

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

West Virginia Lottery Funded Outpatient Treatment

Every caller to the help-line who has a gambling problem, or a family member with a gambling problem, is offered a free two hour consultation with a network clinician. For clients who wish to continue with outpatient treatment/ psychotherapy and who have no alternate payer, such as health insurance, network clinicians may provide a written treatment plan and request pre-certification to continue to provide additional individual sessions. Counselors are given approval for further lottery-funded treatment in three or six session increments. **One hundred and seventy-five (175) people who called the helpline during FY 2009 requested Network funds for treatment beyond the initial assessment.** Most of these people had no insurance, and a few had insurance but it would not cover gambling addiction treatment with a network provider.

As a payer of last resort, when the client meets the clinical criteria, the program pays for up to 20 outpatient treatment sessions for problem gamblers and up to 10 outpatient sessions for the family members. This is in addition to the initial two hour consultation. **Seventy –one percent (71%) of people who went to treatment beyond the initial assessment attended six or fewer sessions. Another 27% attended seven to twelve sessions. Only 2% of persons seeking treatment opted to attend more than twelve sessions.** This is consistent with the average number of therapy sessions attended by voluntary participants in mental health counseling. (Self Determination Theory in the Clinic; Sheldon, Williams and Joiner, 2003)



Callers who had private insurance that covered treatment for gambling addiction continued receiving therapy without network funds.

" I got wonderful assistance from Michele."
-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Outcomes: Six-month, One-Year, and Two-Year Follow-Up

After voluntary entry into the Problem Gamblers Help-line and Treatment Program, help-line counselors contact clients at intervals of six months, one year and two years to determine program efficacy and measurable outcomes. The information is self-reported by the gambler, or in some cases reported about the gambler by the loved one who called on their behalf. Recidivism, abstinence and gambling-related debt are some of the factors measured and reported as follows:

Six-month follow-up outcomes

Two hundred and seventy-two (272) callers were reached for six month follow up. Of those, **47 % reported no longer gambling**. An additional **31% of callers reported a decrease in gambling**. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the callers reached who previously reported a gambling debt, reported a decrease in gambling debt.

One-year follow-up outcomes

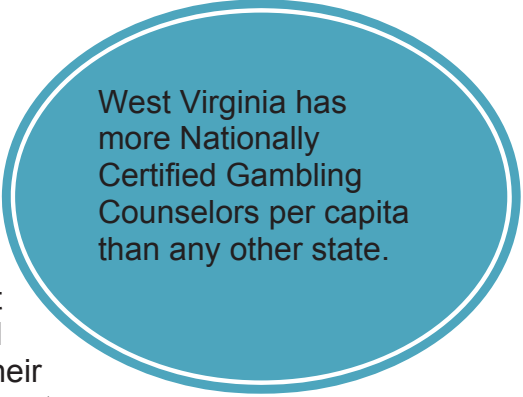
One hundred and thirty-four (134) callers were reached for one year follow-up. Of those, **54% reported no longer gambling**. An additional **24% reported a decrease in gambling**. Fifty-one percent (51%) reported a decrease in gambling debt.

Two-year follow-up outcomes

Ninety-three (93) callers were reached for two year follow-up. Of those, **67%, reported no longer gambling**. An additional **23% of callers reported a decrease in gambling**. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of callers reported a decrease in gambling debt.

Clinician Training and Education

The program recruits, screens, trains, and contracts with individual behavioral health professionals (counselors, social workers, psychologists) statewide to assure that all West Virginia residents have ready access to needed face-to-face services within a 30-mile drive of their place of residence. In order to maintain an adequate level of trained professionals to serve the West Virginians in need, the program offers these initial 30-hour trainings once or twice annually. The training includes four days of classroom training in the diagnosis and treatment of problem gamblers and their loved ones.



West Virginia has more Nationally Certified Gambling Counselors per capita than any other state.

In May 2009, one 30-hour basic training was provided to new clinicians working in underserved areas. Ten clinicians became certified to treat problem gamblers in WV as a result of this training.

In addition to basic training, the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia program conducts regular ongoing clinical supervision sessions around the state so that clinicians providing assessment and treatment have professional oversight of their work.

Over 41 clinicians attended at least one of three (3) Clinical Supervision sessions conducted at various locations statewide by Norman Kruedelbach, Ph.D., the program's clinical consultant. Dr. Kruedelbach is one of only 52 qualified professionals nationwide who can provide supervision for those seeking to attain status as a Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor.

The field of problem gambling is fast growing with new research findings added regularly. Therefore, the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia also provides a statewide continuing education conference for advanced training. National experts come to West Virginia to share new information that will better prepare the help-line and treatment professionals to serve their clients

In FY 2009 the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia offered an advanced training session for current network clinicians on March 22, 23 and 24 at Stonewall Jackson Resort in Roanoke, WV. This training was only open to counselors who are nationally certified in gambling treatment or those in the process of becoming certified. Thirty-six (36) network clinicians and help-line counselors attended the training. Attendees participated in workshops such as "Explaining Electronic Gaming Machines to Clients", "Harm Reduction for Problem Gamblers" and "Table Games: An Overview" among many others.

The program has actively pursued the NCGC certification (Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor) for treatment providers and help-line counselors in the West Virginia network. This certification ensures that clinicians meet the minimum national competency for treating problem gamblers. WV currently has twenty-eight (28) clinicians and help-line staff who have met the standards and passed the test for national certification.

Training specific to the national exam was held in Charleston in December 2008 for network clinicians and help-line counselors. Only those clinicians with a minimum of 100 hours of treating problem gamblers were allowed to take the test. Eleven network clinicians and help-line counselors took the training.

"Sheila did an excellent job. She made me feel that I had hope once again. The same day I first talked to Sheila she had directed me to Christa Aucremanne and on that day I started counseling."

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Ongoing Initiatives and Program Highlights

Client Satisfaction Surveys

Starting in September of 2006 the Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV began sending out client satisfactions surveys as a measure of quality assurance. These surveys are sent to every caller who gave the program an address and permission to mail materials. Thus far, five hundred and thirty-six (536) surveys have been returned. The overwhelming majority reflects a positive help-line experience. For a copy of the survey and the total results, please see TAB 1.

Web site

During FY 2009, the 1800Gambler.net site was viewed worldwide by twenty thousand, seven hundred and sixty-six (20,766) people. Five hundred and twenty-four (524) visits from West Virginia were recorded.

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia offers an interactive and user friendly web site, 1800GAMBLER.net. Visitors to the site can take a self-test to see if they have symptoms of problem gambling. The web site emphasizes that a self-test is not a substitute for professional help. It also gives information on the risk factors and warning signs for problem gambling. The web site features a calendar so that users can view and possibly attend planned PGHNWV speaking engagements, exhibits, trainings, and other outreach activities. PGHNWV updates the

site on a regular basis, so that the latest data, press releases, and general information on the program is readily available. This web site details the program's mission and objectives and includes charts of outcome data. This web site provides access to the program's annual reports, newsletters, and renditions of its current advertising campaign. The web site also provides a special "clinicians only" section where network clinicians can access forms and documents. The web site provides useful links to other sites.

Future plans for the website include possibly constructing a self-help chat-room for problem gamblers in recovery in West Virginia.

"Just keep in contact. It's helpful. Keep sending educational info and articles, they are wonderful tools. Thank you for being here for me, it does help."

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Gamblers Anonymous

Gamblers Anonymous is a free 12-step support group ran by recovering gamblers. Although this is a tremendous resource for problem gamblers, in West Virginia the meetings have traditionally been very few. When the Problem Gamblers Network began in 2000, there were about four meetings statewide. There are now seven meetings statewide. While this is an improvement, it pales in comparison to, for instance, the number of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings available. There are over 60 AA meetings just in the greater Charleston area. The Problem Gamblers Help Network has strived to help the recovery community increase these meetings. Clinical staff members maintain regular contact with GA leaders so that records of the most current GA meetings can be mailed out to help-line callers. When there is a change in meeting location or time, or when a new meeting is formed, staff often sends a mass mailing to all former help-line callers from the applicable area, as well as help with local press coverage of the meeting. Plans for FY 2010 include inviting area recovering gamblers to PGHWNV conferences so they can network with each other and the counselors and start new GA groups or expand existing ones.

Recruitment and Retention

The goal of the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia is to offer all callers an appointment with a trained professional within 72 hours of their calls and within 30 miles of their homes. West Virginia's rural geography and lack of credentialed problem gambling professionals in some remote areas make ongoing recruitment and training imperative. In order to reduce attrition, additional efforts and incentives are offered for provider retention. Please see TAB 2 for a complete map of all the cities in the state where the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia has trained at least one professionally licensed provider. Some cities have multiple providers to meet the needs of help-line callers.

Racetrack Employee Education

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia completed a professionally videotaped training, which was reproduced and sent to each of WV's four racetrack/casinos for use in employee training. Special efforts for further education are also made during Responsible Gaming Education Week and National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

National Conference on Problem Gambling

Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia Executive Director Steve Burton served on the program planning committee and attended the annual conference on problem gambling held in June 2009. The Network also sponsored four of its trained gambling clinicians to attend the conference.

West Virginia Council on Problem Gambling

Steve Burton, Executive Director of the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia, currently holds a seat on the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Council on Problem Gambling.

Publication of Newsletter

In July of 2005, the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia started publishing a newsletter to create awareness about problem gambling and highlight program initiatives. In FY 2009 the Network published and distributed two editions of the newsletter. In addition to mailing a copy to each help-line caller and all state gambling addiction treatment providers, copies of the newsletter are mailed to targeted referral sources. They include but are not limited to:

Members of the National Association of Social Workers, WV Chapter
Members of the WV Association of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counselors
Management Employees of the State's Four Racetrack and Gaming Centers
Members of the West Virginia Legislature
Members of the WV Psychological Association
Members of Charleston City Council
Members of WV Rural Health Agencies
WV Committee on Aging
County Senior Centers
Kanawha County Magistrates & Commissioners
Limited Video Lottery Operators
West Virginia Probation Officers
Clergy members of the WV Council of Churches
West Virginia Judges
WV DHHR County Offices
Family Resource Network Offices
Licensed Practicing Medical Doctors
Licensed Practicing Physician Assistants

For copies of the Summer 2009 and Fall 2009 PGHNWV Newsletters, please turn to TAB 3.

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week

March 1-7 2009 was recognized nationwide as National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. Problem Gamblers Help Network staff and network counselors worked diligently to promote awareness during this week. Over 45 activities took place statewide. Brochures and posters were placed in every type of location statewide, from convenient stores and bars to colleges, hospitals and social service agencies. A statewide Billboard and TV Commercial Campaign began. Numerous radio television stations and newspapers ran stories on the consequences of untreated problem gambling. The WV Legislature officially recognized the significance of the week. Of note was Brocks Run Mining Company, which allowed payroll inserts for all 650 employee See TAB 5 for a complete list of NPGAW activities for West Virginia.

WV Recovery Weekend

The Problem Gamblers Help Network hosted two special event weekends aimed at treating problem gamblers and their loved ones. The events were held on March 6-8 at Chief Logan State Park and June 26-28, 2009 at Canaan Valley Lodge. Promoted as “a safe retreat for confidential help, mutual support and the exchange of ideas” the Recovery Weekends attracted fifty-four (54) state problem gamblers and loved ones of problem gamblers.

Each weekend was intensive in structure, modeled after gambling addiction treatment offered at in-patient and residential programs. Sessions started early in the morning and some self-help groups met until after midnight. The participants were offered private consultations with trained professionals as well as group sessions facilitated by national experts.

In the one-to-one sessions, those with gambling-related financial problems were offered the opportunity to review their credit report and work on debt repayment with a consumer credit counselor. Four of the state’s 90+ professionally trained gambling addiction therapists also offered private sessions.

Participants were asked to complete evaluations at the end of the weekend, and clinical staff followed up with participants six months after the weekend. Results were overwhelmingly positive. Participants reported that the weekend helped them stop or decrease their gambling, better understand the impact of their behavior, and improved their relationship with their significant other, among many other benefits.

Intensive Out-patient Treatment

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia is currently conducting specialized programs in several locations throughout the state for those callers who have the most severe gambling problems. These callers are categorized as “pathological gamblers.” This program is aimed at those who have been treated for gambling addiction but have relapsed. The program rotates to different sites in the state where specialized gambling counselors have been trained. The program is a six-week long intensive treatment experience, which involves six to nine hours per week of therapeutic intervention. Counselors use individual and group therapy techniques. Programs were piloted in Wheeling, Weirton, Teays Valley, Parkersburg, Martinsburg, Beckley, and Fairmont. A total of twenty-five gamblers were served in these locations. In an effort to conserve resources, in the next fiscal year, IOP will primarily be offered at sites already offering this type of program for other types of addictions. Specially trained gambling counselors will be onsite for any type of treatment paid for by the Network.

During FY 2009, three separate 12 hour trainings were held for 21 counselors who were part of the IOP program.

“I appreciated the fast response to my inquiry for the IOP in my area. I also appreciate the respect of privacy or discretion that you use in contacting me by mail or by phone.”

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Program Funding and Expenditures

The West Virginia Lottery Commission is the sole funding source for the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia, a program established in the year 2000 to assist problem gamblers and/or those who care about them. In FY 2009, state law directed that the West Virginia Lottery may provide a maximum of \$1.5 million from Racetrack Video Lottery and Limited Video Lottery, to the Compulsive Gambling Treatment Fund. Recent legislation provides an additional \$500,000 for the Compulsive Gamblers Treatment Fund from table games revenue.

Governing laws related to West Virginia Lottery Commission funding of this program may be found in the Racetrack Video Lottery Act, 29-22A-19 and the Limited Video Lottery Act, 29-22-1408.

In FY 2009, the Problem Gamblers Help of West Virginia spent:

Outreach, Advertising, Public Awareness (Media buys, Conferences, Website, Newsletters, and Reports)	\$637,053
Diagnostic Assessment and Outpatient Treatment	\$249,921
Administration (Rent, Utilities, Supplies, etc)	\$134,898
Liability Insurance	\$22,829
Training (New clinician, Continuing education, Clinical supervision)	\$76,530
Staffing for Initial Therapeutic Intervention (Salaries, Benefits, Payroll taxes, Travel)	\$243,402

First Choice Health receives a contract fee totaling 10% of funds spent.

These funds allowed the program to approve every qualified request for treatment funding specific to gambling addiction. It should also be noted that although "Staffing for Initial Therapeutic Intervention" is a separate line item, the most common type of "treatment" chosen by callers was the initial therapeutic intervention done by help-line counselors.

"Kathleen was very helpful. Also the therapist that she arranged for my husband and I to talk with was very helpful. We had nowhere to go except the 1800Gambler. They are doing an excellent job. Thank you"

-Help-line Survey Respondent, FY 2009

Help-line Satisfaction Survey Results

June 2007-Sept 2009

We're glad you called the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia. We pride ourselves on offering real hope and help to problem gamblers and their loved ones. We sincerely want to know if you found your help-line call helpful, or if there are areas where we need to improve. Please take a moment to anonymously complete this survey and return to us in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you or a loved one still needs help with a gambling problem please call our help-line at 1-800-GAMBLER.

The person who answered your help-line call was _____.

1. Was he/she respectful and courteous?
Yes 526 No 1 Unsure 0
2. Did he/she seem to have an understanding of gambling addiction?
Yes 510 No 1 Unsure 16
3. Did he/she offer you a free consultation with an expert on problem gambling in your area?
Yes 513 No 7 Unsure 7
4. Did you receive a mail packet including educational material and resources on problem gambling?
Yes 497 No 22 Unsure 8
5. Did you receive help quickly?
Yes 510 No 5 Unsure 12
6. Overall, did you find the call helpful?
Yes 508 No 5 Unsure 14

Please add any additional comments concerning what you liked or disliked about our service, including how we could have done a better job.

Please address any additional concerns to:
Steven L. Burton, Director at 304-344-2163. **THANK YOU!**

1♥800♦GAMBLER

News from The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

Summer 2009

The Darkest Side of Gambling Addiction



Donna went to jail after stealing over \$13,000 from one of her patients

Donna looks over the last few years of her life, and counts her blessings. Many people in Donna's position wouldn't have such an optimistic outlook. Her mother died a couple months ago. Although this was very hard for Donna, she takes comfort in knowing she passed a "test."

When someone has struggled with a severe gambling problem, like

Donna has, when they face tragedy they often take comfort in gambling. *But not Donna. "I am never going to touch one of those machines again-and I told my mom that on her deathbed. It's been 20 months since I've gambled, and I won't ever do it again."*

Donna first gambled years ago when she worked at a place that had gambling machines. She found herself getting in trouble, but was able to stop for a while. Then, when life's stresses piled up and she needed an escape, she started going to a local convenience store that had machines in the back. She would start playing at 5PM, and stay until they closed, around 3 AM. Sometimes, all the machines were taken, and she would have to go to other places in town until she could find a vacant seat. Meanwhile, her husband noticed the bills were going unpaid. Donna was spending she and her husband's paychecks on gambling. Soon, that wasn't

enough. Donna worked as a home health aide caring for an elderly woman. She started taking her patient's bankcard, and using it every night to gamble. She took over \$13,000. She knew the day might come when she would be caught, but she always felt she was just one win away from being able to pay it all back. One day a policeman showed up to take Donna to jail, and she immediately broke down and admitted what she did. By this time, Donna's marriage was also over.

Donna is not alone. About a third of callers to the WV Gambling Help-line say they have done something illegal such as write bad checks or steal to finance their gambling.

Fortunately, when Donna went to court, she was told to call 1-800-GAMBLER to get help. She saw Problem Gamblers Help Network Counselor Richard Morgan. *"He was*

wonderful-he really helped me quit, and see that I was never going to come out ahead gambling." Donna also recently attended a Problem Gamblers ReTREATment weekend held in Logan, WV. Donna, now 20 months clean, is going to be off probation soon, and hopes to start her own Gamblers Anonymous group. She is now employed and has almost paid back all the money that she stole to gamble. She and her ex-husband are slowly working their way back to each other. Best of all, she now has peace of mind, and feels like the machines no longer have a hold on her.



Near misses 'encourage gambling'

Scientists believe they have uncovered the secret of why gambling is so addictive: a near miss feels almost as good as a win.

Adapted from article by Kate Devlin, Medical Correspondent, London Telegraph

Gambling: Even though they lose, gamblers get a surge of excitement from almost hitting the jackpot. The research could explain why people continue to gamble even when they know that the odds are against them. Even though they lose, gamblers get a surge of

(Continued on next page)

Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia Staff

Steve Burton, MSW, LCSW, NCGC
Program Director

Sheila Moran, MSW, LSW, NCGC
Director of Quality Assurance

Michele Gordon, MSW, LGSW
Help-line Supervisor

Jane Reynolds, BA
Clinical Coordinator

Jennifer Davis Walton, MA
Clinical Coordinator

Julie Osborne, MSW, LSW
Clinical Coordinator

Kathleen O'Neil, MA, NCGC
Clinical Coordinator

Gloria Kirk
Administrative Assistant

**Visit our website,
1800GAMBLER.net
for up to date news
on our program,
and more detailed
information about
help for problem
gamblers in
West Virginia**

Near misses 'encourage gambling'

(Continued from previous page)

excitement from almost hitting the jackpot, the study found. It is this 'hit' which spurs them on to continue gambling, even when they are losing.

"Gamblers often interpret near misses as special events, which encourage them to continue to gamble," said Dr Luke Clark, from Cambridge University, who led the study. "Our findings show that the brain responds to near misses as if a win has been delivered, even though the result is technically a loss." These signs were red herrings, confusing the brain about the odds of winning, he said. "On games where there is some skill involved, like target practice, it makes sense to pay attention to near-misses.

"However, on gambling games where the wins are random, like slot machines or roulette, near misses do not signal your future success. "Importantly, our volunteers in this study were not regular or problem gamblers, and so these findings suggest that the brain may naturally respond to near misses in this way." The study looked at the reactions in the brains of 15 volunteers as they gambled on a fruit machine. When the volunteers won on the machine their brains responded in the areas known to process natural rewards like chocolate and drugs, the study, published in the journal *Neuron*, found.

But near-misses, such as scoring two cherries and an orange, also caused activity in the same region. When asked later the players described the near-misses as unpleasant, but said that they made them want to continue playing the game. Those who responded more forcefully to near-misses were also more likely to agree with statements of problem gamblers, the study found, such as "losses when gambling are bound to be followed by a series of wins".

Problem Gambling Experts Meet at Stonewall Jackson

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia invited internationally known gambling experts to Stonewall Jackson Resort, near Weston WV to share their knowledge with gambling counselors in the state. These experts included Dr. Norman Kruedlebach, former Director of the Brecksville In-patient gambling treatment facility, Joanna Franklin, of Gemini Research, Nigel Turner, Ph.D, Canadian scientist and expert on slot machines. The Network invited over thirty of their most experienced counselors, ones who are certified as Internationally Certified Gambling Counselors, to meet with these experts to learn more specific techniques to help people stop or decrease their gambling behavior. Workshops included:

- Harm Reduction-Decreasing Gambling Behavior
- How Electronic Gaming Machines Really Work
- How to Help Family Members of Problem Gamblers
- Celebrate Recovery-A Christian Perspective to helping
- How Consumer Credit Counseling can help Problem Gamblers
- Table Games from a Player's Point of View

Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Problem Gamblers is a Success

PGHNWV has been offering intensive outpatient therapy in different locations throughout the state for the last year. A recent participant in the Teays Valley IOP, which was facilitated by George Cantees of Prester's Hopewell Place, wrote this letter to Kathleen O'Neil, PGHNWV staff member who has been coordinating the IOPs.

(Reprinted with permission)

Kathleen-

The Teays Valley Outpatient Therapy sessions with George have ended, and I wanted to e-mail to let you and the Network know what a success that program has been for me and my family. I have not gambled since December 2008, and George's program has been a blessing and real turning point in my recovery from gambling.

I had attended Gamblers Anonymous before being selected for George's group, and I did have periods of abstaining from gambling while attending G.A. George's program was a personal breakthrough for me because he clearly imparted to me and the group the difference between recovery and abstention; George gave me the assistance and tools to complete a thorough recovery plan for myself. I also did not realize until the last few sessions of his program, but I was working the 12 self-help steps advocated by G.A. while attending George's program.

I consider it a true blessing that I was able to attend the Outpatient Therapy program, and I cannot speak highly enough of George's professionalism, patience, kindness, and help. This program has truly given me the understanding of my compulsive gambling in order to stop the gambling behavior, and make real provision for recovery and abstention. I have been able to maintain employment and keep my family together because of the program.

I am making a commitment to regularly attend G.A. as part of my overall recovery plan, and I know one other member of our group has also made the same commitment.

I want to thank you, the Network, and most of all George for the opportunity and gift provided me... for the first time since recognizing I am a compulsive gambler, I have true hope for recovery and wellness; I can now conceive of living the rest of my life without gambling.

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week Brings Results

March 1-7 was recognized nationwide as National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. Problem Gamblers Help Network Staff and network counselors did a great job promoting awareness during this week. Over 45 activities took place statewide. Brochures and posters were placed in locations statewide, from convenient stores and bars to colleges, hospitals and social service agencies. A statewide Billboard and TV Commercial Campaign began. Numerous radio television stations and newspapers ran stories on the consequences of untreated problem gambling. The WV Legislature officially recognized the significance of the week. Of note was Brocks Run Mining Company, which allowed payroll inserts for all 650 employees. The result was amazing and worth everyone's hard work: Calls for the month of March were double those in recent months. For a full list of activities, or to see how you can participate next year, visit our website at 1800GAMBLER.net

Top Reasons People DON'T call 1-800-GAMBLER

At the recent Problem Gamblers ReTREATment weekend, we discussed our marketing efforts with our target audience, problem gamblers. We know that if national statistics hold true for WV, there are tens of thousands of problem gamblers in our state who have not yet called 1-800-GAMBLER for the help that we know works. It is well documented that many people with addictions don't seek treatment at all, and of course we know there are problem gamblers who seek help from sources other than 1-800-GAMBLER. We polled this group, who did seek our help, to find out what may be stopping folks from calling. Each member agreed they had a gambling problem for several months or even years before they called us. Top reasons for hesitating to call are:

- “I didn't think I had a gambling problem”

Although each person must come to their own conclusion about the severity of their gambling problem, we hope by coordinating a statewide campaign to educate the public on the ten symptoms of gambling addiction, more people who have this disorder will realize help is available

- “I didn't believe counseling could help me”

We know that many people feel “just talking about it” won't solve their problem. We want them to know that our clinicians are trained in specific techniques to help them stop gambling. Our follow up with clients show that most who get help are able to stop or significantly decrease their gambling

- “I was worried people would find out I called for help”

Each call to us is confidential. Our licensed clinicians have requirements similar to that of doctors and may not disclose anything about you to a third party without your permission.

- “I heard the program was funded by the Lottery, so I didn't think it would help”

The program was mandated by law to help problem gamblers, and although the money is taken from lottery proceeds, the program is administered by the WV Department of Health and Human Resources.

Professional Counselors: The Key to Our Success

Linda Parkhill is a Licensed Professional Counselor and is a Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor. She has helped over eighty problem gamblers in the Martinsburg area. We asked her to share a little about herself and her experience helping people recover from this disorder.

Arriving at a mental health counseling career was an evolutionary process and has been one of my chosen career paths for the past 10 years. Prior to this, I had a varied job/business history being a newspaper copywriter and editor, publishing company owner and real estate developer. Currently, I treat problem gamblers and other mental health issues from my therapy center in Martinsburg WV. The Parkhill Center has also evolved into a healing place for clients of other therapists in the area and also for the Bereavement Division for Hospice of the Eastern Panhandle.

I've had the pleasure of being involved with the The Problem Gambler Help Network of WV for about 7 years. What first attracted me to the Network was the quality of training given at all levels. The training helped me realize I had a special affinity and empathy for working with this non-substance abuse addiction.

The most obvious missing piece of therapeutic support is the lack of a nearby GA group. Efforts to start one in this area have not been successful. The nearest GA group is in Frederick MD. about 40 miles away. This is conveniently inconvenient for most gamblers. Another issue is that sometimes significant others don't want to be involved with treatment or have a gambling problem themselves which will add to the complexity of the gambler's recovery. Many of my clients have been successful in cutting down or stopping gambling. One of the single most effective tools has been the self-ban at nearby Charles Town Race Track. If a client sees it as a 100% effective barrier, then it is an effective deterrent to gambling.

I often inspire gamblers to follow their passions. This usually involves discovering their creative side. What works for me is ballroom dancing, pottery, biking and gardening and building buildings. Each gambler is different and can identify a variety of interests. Nature has been an important contribution to my spirituality and I encourage gamblers to get in touch with their spiritual self in a way that resonates with them.

Counseling problem gamblers has been a rewarding choice for me. If I look at it as a metaphor on life, I've had fun, disappointments, rewards and accolades—not a bad return on my personal investment. I hope to continue making a difference to gamblers who desire change in their lives for a long time.



Linda Parkhill, LPC, NCGC

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### Economy Isn't Slowing Down Problem Gambling in WV

The current economic recession has not caused a drop in people seeking help for their gambling addiction in West Virginia. Calls to 1-800-GAMBLER in West Virginia have seen a recent increase, nearly doubling from the amount of calls seen at that same time last year. About 31% of the people now calling the help-line are unemployed, living on disability, or retired. Many of these people say they started gambling to make up for lost income but instead have fallen deeper in debt.



Fall 2009



## Teresa's Story

Teresa's life revolves around her husband and four-year-old daughter. Talking to this intelligent and articulate woman, it's hard to imagine what her life was like just a couple years ago.

**"I'll figure these machines out"**

Even though she had a college degree and she and

her fiancé both worked full-time, there never seemed to be enough money. One day at work a customer told her how he had won \$300 on a slot machine at a local parlor. She thought maybe she could develop a "system" and figure out when the machines were going to

pay off. Teresa doesn't drink at all and had never been addicted to anything, so she never considered the pull that these machines would eventually have on her.

Fast forward to a year later. Teresa was about to be married and her fiancé had no idea that she had a gambling problem. His first clue may have been the small wedding ceremony. Teresa had been saving and planning their dream wedding, but she gambled that money away. Teresa's personality began to change. She was highly irritable. He inquired about her gambling habits. "How much are you down?" he asked. "Fifty dollars" she lied. When he later saw a bank statement and understood where their money had been going, he was livid. They were newlyweds with a young daughter, and he was ready to leave her. This would be the first of many times she begged him to stay. He always did. She called 1-800-GAMBLER, and got an appointment right away with Nancy Wolfe-Dilgard, a trained

**"It took a little less than a year for this to almost destroy my life"**

gambling counselor with Valley Health Care. Although she really liked the counselor, she only went to one appointment. She later explained "I just wasn't ready yet."

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Live Online Chat with Gambling Counselors



The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia will soon launch a new program which will allow anyone in the state to access a gambling counselor online. The service, which is free to all WV residents, is part of an effort to reach out to those who are undecided about calling a help-line. Steve Burton, PGHNWV Director, said "Although all information given to help-line counselors is confidential, we know some people are just more comfortable with the anonymity of the internet. We are really hoping to reach more young people this way. Even though numerous studies tell us that adolescents are even more likely to develop a gambling problem than an adult, we get few calls from young people." Those accessing this service will be chatting with a gambling counselor in Charleston. The goal of the chat is to provide information about the range of services available to problem gamblers in West Virginia and to offer to link them directly with a counselor in their community. The chat service, which will be launched by November 2009 can be accessed from the website, 1800Gambler.net.

## Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia Staff

Steve Burton, MSW, LCSW, NCGC  
*Program Director*

Sheila Moran, MSW, LSW, NCGC  
*Director of Quality Assurance*

Michele Gordon, MSW, LGSW  
*Help-line Supervisor*

Jane Reynolds, BA  
*Clinical Coordinator*

Jennifer Davis Walton, MA  
*Clinical Coordinator*

Julie Osborne, MSW, LSW  
*Clinical Coordinator*

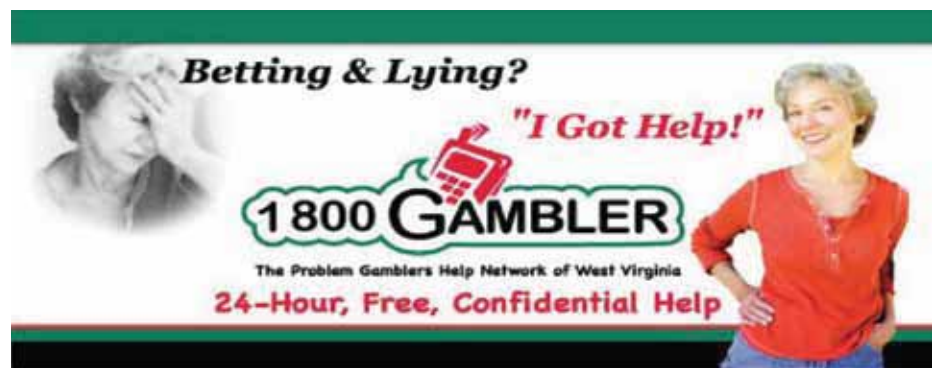
Kathleen O'Neil, MA, NCGC  
*Clinical Coordinator*

Gloria Kirk  
*Administrative Assistant*

Visit our website,  
**1800GAMBLER.net**  
for up to date news  
on our program,  
and more detailed  
information about  
help for problem  
gamblers in  
West Virginia

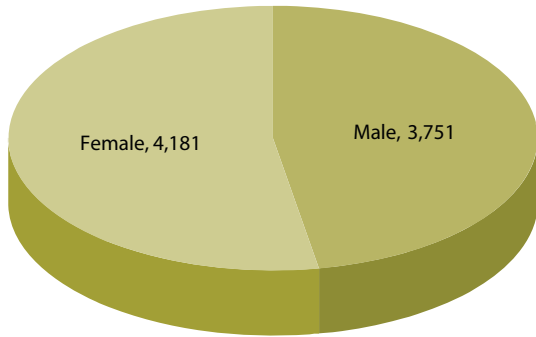
## New Outreach Efforts Highlight Recovery

For years the Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV has run a successful campaign aimed at educating West Virginians on the symptoms of gambling addiction, and urging those with the disorder to call for help. Now, after almost ten years of helping problem gamblers and their loved ones, the network has data showing that people CAN and DO recover from this disorder. Long term follow-up calls made by 1-800-Gambler staff members show that almost 75% of those who call for help are able to stop gambling. The network is highlighting this success with a new billboard campaign focusing on recovery and emphasizing that treatment works.

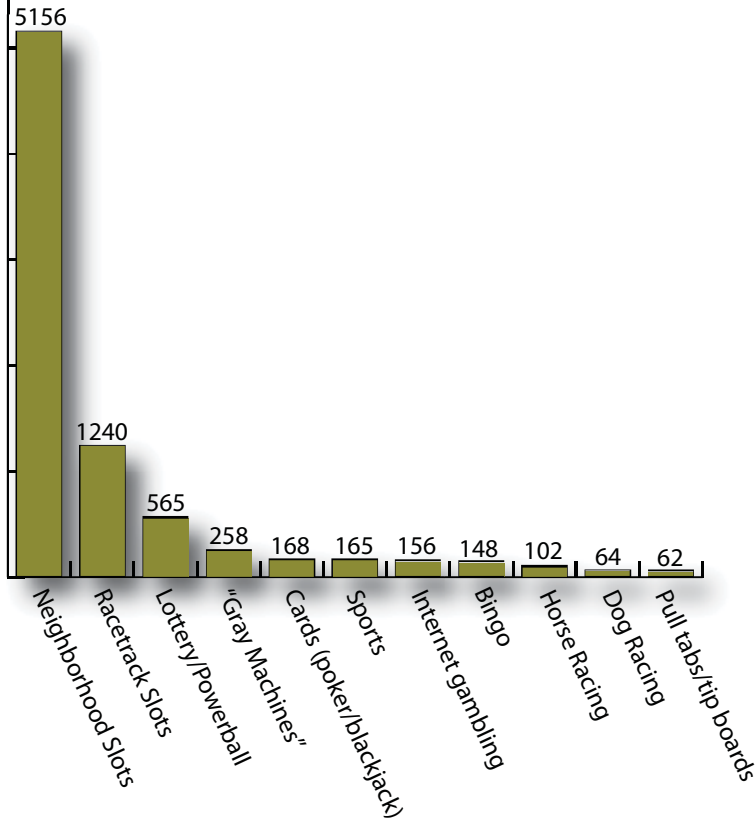


We have recently compiled statistics on all the problem gamblers who have called 1-800-GAMBLER over the past nine years. For the complete report, please visit us at [1800gambler.net](http://1800gambler.net).

### Gender of Gambler



### Type of Gambling



### Top Financial Problems

|                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Borrowed \$ from Others..... | 5,332 |
| Unpaid Bills .....           | 4,532 |
| Spending All Income .....    | 4,426 |
| Credit Card Charges .....    | 2,602 |
| Bad Checks.....              | 2,078 |
| Bank/finance co. loan.....   | 1,094 |
| Sold/pawned property .....   | 1,154 |
| Spent Savings .....          | 893   |
| Bankruptcy .....             | 825   |
| Stole \$ to Gamble .....     | 586   |
| Cashed in Stocks, 401k ..... | 334   |
| Second Mortgage* .....       | 281   |
| Unpaid Taxes .....           | 223   |
| Lost Car or House* .....     | 182   |
| Owe bookie/loan shark.....   | 113   |
| Canceled Insurance .....     | 88    |
| Business Debts* .....        | 86    |
| Owe Casino.....              | 56    |
| Spent Settlement* .....      | 52    |
| Spent Inheritance* .....     | 52    |
| Paying Restitution .....     | 47    |

\*Recently added items

### Most Common Occupations

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Health Care/Social Work..... | 522 |
| Gaming Industry.....         | 506 |
| Restaurant employee .....    | 365 |
| Labor/Manufacturing .....    | 268 |
| Homemaker.....               | 266 |
| Self employed .....          | 234 |
| Sales .....                  | 232 |
| Management .....             | 202 |
| Transportation/trucking..... | 198 |
| Construction .....           | 174 |
| School/education.....        | 165 |
| Clerical .....               | 132 |
| Retail Clerk.....            | 129 |
| Food/Hotel.....              | 124 |
| State gov't employee.....    | 114 |
| Laborer .....                | 112 |
| Federal gov't employee.....  | 97  |



## Teresa's Story - *(continued from page 1)*

She was no longer looking to make extra money, but desperately trying to win back the money she lost-her savings, her income tax

refund, the money that should have paid her car insurance, her lost paychecks, and her bill money. Teresa always tried to balance home and work. Now she was working extra shifts, and even took on a second job on a midnight shift to get more money to gamble. She prided herself on being a model worker, moving up quickly to a management position in her day job. Now her gambling took precedence and she was taking long lunches, coming in late, or not coming in at all. She was fired from her day job. Then, she did something she never imagined she would do. She stole over \$500 from her night-shift job. She went to a video poker machine, praying she'd win so she could pay back the money she had just taken, and win back some of her other losses. By 3 AM, she was broke, and truly desperate, sitting alone in her car thinking of the mess she was in, and thinking of her family. They'd be better off without her, she reasoned. "Why does my daughter need a mother who is a degenerate gambler and a thief?" she asked herself.

She describes what happened next as "the hand of God." She decided not to kill herself, but instead went to the police headquarters and confessed her crime. She was ready to go to jail. Fortunately for her, she had been such a good employee that her boss agreed not to prosecute her if she repaid the money. Her angst was obvious to all who encountered her that night, and she was admitted to the local psychiatric hospital for a week. After getting out, she again went to see counselor Nancy Wolfe-Dilgard. "I thought maybe you'd be back" Nancy told her. They started to really work on her issues, and even brought her husband into some sessions. "He ended up taking over the money for quite a while, and Nancy really helped him understand what was going on with me." She and her husband also attended a "Weekend ReTREATment Experience" sponsored by the Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV. It was there that she was moved by hearing stories of other gamblers in recovery and she decided she wanted to share her own story.

It has now been almost a year and a half since Teresa has gambled. She wants to tell other people who may be struggling with this disorder "You can get your life back."

**"The counselor saved my marriage-and my life"**

We are pleased to introduce the newest class of graduates of our "Diagnosis and Treatment of Gambling Addiction" training program. These professionals have been providing therapy in the mental health and addictions field for years, and now they are certified to treat problem gamblers.

**Janelle Cress**, Morgantown  
**Patty Jean Deutsch**, Charleston  
**Robert Edmundson**, Morgantown  
**Martha Ferris**, Morgantown  
**Eva Fisher**, Wheeling  
**Nancy Graham**, Morgantown  
**John R. Haram**, Martinsburg  
**Sky Kershner**, Charleston  
**Dana Petroff**, Hurricane  
**Jo Anna Scheidler**, Dunbar  
**Joy Sexton**, Beckley  
**Nancy Taylor**, Morgantown  
**Wesley Thorne**, Kingwood  
**Ashlee Walls**, Dunbar  
**Liz Watkins**, Wheeling  
**Rebecca Wilson**, Fairmont  
**Christa Aucremanne**, Morgantown

**If you or a loved one suffers with a gambling addiction, please take action now! Call us today at 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential help.**

**3,973**

The number of 1-800-GAMBLER callers who say they have received "bailouts" from loved ones. Rather than ask for money to gamble, most problem gamblers ask friends or family members for money for bills or other necessities. This makes their loved ones more likely to provide funds which enable them to continue gambling.

## Gambling Addiction Experts Gather at Oglebay

Gambling addiction experts from the northern part of the state recently met for a symposium on advanced treatment techniques at Oglebay Park in Wheeling. A very special part of the conference was a cookout that was attended by area Gamblers Anonymous members. This gave the counselors and the GA members a chance to meet and discuss how professional treatment providers and support groups can work together to help those who want to stop gambling. Conference workshops included:

- A panel on financial issues for problem gamblers, featuring local attorney Tom McIntyre who works with bankruptcy, banker Jim Gordon, and Consumer Credit Counseling Director Mary Harriman
- A presentation by PGHNWV counselor Rus Philpot on working with loved ones of gamblers
- A discussion on the relationship between gambling addiction and Parkinson's Disease led by Dr. Norman Kruedelbach
- A dialogue on ethical issues encountered when treating problem gamblers, led by PGHNWV Counselor Sandra Street

Conferences for counselors in the central and southern part of the state are planned for next year so that all PGHNWV network members can receive these updates on gambling addiction treatment.

## Professional Counselors: The Key To Our Success

Sandra Street is a nationally certified gambling counselor who has been seeing 1-800-GAMBLER callers from Wheeling for several years. Sandra has helped many people stop gambling. We asked her some questions about her experience working with problem gamblers.

### How long have you been doing counseling?

Twenty-five plus years. I have a Master of Arts degree in Counseling and I'm a licensed professional counselor, approved licensed professional supervisor, certified clinical addiction counselor/supervisor, and nationally certified gambling counselor. My undergraduate degree is in nursing and I am certified as a psychiatric/mental health nurse.

### How long have you been treating Problem gamblers?

I have been with the network since 2004. I had seen a few gamblers before that but before PGHNWV there weren't many resources to help gamblers.

### Why did you decide to take the 35 hours of training from PGHNWV and become part of their network?

I have worked in substance abuse since 1985 in several settings. Many substance abusing patients also gambled. Often they gambled when drinking or using drugs. I noticed how gamblers used distorted thinking and I wanted to learn more about gambling in order to be effective with these clients.

### What is the most challenging thing about treating problem gamblers?

I think it is the thought processes of the gamblers. They are convinced they can be successful by winning. This seems a reasonable remedy to being in debt from gambling, but only encourages the cycle and sets them up for relapse.

### How is treating a problem gambler different than treating clients with substance abuse addictions?

Thankfully, we have made great strides in public awareness of the disease concept as it applies to dependence on alcohol and/or other drugs but Pathological Gambling is not usually perceived as a disorder. Pathological Gambling is a hidden addiction. Gamblers cannot attribute their behavior to being intoxicated, hence, the guilt and shame are even stronger and the family's anger is intense. Gamblers appear to have greater denial and stronger defense mechanisms.

### Are many of your clients successful at stopping or reducing their gambling?

The majority have stopped completely or decreased the gambling. Families report that they have learned about enabling the gambler and are learning to take care of themselves.

### Have you found any commonalities among the problem gamblers you have treated?

The majority of gamblers I see are "escape gamblers" and have other issues, such as depression, anxiety, grief, and low self-esteem. Almost without exception, they refer to not thinking about their problems when they are gambling. The other commonality I hear is that they are convinced they can win.

### Have you found any one intervention in particular that seems to be effective with problem gamblers?

It is a must to look at financial controls. Gamblers often fall into a pattern of thinking they will win their money back if they can continue to have money to gamble.



Sandra Street, Nationally Certified Gambling Counselor Wheeling, WV



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The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

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Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia • Administered by WV-DHHR.  
PO Box 3324 • Charleston, WV 25333

**60%**  
of problem gamblers  
in treatment in WV who  
owe child support admit  
to being delinquent on  
payments due to their  
gambling.

We are working on plans for the next Weekend ReTREATment Experience, to be held this spring. We will have one in the southern part of the state and one in the northern part of the state. This free event brings together problem gamblers and their family members with gambling addiction experts for a weekend of intense treatment and fellowship.

**Space is limited, so please contact Michele Gordon at  
1-888-696-2517 or Michele@1800Gambler.net for more details.**

~ ~ ~

***Quotes from participants at our last “Weekend ReTREATment Experience”:***

*“I enjoyed the entire weekend but best of all was hearing everyone talk about their lives and fears and troubles – very eye opening.”*

*“Having my husband participate in the weekend with me was key because I was finally able to talk to him about my gambling in an open way.”*

*“I think all of it was good, but the part on how the machines work really hit home, and I think that will help me so much.”*

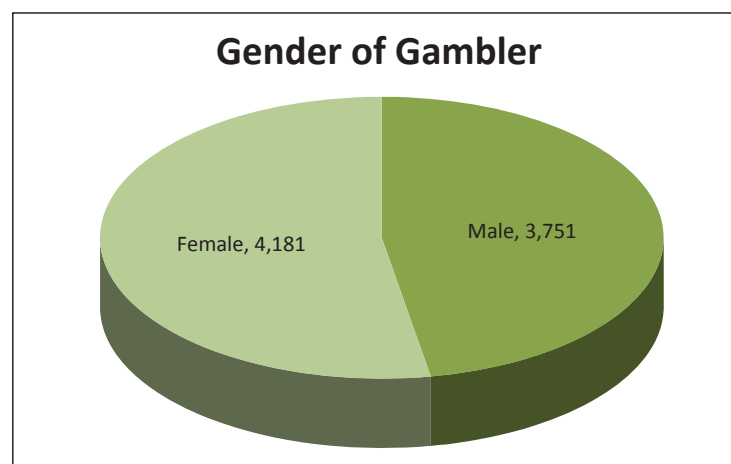
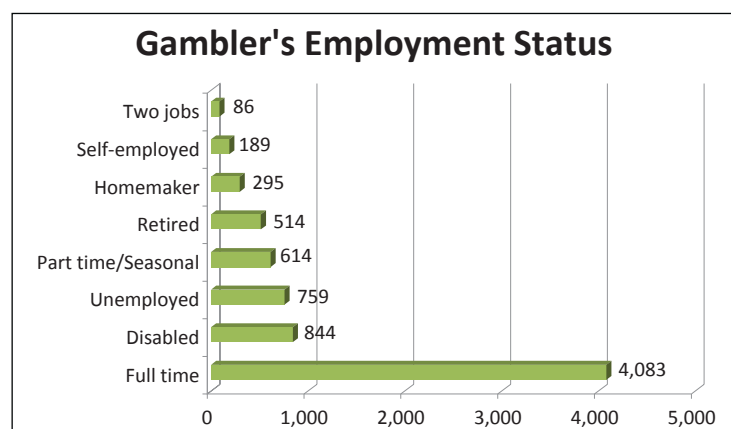
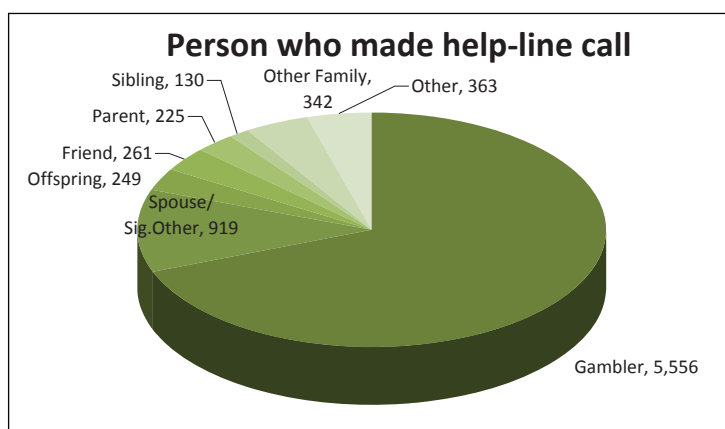
Over the next several months we will be offering extra help for problem gamblers who have tried to stop gambling with the help of traditional therapy, but have been unable to do so. Intensive outpatient therapy is a treatment approach that involves several hours per week of therapy in an outpatient setting. We will be offering this special program at multiple locations throughout the state. For more information call Kathleen O’Neil at 1-888-696-2517 or e-mail Kathleen@1800Gambler.net



# 1800 GAMBLER

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

## Clinical and Demographic Data August 2000 --- August 2009





# Total Clients Helped 8,045

|                               |       |                                            |       |                          |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| <u>Top Referral Sources</u>   |       | <u>Gambling Debt</u>                       |       | <u>DSM Symptoms</u>      |       |
| Billboards                    | 2,051 | None reported                              | 1,266 | Loss of Control          | 6,349 |
| Past Help-line Call           | 892   | \$1.00 - \$1,000                           | 642   | Chasing Losses           | 6,081 |
| Sticker on Machine            | 773   | \$1000 - \$5,000                           | 1,093 | Lying                    | 6,078 |
| Family/Friend                 | 593   | \$5,000 - \$25,000                         | 1,260 | Tolerance                | 5,135 |
| PGHNWV Counselor              | 548   | \$25,000 - \$50,000                        | 448   | Escape                   | 5,064 |
| Yellow Pages                  | 531   | \$50,000 - \$100,000                       | 233   | Preoccupation            | 4,235 |
| Television                    | 423   | Over \$100,000                             | 106   | Bailouts                 | 3,973 |
| Newspaper                     | 227   |                                            |       | Loss of Job/Relationship | 3,678 |
| Racetrack Brochure            | 199   | <u>Type of Gambling</u>                    |       | Illegal Activities       | 2,383 |
| Website                       | 182   | Neighborhood Slots                         | 5,156 | <u>Education Level</u>   |       |
| Staff Follow-up Calls         | 181   | Racetrack Slots                            | 1,240 | Less than HS Grad        | 632   |
| Healthcare Provider           | 145   | Lottery/Powerball                          | 565   | HS Grad/GED              | 2,331 |
| <u>Top Financial Problems</u> |       | "Gray machines"                            | 258   | Vocational Training      | 363   |
| Borrowed \$ from Others       | 5,332 | Cards (poker/blackjack)                    | 168   | Some College             | 997   |
| Unpaid Bills                  | 4,532 | Sports                                     | 165   | 2 Year College Grad      | 350   |
| Spending All Income           | 4,426 | Internet gambling                          | 156   | 4 Year College Grad      | 675   |
| Credit Card Changes           | 2,602 | Bingo                                      | 148   | Advanced Degree          | 147   |
| Bad Checks                    | 2,078 | Horse Racing                               | 102   | <u>Household Income</u>  |       |
| Bank/finance co. loan         | 1,094 | Dog Racing                                 | 64    | \$0 - \$10,000           | 494   |
| Sold/pawned property          | 1,154 | Pull tabs/tip boards                       | 62    | \$10,000 - \$20,000      | 838   |
| Spent Savings                 | 893   | * Some list more than one type of gambling |       | \$20,000 - \$30,000      | 712   |
| Bankruptcy                    | 825   | <u>Marital Status</u>                      |       | \$30,000 - \$40,000      | 526   |
| Stole \$ to Gamble            | 586   | Married                                    | 3,712 | \$40,000 - \$50,000      | 402   |
| Cashed in Stocks, 401k        | 334   | Single                                     | 1,473 | \$50,000+                | 1,344 |
| Second Mortgage*              | 281   | Divorced                                   | 1,054 |                          |       |
| Unpaid Taxes                  | 223   | Living Together                            | 684   |                          |       |
| Lost Car or House*            | 182   | Separated                                  | 298   |                          |       |
| Owe bookie/loan shark         | 113   | Widowed                                    | 277   |                          |       |
| Canceled Insurance            | 88    | <u>Gender of Gambler</u>                   |       |                          |       |
| Business Debts*               | 86    | Male                                       | 3,751 |                          |       |
| Owe Casino                    | 56    | Female                                     | 4,181 |                          |       |
| Spent Settlement*             | 52    |                                            |       |                          |       |
| Spent Inheritance*            | 52    |                                            |       |                          |       |
| Paying Restitution            | 47    |                                            |       |                          |       |
| *Recently added items         |       |                                            |       |                          |       |

1-800-Gambler also tracks several other categories including call date and time, living arrangements, number of dependents, frequency of gambling, veteran status, occupation, occurrence of big early win, mental health and substance abuse issues, stressful life events, age progression of gambling, disability status, family history of mental illness or substance abuse, treatment history, and status of current counseling sessions. Additional data is collected on clients who attend face-to-face assessments. The data is self-reported, so some categories will not equal total number of calls taken because not all callers reported that information.

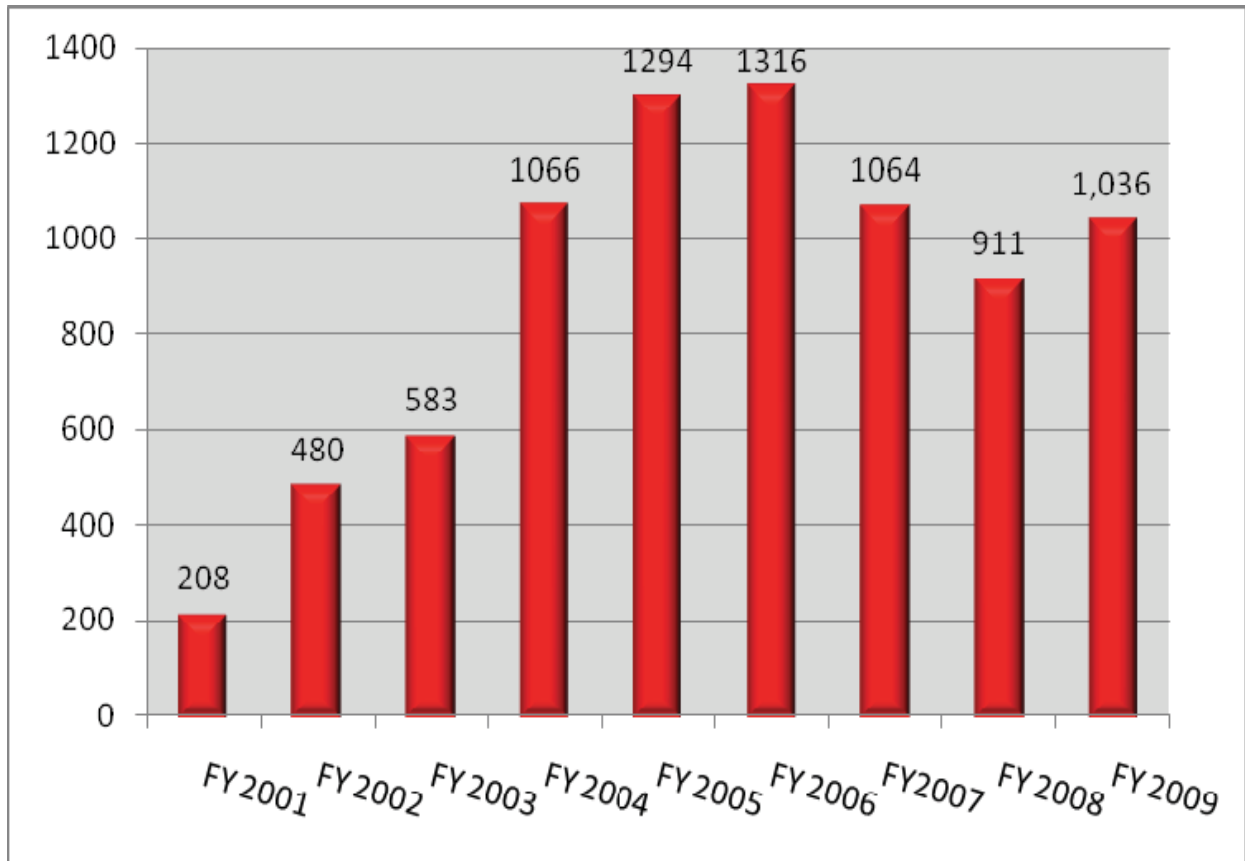


## Calls to 1-800-GAMBLER by County August 2000 - August 2009

|            |     |            |       |              |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-------|--------------|-----|
| Barbour    | 50  | Kanawha    | 1,275 | Preston      | 102 |
| Berkeley   | 425 | Lewis      | 46    | Putnam       | 271 |
| Boone      | 91  | Lincoln    | 61    | Raleigh      | 284 |
| Braxton    | 30  | Logan      | 100   | Randolph     | 81  |
| Brooke     | 144 | Marion     | 271   | Ritchie      | 12  |
| Cabell     | 423 | Marshall   | 168   | Roane        | 13  |
| Calhoun    | 4   | Mason      | 63    | Summers      | 37  |
| Clay       | 14  | McDowell   | 28    | Taylor       | 56  |
| Doddridge  | 9   | Mercer     | 217   | Tucker       | 9   |
| Fayette    | 131 | Mineral    | 66    | Tyler        | 20  |
| Gilmer     | 6   | Mingo      | 76    | Upshur       | 61  |
| Grant      | 10  | Monongalia | 313   | Wayne        | 86  |
| Greenbrier | 75  | Monroe     | 36    | Webster      | 3   |
| Hampshire  | 32  | Morgan     | 16    | Wetzel       | 55  |
| Hancock    | 255 | Nicholas   | 58    | Wirt         | 13  |
| Hardy      | 21  | Ohio       | 444   | Wood         | 560 |
| Harrison   | 395 | Pendleton  | 6     | Wyoming      | 43  |
| Jackson    | 76  | Pleasants  | 27    | Out-of-State | 274 |
| Jefferson  | 246 | Pocahontas | 16    | Unknown      | 391 |

## Nine-Year Trends in Help-Line Intakes

This graph shows the number of help-line intakes completed for each fiscal year since the program was started in August 2000.



**National Problem Gamblers Awareness Week, 2009**  
**The Problem Gamblers Help Network of WV**

- Frank Masters placed posters and brochures in his office at Pyramid Counseling
- Ron Pearse did a radio interview with WRLF; conducted an interview with the Dominion Post Newspaper; did a lecture on problem gambling at Fairmont State University; did an in-service at a residence hall at FSU; placed posters and brochures at local offices
- Tammy Showell started a support group for problem gamblers (G.A.M.E.S) at her Lewisburg office; used radio and television ads to promote NPGAW and the new group
- Jean O'Halloran did an interview with the Record Delta; interview with WDTV (Channel 5 in Buckhannon); gave printed materials to members of the Upshur County Family Resource Network
- Kim Goodwin placed posters and brochures in offices at Westbrook Health Services and shared printed materials with Wirt and Calhoun County Family Resource Networks
- WV Primary Care Association took part in Webinar conducted by PGHNWV Director Steve Burton; allowed PGHNWV to distribute printed materials to its 40-member network of primary care centers
- Alliance for Children distributed packets of information to its 12-member network
- Common Grounds Outreach placed posters and brochures in food pantry
- Alloy Plant allowed PGHNWV insert information into payroll; placed posters and brochures in plant
- Rock Forge Neighborhood House placed posters and brochures in the lobby
- Midtown Center allowed PGHNWV staff to put up display in lobby
- Fannie Loughridge placed posters and brochures in lobby at Recovery Garden
- Sandra Street placed posters and brochures in her lobby at Street Consulting; set up display at Wheeling Downs Casino
- Tammy Smith placed posters and brochures at Mercer County Day Report Center

- Deborah Maiorano placed posters and brochures at local colleges and MD offices
- Susan Lawson placed posters and brochures in lobby at Veterans Administration lobby
- Karen Dotson placed posters and brochures in offices of Seneca Mental Health
- Jack Koehrsen placed posters and brochures in both of his counseling offices
- Sara Evans will do an ad in Keyser Newspaper
- Diana Masso and Roseanne Hefner of Kanawha Pastoral Center placed informational materials at their office, Cabin Creek Health Center, and St. Anthony's church
- PGHNWV staff member Gloria Kirk placed posters and brochures at Lippert Terrace
- PGHNWV staff member Gloira Kirk placed posters and brochures at Dunbar Mtn. Mission.
- David Frederick sent two letters to the editor of the Huntington Herald Dispatch
- Potomac Highlands Guild did articles highlighting PG for local newspaper
- Emily Wilson began working on a proposal for a program in Cabell County to provide diversionary services to problem gamblers who break the law
- PGHNWV staff member Jennifer Davis Walton placed posters and brochures at several Huntington area businesses
- Virginia Shelhammer did two newspaper stories for the Wheeling Intelligencer and did a TV interview with Comcast
- Jim Keefer did a presentation on PG to the American Council for the Blind
- PGHNWV staff member Jane Reynolds did a presentation at New River Community College; presentation to Thomas Health Systems Staff; presentation to addictions class at WV Wesleyan College
- PGHNWV staff members Jennifer Davis Walton and Jane Reynolds did a presentation to the Huntington area VA
- PGHNWV staff member Jennifer Davis Walton mailed printed material to RiverPark Hospital
- PGHNWV staff member Kathleen O'Neil mailed over 400 pieces of literature to Salem College for distribution

- PGHNWV worked with the WV Legislature to obtain a Proclamation of National Problem Gambling Awareness Week
- PGHNWV mailed out its Annual Report to all WV newspapers and television stations, garnering several positive stories
- PGHNWV mailed its Annual Report to all WV Legislature members
- PGHNWV mailed out a training DVD on PG to all four WV Casinos to be used for new employee orientation
- PGHNWV began a statewide billboard and television advertising campaign to encourage calls to its help-line
- PGHNWV staff member Jane Reynolds met with and distributed materials to various doctors offices at Summersville Memorial Hospital; hospital administrators agreed to advertise the 1-800-Gambler help-lien for free on the marquee outside the hospital
- PGHNWV staff member Jane Reynolds placed literature in local psychiatrists' offices
- PGHNWV staff member Jane Reynolds did an interview with the Nicholas Chronicle Newspaper
- PGHNWV held its third ever Weekend ReTREATment seminar for problem gamblers. Over 30 people attended and took part in a weekend of intensive treatment
- PGHNWV took out an ad in Charleston Newspapers
- PGHNWV mailed out over 1800 stickers with the 1-800-GAMBLER logo to all businesses in WV which sell or promote lottery products
- PGHNWV to hold (Mar 22-24) annual advanced training especially for counselors who are Nationally Certified Gambling Counselors

## *Marriage at Risk?*

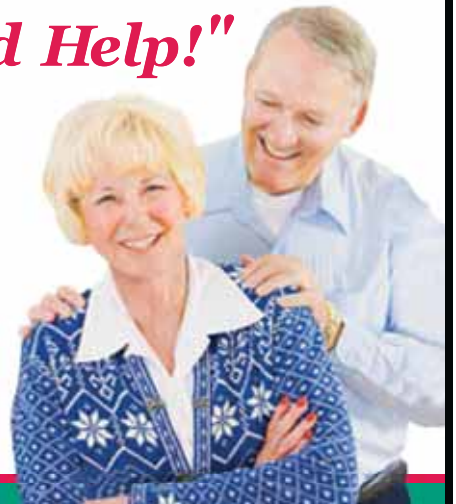
*"We Found Help!"*



**1 800 GAMBLER**

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**24-Hour, Free, Confidential Help**



## *Gambling the Rent Money?*

*"I Got Help!"*



**1 800 GAMBLER**

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

**24-Hour, Free, Confidential Help**



## *Betting & Lying?*

*"I Got Help!"*



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**24-Hour, Free, Confidential Help**



**The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia**

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