

# Problem Gambling Awareness Month Shines Spotlight on Hidden Addiction of Gambling

*Calls to Virginia Council on Problem Gambling's helpline increased by 114% from 2020*

RICHMOND, VA, USA, March 1, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) and the Virginia Council on Problem Gambling ([VCPG](#)), in collaboration with the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#), is dedicating the month to help individuals with gambling problems as well as to support their families. The 2022 campaign theme is "Awareness + Action" with the hashtag #PGAM2022.



VCPG Logo

“

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*Dr. Carolyn Hawley, President,  
Virginia Council on Problem  
Gambling*

“Unlike substance and alcohol use, gambling is considered a hidden addiction with consequences that can be just as devastating,” said Dr. Carolyn Hawley, Ph.D., President of VCPG. “Across the Commonwealth, we are recognizing Problem Gambling Awareness Month so people will be aware that problem gambling is treatable and help is available. VCPG can navigate problem gamblers or their family members to the support and resources they need.”

Problem gambling is defined as all gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. Approximately two million U.S. adults (1% of the population) are estimated to meet the criteria for severe problem gambling. Another four to six million meet the criteria for mild or moderate problem gambling.

With the expansion of gambling and increased awareness of the helpline, callers seeking help for their own or a loved one's gambling problems increased by 114% from 2020. The most prevalent forms of gambling that the callers played were slot machines at a casino or track (17%) and sports betting (15%). Calls were largely from males (74%).

VCPG's toll-free confidential helpline, 1-888-532-3500, provides 24/7/365 support and resources for anyone having questions about a gambling problem for themselves, a friend or a loved one. The helpline is easily accessible by call, text or even by online chat at [vcpg.com](http://vcpg.com). All callers who allow follow-up calls receive regular contacts via phone, text and email after 48 hours, one week, one month and six months. In addition, helpline staff members offer unique follow-ups and crisis counseling/services when needed to provide optimal support.

"As our state's legislature continues to make multiple new forms of gambling legal, it's important for Virginians to be aware of the signs of problem gambling, whether it's for themselves or someone they know," added Dr. Hawley. "The PGAM's campaign theme is all about taking the specific steps, having the right conversations about problem gambling and ensuring that individuals are directed toward the help they need. Virginians will soon have access to a new funding source executed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services to help with their treatment requirements."

"The Virginia Lottery is proud to partner with the Virginia Council on Problem Gambling, not just during Problem Gambling Awareness Month, but throughout the year, to help raise awareness of problem gambling and the resources available to the Commonwealth," said Virginia Lottery Acting Executive Director Kelly Gee. "The Lottery is committed to using its resources and strong brand awareness to encourage responsible play for those who choose to gamble, and to educate Virginians on how to seek help if they may need it."

VCPG aims to increase public awareness of problem gambling, ensure the widespread availability of treatment and support for problem gamblers and their families, and to encourage research and programs for prevention and education. VCPG maintains a neutral stance on gambling. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call or text 1-888-532-3500 or visit [vcpg.net](http://vcpg.net) to chat online.

Carolyn Hawley, PhD  
Virginia Council on Problem Gambling  
+1 804-461-9501

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)



Dr. Carolyn Hawley

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