

Virginia Partnership for Gaming and Health Reports 36% Increase in Demand

RICHMOND, VA, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the first half of 2026, the [Virginia Partnership for Gaming and Health](#) (VPGH) saw a 36.53% increase in referrals and intakes when compared to the same period last year. This significant increase underscores the growing need for support following the rapid expansion of legalized gambling and online gaming platforms in Virginia in recent years.

"We've not yet hit a plateau," says Carolyn Hawley, Director of VPGH. "As access to gambling continues to increase, we're going to see parallel growth in the need for problem gambling support."

Housed at Virginia Commonwealth

University, VPGH was created through the Virginia Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund to meet this moment through coordination, collaboration, and compassion. Support seekers are immediately connected to peer recovery support, and nearly all meet with a specialized treatment provider within one week.

VPGH is committed to strengthening Virginia's behavioral health response as gambling continues to evolve. In the first six months of 2026, VPGH added 27 new clinicians and two certified peer recovery specialists to its statewide network of providers. In that same period, VPGH conducted 76 community outreach activities that engaged more than 3,735 individuals.

"The model we've built at VPGH is unprecedented," Hawley says. "We have invested in training providers, in education and outreach efforts, and in research that informs policy and practice. No one else offers the same range of services."

However, funding for the Virginia Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund has not kept



**Virginia Partnership
for GAMING & HEALTH**

VPGH Logo



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*Dr. Carolyn Hawley, Director,
Virginia Partnership for
Gaming and Health*

pace with the growing need.

"The fund needs to grow alongside the growth in support seekers," Hawley says. "With more treatment dollars, we could increase the number of peer recovery specialists and trained providers, and make a greater investment in research that promotes best practices in treatment and recovery.

"There's a vast opportunity, but we have to meet it as a state."

About the Virginia Partnership for Gaming and Health

The Virginia Partnership for Gaming and Health (VPGH) at Virginia Commonwealth University aims to inspire hope, build support, and foster solutions that empower every Virginian seeking to transform their lives from problem gambling. VPGH partners with the [Virginia Council on Problem Gambling](#) and the [Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services](#) to ensure eligible Virginians receive treatment and recovery services. If needed, VPGH covers the cost of treatment to ensure every support seeker's recovery needs are met. VPGH also provides evidence-based training on problem gambling to its network of clinicians and peer recovery specialists.

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