

# Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling

47 Clapboard Hill Road • Guilford, CT 06437

---

## SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS OF HELPLINE CALLS 1997

### Introduction

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) operates a Helpline which covers Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Helpline is a 24-hour service for callers seeking help with a gambling problem for themselves or someone they care about. Callers seeking more general information about problem gambling are referred to CCPG's office. Included here are highlights from the recently released 1997 statistics. For more information or the complete report, contact CCPG at 888-789-7777.

### Major Findings

- Helpline Calls concerning someone with a gambling problem increased 76.1% from 704 calls in 1996 to 1240 calls in 1997.
- Helpline callers tended to be male (68.1% vs. 31.9% female), between 31-40 years old, Caucasian (86.7%), and Catholic (57.2%).
- 44.5% of problem gamblers were married and 37.8% reported children at home (64% males and 36% females).
- The four types of gambling most frequently causing a problem were casino slot machines (38.2%), casino blackjack (28.7%), lottery (20.4%) and sports betting (13.3%)

### Vulnerable Populations Need Special Attention

- Women: Special prevention programs targeting women are warranted as women developed a gambling problem in fewer years than men (4.7 years versus 7.8 years).
- Low Income: Three out of ten (31%) problem gamblers were underemployed and one out of three (36.3%) had an income of less than \$26,000. People with low income are more quickly and seriously impacted by their gambling losses.
- Families: Almost 1/3 (31%) of calls were made by those close to the gambler, indicating that families are deeply affected by problem gambling. Family members are more likely to be receptive to information and resources than the gamblers themselves.
- Other Addictions: A relatively high percentage of problem gamblers also reported cross addictions to alcohol (19.4%), tobacco (58.5%) and/or food (13%). Addiction clinicians treating these areas should routinely screen for problem gambling.

### Substantial Negative Personal, Family and Societal Impact

- Effects on the individual and family: high reported rates of depression, concurrent substance abuse, and suicidal ideation.
- Effects on society: enormous lifetime gambling losses and current gambling debts of problem gamblers.
  - Total lifetime losses for Helpline problem gamblers residing in Connecticut: \$69,649,188
  - Total estimated lifetime losses for all 70,000\* Connecticut problem gamblers: \$2.8 billion
  - Total current debt for Helpline problem gamblers residing in Connecticut: \$14,011,256
  - Total estimated current debt for all 70,000\* Connecticut problem gamblers: \$565 million
- The enormous burden on Connecticut taxpayers of problem gambling related losses, debts, bankruptcies, family disruption, theft, incarceration, and suicide, warrants a greater financial commitment by the State of Connecticut to support the prevention, treatment and research programs needed to address this growing problem.

\* Estimate based on the 1998 state sponsored survey

---

Office: 203-453-0138 • Fax: 203-453-9142  
Toll Free (CT, MA, RI): 888-789-7777

E-Mail: [ccpg@ccpg.org](mailto:ccpg@ccpg.org) • Website: [www.ccp.org](http://www.ccp.org)

**HELPLINE: 1-800-346-6238**