

# Problem gambling treatment

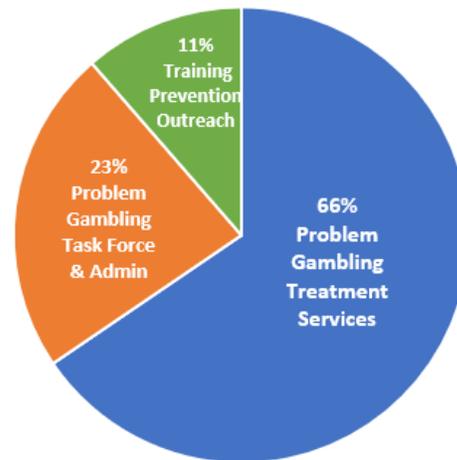
## Overview

The State Problem Gambling Program provides gap funding for individuals and family members seeking clinical treatment for problem gambling and Gambling Disorder (DSM-5) and who are uninsured or underinsured. In addition, the program funds training for Certified Gambling Counselors and other clinicians, and supports prevention, awareness, outreach, and education activities across WA State.

- Contracts with 11 certified problem gambling treatment provider agencies to increase access to quality care
- Coordinates problem gambling prevention and outreach activities with the HCA Prevention Unit and external stakeholders. Creates & distributes educational and outreach materials
- Provides online information and materials to increase referrals to the WA State Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-547-6133). The Helpline assists individuals and families with referrals to treatment providers and crisis stabilization
- Program manager coordinates Problem Gambling Task Force and the Adult Problem Gambling Prevalence Study
- Contracts with the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling for:
  - Awareness campaigns, including Problem Gambling Awareness Month (March) with a focus annually on specific populations at higher risk for problem gambling (examples: Veterans, Older Adults, Youth, etc.).
  - Trainings and certification for Problem Gambling Counselors and other professionals including in prevention, education, peer services, etc.
  - Youth-focused prevention activities in coordination with HCA's Prevention Unit.
  - Endorsement for Financial Specialists working with gamblers and their families (*new in 2021*)

## 2021-2023 Budget

In the 2021-2023 Biennium, the State Problem Gambling Program is allocated \$1.463 million from the state problem gambling account. This funding is divided evenly between SFY 2022 & SFY 2023 and budgeted as follows:<sup>1</sup>



## Costs and numbers served in SFY 2021

In SFY 2021, 336 distinct adult clients received problem gambling treatment services. Although the program served 13.6% fewer clients than in SFY 2020 (likely because of the pandemic shutdown and transition to telehealth), spending for treatment *increased by \$6K* over the previous year (from \$489K to \$495K). This indicates an average increase in services per client (with an average of \$1,472 per client, up from \$1,257 per client in the previous year). Of 167 clients who were newly assessed, 76% were admitted into outpatient services.

## Program eligibility requirements

Individuals seeking clinical treatment for problem gambling/gambling disorder are eligible to receive state-funded treatment if they meet the following criteria:

- Have been assessed by a licensed clinician and determined to meet criteria for problem gambling/Gambling Disorder (DSM-5).

<sup>1</sup> Does not include \$500,000 that was appropriated for an Adult Problem Gambling Prevalence study (including study, appropriation is 1.963M)



- Are ready to enter treatment with a Certified Gambling Counselor and a clinical assessment confirms they are likely to benefit from treatment.
- Are unable to afford treatment (do not have insurance coverage for problem gambling treatment. Medicaid recipients eligible).

Treatment for problem gambling includes screening & assessment, and individual, group, couples, and family counseling and case management. Family members (with or without the client) are also eligible to receive counseling services. Note: Treatment is available only to the extent of the funds appropriated by the Legislature for this purpose.

### Reimbursement rates

Certified problem gambling agencies that have contracts with HCA are reimbursed at the following fee-for-service rates: \$160 per assessment, \$80 per hour per individual/conjoint/family treatment, \$35 per session for group treatment, and \$20 per 15 minutes for case management. Clinical supervision is reimbursed at \$75 per hour, per counselor. Note: the rates have remained the same since 2011.

### Program funding

The problem gambling account receives a percentage (0.13%) of business & occupation tax on the net receipts from industry card rooms, pull tabs, and other games of chance, the State Lottery Commission, and the Washington Horse Racing Commission. Funds are directed to the state problem gambling account. Additional voluntary contributions may be directed to the problem gambling account, per RCW 43.20A.890.

### Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on services

In SFY 2021, the number of clients served decreased by 13.6% from SFY 2020 likely due to the shutdown necessitated by the pandemic. Despite the availability of telehealth, some clients had difficulty transitioning to an online mode. However, even though the number of clients served decreased, the number of sessions-per-client increased over the previous SFY.

### Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery Problem Gambling Fact Sheet 2022

To respond to this quick drop in caseloads, beginning in March 2020, the program provided \$67K in total for supplemental funding to seven contracted problem gambling agencies to help bridge the financial gap created by the decline in caseloads due to the shutdown. This funding ended in March 2021, and most of the contracted provider agencies have seen their problem gambling treatment caseloads return to normal, with several large agencies experiencing an *increase* above pre-pandemic levels.

### Authority

Revised Code of Washington 43.20A.890, and Washington Administrative Codes 246-341. Problem gambling program established by RCW 41.05.750; problem gambling account established by RCW 41.05.751. WAC 182-100-0100 defines the scope of the State Problem Gambling Program under the Health Care Authority, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.

### Partners (partial list)

- WA State Gambling Commission
- WA Indian Gaming Association
- State Lottery & Horse Racing Commissions
- Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling
- Behavioral Health Advisory Council/DBHR
- The Recovery Café (Seattle) & reSTART Life
- National Council on Problem Gambling

### Program Contract monitoring

Contract monitoring for treatment provider agencies includes onsite visits and invoice review and approval (on hold for SFY 2021 due to pandemic)

### For more information

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Program website: [www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-and-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/problem-gambling](http://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-and-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/problem-gambling)