

# Problem gambling treatment

## Overview

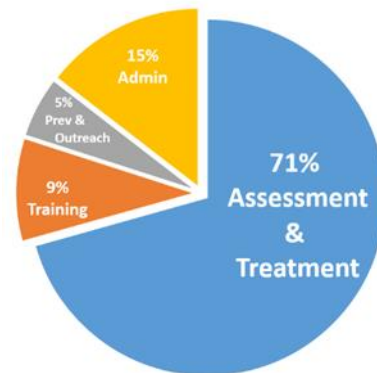
The State Problem Gambling Program provides gap funding for individuals and family members seeking clinical treatment for problem gambling and Gambling Disorder (DSM 5) and who are uninsured or underinsured. In addition, the program funds training for Certified Gambling Counselors and other clinicians,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

- Contracts with 15 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
- Coordinates the Joint Legislative Problem Gambling Task Force (including 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 for Gambling Counselor Certification and for clinicians.

- Endorsement for Financial Specialists -- Training for CPAs, financial planners and others to assist individuals and families with financial recovery and control (*new in 2021*)
- Youth-focused prevention activities in coordination with HCA's Prevention Unit.

## 2019-2021 Budget

In the 2019-2021 Biennium, the State Problem Gambling Program was allocated \$1.461 million from the state problem gambling account. This funding is divided evenly between SFY 2019 & SFY 2020.<sup>1</sup>



## Costs and numbers served in SFY 2020

389 distinct adult clients were assessed to determine if they were eligible to receive problem gambling treatment services. Of clients assessed, 85% were admitted into outpatient services (330 distinct adults, at an average cost of \$1,452). 15% received an assessment but did not enter treatment (59 distinct adults, at an average cost of \$165 per client). Overall, the program spent \$489K for clinical services from problem gambling certified agencies (including assessments and treatment), with an average of \$1,257 per client served in the program.

<sup>1</sup> Note: An additional \$600,000 was appropriated for the Problem Gambling Task Force facilitation and Adult Problem Gambling Prevalence Study. Not included in this graph.

## Eligibility requirements

Adults and their family members 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).
- Are ready to enter treatment with a Certified Gambling Counselor and 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. 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: same rates since 2011.

## Program funding

The problem gambling account receives a percentage (0.013%) 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 2020, the number of clients served decreased by 14% from SFY 2019 due to the impact of the pandemic from March-June 2020. Despite the availability of telehealth, some clients had difficulty transitioning due to technology challenges. In response, almost half of the contracted certified problem gambling agencies were awarded supplemental funding from program to offset the financial impact and ensure the continuation of their programs. Despite the overall reduction in clients, the *percentage* of clients who were admitted for treatment increased by 2.5% (from 82.5% of those assessed in SFY 2019 to 85% in SFY 2020).

## 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.
- Program tracking for participation and outcomes.

## 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)