



FACT SHEET

OFFICE OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

Overview

The Office of Problem and Pathological Gambling, known as the Office of Problem Gambling (OPG), was established in the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) under Assembly Bill (AB) 673, Chapter 210, Statutes of 2003 (Section 4369 of the Welfare and Institutions Code). The annual operating budget derived from the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund is \$8.5 million, of which \$3.5 million goes toward prevention services and \$5 million is allocated to a five-year, limited-term treatment services program that began in fiscal year 08/09. In addition, OPG receives \$166,000 annually from the Gambling Addiction Program Fund, created pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 19954 for the deposit of payments from California cardrooms. The California Lottery also provides approximately \$120,000 annually to OPG for prevention services.

OPG provides problem gambling prevention and treatment services for communities, families and individuals. OPG also provides training for licensed mental health practitioners to treat California residents and their families impacted by problem and pathological gambling.

California now joins the ranks of 38 other states that are committed to addressing problem and pathological gambling and currently provide prevention and/or treatment services.

The Challenge

According to the 2006 California Problem Gambling Prevalence Study, approximately 1,018,462 California adults experience significant problems related to gambling. In addition, 2.2 to 2.7 million California adults are at risk for developing gambling-related problems and juveniles are more likely than adults to develop a gambling addiction. The California Research Bureau's May 2006 Report, "Gambling in the Golden State," estimated that problem and pathological gambling in California costs society nearly \$1 billion annually (costs associated with crime, unpaid debts and bankruptcy, mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment, and public assistance).

Definition of Terms

The Welfare and Institutions Code defines problem gambling as participation in any form of gambling to the extent that it creates a negative consequence to the gambler, the gambler's family, place of employment or community. This includes patterns of gambling and related behaviors that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, familial, educational, financial or vocational interests. Pathological gambling disorder is defined as a progressive mental disorder meeting the diagnostic criteria set forth in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fourth Edition.

OPG Priorities

By direction of the State Legislature, OPG's first priority was to develop a statewide plan addressing problem gambling and to create a prevention program.

The program consists of the following activities and services:

- A toll-free telephone helpline for immediate crises management that includes referrals to self-help groups and treatment services.
- Public awareness campaigns that focus on prevention and education among the general public, through dissemination of youth-oriented literature, school programs, and public service announcements in the media.
- Empirically driven research programs focusing on epidemiology/prevalence, etiology/causation and best practices in prevention and treatment.
- Training for health care professionals, educators and members of nonprofit organizations in identifying problem gambling behaviors and making referrals for assistance.
- Training for gambling-industry and law enforcement personnel in identifying individuals who are at risk for problem or pathological gambling and making referrals for assistance.

In designing and developing the program, ADP will:

- Develop a statewide plan to address problem and pathological gambling
- Adopt any regulations necessary to administer the program

- Develop priorities for funding services and criteria for distributing program funds Monitor the expenditures of State funds by agencies and organizations receiving program funding
- Evaluate the effectiveness of services provided through programs

Recognizing the need for problem and pathological gambling treatment services, legislators set a broad framework for developing programs to support treatment services. Implementation of treatment programs is subject to continued funding by the Legislature.

Funding Opportunities

Interested parties should periodically refer to the OPG portion of the ADP website for information on funding opportunities.

Toll-Free Helplines

If you think that you or someone you know may have a gambling problem, please access OPG's website at www.problemgambling.ca.gov or call one of these toll-free helplines:

1-800-GAMBLER (Language translators available)

1-888-968-7888 (Mandarin and Cantonese languages)

For more information, visit the OPG multi-cultural [website](#).

Questions and comments may be emailed to OPG at OPG@adp.ca.gov.