



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

*The National Council on Problem Gambling Seeks to Expand Awareness and Understanding of this Often-Hidden Illness*

**Washington, DC (February 26, 2019)**- For the sixteenth year, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) dedicates the month of March to helping people affected by problem gambling. Approximately 2 million (1%) of U.S. adults are estimated to meet criteria for gambling addiction, and another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered problem gamblers. Yet for many, gambling remains a hidden addiction.

Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) is designed to achieve three goals: to increase public awareness of problem gambling; to increase the availability of prevention, treatment and recovery services; and to encourage healthcare providers to screen clients for problem gambling. This grassroots campaign brings together a wide range of stakeholders - public health organizations, advocacy groups and gambling operators - who work collaboratively to let people know that hope and help exist.

The Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling (LACG) is one of many organizations preparing for PGAM. "Let's not assume anyone is immune from the effects of this addiction. This year, together we can help thousands of families learn about this addiction and the available resources of helplines, treatment and counseling," said Janet Miller, Executive Director of LACG.

PGAM will also include Gambling Disorder Screening Day on March 12, 2019 in collaboration with the Cambridge Health Alliance. Screening Day is an international movement designed to support health care providers in the identification of gambling disorder. This disorder leads to financial, emotional, social, occupational and physical harms, yet many cases go undetected due to limited assessment for this problem. Screening Day addresses the imperative and provides tools to detect gambling-related problems as early as possible.

In addition, as March Madness reaches a crescendo with an estimated \$10 billion in bets placed on the NCAA basketball championship games, calls to the National Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-522-4700) spike an average of 40% during the month.

"March Madness is a time when we see an increase in gambling and more outreach for our services. PGAM is important to me - and NCPG as a whole - because we want to help

individuals with problem gambling, and this is the peak time for raising awareness of the issue," said Keith Whyte, Executive Director of NCPG.

**About the National Council on Problem Gambling**

NCPG is the national advocate for problem gamblers and their families. NCPG is neutral on legalized gambling and works with all stakeholders to promote responsible gaming. For more information on the 33rd National Conference on Problem Gambling, visit [www.ncpgambling.org/conference](http://www.ncpgambling.org/conference).

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call or text the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network at 1-800-522-4700 or visit [www.ncpg.org/chat](http://www.ncpg.org/chat) for confidential help.

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