



Problem Gambling Awareness Month Enters March Madness Phase *NCPG and NAADGS Highlight Addiction and Help*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2021

CONTACT:

John Norton
johnn@ncpgambling.org
202-360-4560

Washington, DC – The [National Council on Problem Gambling](#) (NCPG) and the [National Association of Administrators of Disordered Gambling Services](#) (NAADGS) are working together to highlight potential harms from sports betting and how to address them. With this week’s start of March Madness and the NCAA basketball tournament, people, families and concerned others should be aware that gambling addiction is real. It impacts families and communities as well as the person who gambles. There are many sources of help - treatment works and recovery is possible.

NCPG and NAADGS joined together nineteen years ago to designate March as [Problem Gambling Awareness Month](#) (PGAM) because of the popular college basketball event that has people in neighborhoods and offices filling out brackets and placing bets. PGAM is a national awareness campaign modeled after SAMHSA’s National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. Although problem gambling services receive no federal funding, with each passing year more join the hundreds of organizations that participate in PGAM to help the public, bettors and families be aware of the issue.

“NCPG and NAADGS created Problem Gambling Awareness Month as an annual campaign to focus the public on identifying and helping those affected by gambling addiction,” said Keith Whyte, NCPG Executive Director. “We leverage March Madness to aid that effort because sports bettors can be especially vulnerable to this problem. Last year the pandemic caused the tournament to be cancelled, but now it is back, starting in a few days. We fully expect calls to our National Problem Gambling Helpline and other helplines to peak during this month and we stand ready to help.”

In their [2018 ruling](#) in the Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the door for states to legalize sports betting. It is now operational in 20 states and Washington D.C, legalized but not operational in 5 states, and 17 more are considering it so far this year. Altogether, this is the fastest expansion of gambling in the United States ever – a 500% increase from five states in 2018 to 26, and possibly 42, in just three years. Funding for services in problem gambling have not similarly increased, but each year more states acknowledge the need.

“States across the country have decided to expand options for gambling in recent years,” said Stacey Frohnepfel-Hasson, President, NAADGS. “The need for awareness of responsible gambling practices is more vital now than ever before. As state administrators for problem gambling services, we’re excited to partner with the National Council on Problem Gambling to build awareness of prevention, treatment and recovery services for those in need.”

The PGAM grassroots campaign brings together a wide range of stakeholders, among them public health organizations, advocacy groups including NCPG state affiliates, and even gambling operators. It’s not too late to participate! The main hub of information can be found at bit.ly/NCPG-PGAM. Visitors will find a wide assortment of materials to support awareness, such as:

- A toolkit that includes sample social media posts and local press release templates
- Logos and graphics that can be used for a wide variety of communications platforms
- Sample posts for social media in both English and Spanish
- Calendar listings - [learn about](#) what others are doing, and [submit details](#) about your events
- Information about [Gambling Disorder Screening Day](#), which occurs the on the second Tuesday of every March (The event already happened this year, but it is useful information)
- State and city proclamations designating March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month

If you or someone you know are struggling with gambling addiction, call or text the National Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-522-4700 or visit www.ncpgambling.org/chat. Assistance is free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, there is an online self-assessment tool that can be found here:

<https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/screening-tools/>.

About the National Council on Problem Gambling

Based in Washington DC, the National Council on Problem Gambling is the only national nonprofit organization that seeks to minimize the economic and social costs associated with gambling addiction. If you or someone you know may have a gambling problem, contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline, which offers hope and help without stigma or shame. Call or text 1-800-522-4700 or visit www.ncpgambling.org/chat. Help is available 24/7 – it is free and confidential.

About National Association of Administrators of Disordered Gambling Services

NAADGS, formerly known as Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA), is a national membership organization of state administrators of public funds for problem gambling services. The organization was formed in 2000 to support the development of services that will reduce the impact of problem gambling in the United States. Central to this mission, it conducts a national survey of publicly funded problem gambling services in the United States, providing information on funding, types of services, administrative structures, state profiles, and state contacts.

###