

IDHS Recognizes March As Problem Gambling Awareness Month

by Marisa Kollias
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CHICAGO - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) today recognized March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) in Illinois. To raise awareness around gambling disorders and honor those in recovery, participating buildings in downtown Chicago will be lit teal and a statewide art contest will shine a spotlight on the power of recovery. Throughout the month, IDHS will also partner with providers across the state to raise awareness around treatment options for those in need.

"This month is a key opportunity for IDHS and our providers to raise awareness for the recovery support services available for gambling disorder. We would like to thank BOMA Chicago for helping us in our efforts to raise awareness by lighting the city

skyline teal from March 20th-26th,” said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou. “Individuals who struggle with gambling disorder often hide their behavior from family members and we want all Illinois residents to know there is hope and a path to recovery.”

IDHS’ Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) continues to work with gambling providers to expand outreach and raise awareness for the problems gambling can cause. IDHS launched an art contest, open to all residents of Illinois over the age of 21, to highlight Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The program is part of the new "Are You Really Winning?" Campaign.

The juried art program aims to raise awareness of gambling issues and to deliver a sense of hope to those who are struggling. Accepted media include drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, collage, digital art, fiber art, textiles, glass art, photography, ceramic art, assemblage, sculpture, graphic design, and illustration. The winning submissions will be displayed in April. To learn more, [click here](#).

According to research by Health Resources in Action (HRiA), four percent, or nearly 400,000, of Illinois residents have a gambling disorder, and another seven percent, or 700,000, are at risk of developing a gambling disorder.

SUPR has also helped providers prepare for an increase in problem gamblers coming in for treatment. In State Fiscal Year 2022, 20,354 assessments were conducted by treatment providers, representing a 56% increase over the previous year. The significant growth was followed by a 27% increase over the previous year in the number of individuals receiving gambling treatment.

Over the past three years, there have been over 429 clinicians trained to provide gambling disorder treatment services in Illinois. This year, SUPR will provide monthly webinars focused on gambling disorder, a two-day Summit on Problem Gambling, as well as an on-demand form of the 30-hour Gambling Counselor Training.

If gambling has become a problem for you or someone you know, call 1-800-GAMBLER. Help is also available through the website [AreYouReallyWinning.com](https://www.AreYouReallyWinning.com) and by texting GAMB to 833234.