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**Illinois Department of Human Services Releases First-Ever
Statewide Assessment of Gambling**

Department invests in related prevention, treatment, and recovery services

CHICAGO – Today the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) released the first-of-its-kind statewide assessment of problem gambling in Illinois.

Commissioned by IDHS and conducted by researchers at Health Resources in Action (HRIA), the assessment reports on the prevalence of different types of gambling in the state, the availability of treatment and other services, the prevalence of problem gambling among different groups, and overall attitudes about gambling.

IDHS is committed to expanding services and continuing to raise awareness about recovery options available through the website [WeKnowTheFeeling.org](https://www.weknowthefeeling.org), 1-800-GAMBLER, or by texting “ILGamb” to 53342.

The study found that 68% of adult Illinoisans reported gambling in the past year, with the State lottery being the most popular form. Following legalization and expansion, gambling at video gaming terminals and online sports betting showed significant growth over time.

While most adults engage in responsible gambling behaviors, some experience significant impact on their economic, social, and mental well-being, developing problem gambling and gambling disorder.

Statewide, the assessment found:

- 3.8% of adult Illinoisans -- approximately 383,000 people -- are considered to *have a gambling problem*
- An additional 7.7% -- approximately 761,000 people -- are *at risk for developing a gambling problem*

"It is so important that we have data on the patterns and depth of gambling across the state. I hope this report will be used to advance and expand effective treatment and recovery options for people experiencing problem gambling disorder throughout

Illinois,” **said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou.** “For those who do struggle with gambling disorder, they seldom seek help and often hide their behavior from family members.”

As the number of individuals in need of gambling treatment services continues to rise, IDHS has made significant investments in gambling services, including \$10 million budgeted for State Fiscal Year 23.

“We hope that the findings of this assessment will provide much needed information for people working on prevention and treatment of problem gambling in Illinois, which will help them make data-informed decisions on how best to assist individuals on their road to recovery,” **said Dr. Hannah Carliner, of Health Resources in Action, lead author of the study.** “The broad scope of this assessment also enables it to be used as a baseline measure for future assessments to track changes over time regarding prevalence of gambling and problem gambling, and availability and use of services,” she said.

The assessment was ordered in response to legislation that expanded access to gambling across the state. The 250-page report includes *10 recommended strategies* the State and partners can take to address problem gambling amidst this expansion. These include providing consistent funding toward problem gambling prevention and services, increasing awareness about problem gambling and its symptoms, and improving access to holistic treatment for problem gambling.

“These recommendations are based on the needs of Illinoisans identified through this assessment and informed by best practices from other states to provide a strategic initiative for the future of gambling disorder recovery and prevention in Illinois,” **said Laura Garcia, Director of the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) at IDHS.** “We are using these findings to develop strategies to increase awareness about problem gambling; support responsible gambling; and expand prevention, treatment, and recovery services throughout the state,” she said.

IDHS continues to work with gambling providers to expand outreach and awareness of the problems that gambling can cause, and to connect impacted people with the services that support recovery. IDHS, through SUPR, has funded 26 gambling treatment programs through SFY22. Twenty-one of them provide outpatient treatment and outreach services to the communities they serve.



JB Pritzker, Governor

Grace B. Hou, Secretary

SUPR has also helped providers prepare for an increase in problem gamblers in need of treatment. In State Fiscal Year 2021, 13,037 assessments were conducted by treatment providers, representing a 440% increase over the previous year. The significant growth was followed by a 185% increase over the previous year in the number of individuals receiving gambling treatment.

Over the past two years, over 245 clinicians have been 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 offer new opportunities for participation in the 30-hour Gambling Counselor Training.

The State of Illinois provides various intervention, treatment, and recovery resources, including the Illinois Problem Gambling Helpline, a telephone and web resource with specialists trained to connect people with treatment and recovery support services.

If you or someone you know is experiencing problems with gambling, contact the State's Gambling Helpline [weknowthefeeling.org](https://www.weknowthefeeling.org). Call: 1-800-GAMBLER, Text: "ILGamb" to 53342, or [chat here](#).

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