



National Council on Problem Gambling

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2,000,000 Calls to National Problem Gambling Helpline This Decade

March 9, 2010, Washington, D.C. -- Since 2000, there have been almost 2,000,000 calls to the National Problem Gambling Helpline (800.522.4700). Each call was automatically routed to one of 27 state or local call centers with information and referral resources for the caller's area. While not all calls were from problem gamblers or their families, every call must be answered as if it were a crisis call. National Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director, Keith Whyte, credits their partnerships with gaming operators and state health agencies to promote the number as one of the biggest factors in the growth of calls. Whyte notes, "Call volume is most directly related to publicity of the number. While gambling participation and revenue surged for most of the decade, the prevalence of gambling problems trended upward but appeared to remain within the range of 2-3% of the adult population."

Total and Average Calls per Month, 2000-2009

Year	Total Calls	Average Calls/Month
2000	115,699	9,642
2001	144,455	12,037
2002	126,181	10,515
2003	145,470	12,123
2004	183,328	15,277
2005	221,735	18,477
2006	236,460	19,704
2007	243,871	20,323
2008	255,671	21,306
2009	270,242	22,520
Total (2000-2009)	1,943,112	-----

In 2009, total calls to the National Helpline totaled 270,242, a 6% increase from 2008. Calls came from a range of ages, with the 45-54 age group topping the list. Male callers outnumbered females by approximately 18% in 2009. While the addiction affects both genders, studies show that men are much more likely to gamble, gamble for larger stakes, and on more things.

It may be difficult to tell in some cases whether or not someone simply enjoys gambling, or if they have an actual problem. Here are some signs to help recognize if you or someone you love has a gambling problem:

- Preoccupied with gambling and unable to stop
- Bragging about gambling, exaggerating wins and minimizing losses
- Restless and irritable when not gambling
- Gambling to win back what you've lost
- Borrowing money for gambling
- Lying to hide time spent gambling or unpaid debts
- Frequent unexplained absences
- Losing work time because of gambling
- Doing something illegal to get money for gambling
- Jeopardizing a significant relationship or job by gambling

A gambling addiction is a serious matter, and is not taken lightly. Often, people with gambling addictions either have, or are more susceptible to have, other types of addictions. Help can be found by calling the National Helpline: **1-800-522-4700**. The National Gambling Helpline is 24-hours, confidential and will direct you to local resources in your area. There are also trained individuals on-site to help with crisis calls that are in need of immediate attention.