

Increase Funding for Problem Gambling Services 2019 Legislative Session Talking Points

I. Nevada is a leader in the global gaming industry, and its problem gambling programs should reflect this leadership status.

States with far fewer gaming revenues spend many times more on problem gambling services. For Nevada to maintain the gold standard as a leader in gaming policy it must innovate in all areas of gaming including responsible gaming.

II. Legislation that created the Revolving Account for the Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling needs to be updated to account for changes in the State’s gaming industry.

Funding for DHHS problem gambling services rely exclusively on a formula that allocates the equivalent of \$2 per slot machine per quarter that was first enabled over a decade ago (NRS 458A). While the problem gambling service system has developed over the past decade, funding for that system has decreased from \$1,700,000 in 2008 to approximately \$1,300,000 for SFY 2017.

III. Nevada ranks 2nd in the nation for gambling revenue per resident age 18 and above yet ranks 13th in nation for per capita problem gambling service funding.

In 2016 sales tax, property tax and gaming tax from Nevada hotel casinos accounted for nearly \$1.4 billion, or approximately 42 percent of State General Fund revenues – more than any other industry. Of these revenues, Nevada invested less than one-tenth of one percent (\$1.3 million) of these funds towards programs to reduce gambling related harm.



IV. Nevada needs to focus on population health and to do so takes a larger investment in problem gambling prevention and health promotion.

In SFY 2018 about \$210,000 was invested in problem gambling prevention. This amount is not sufficient to deliver problem gambling prevention services throughout the state or finance an effective campaign.

V. Problem gambling directly impacts tens of thousands of Nevadans.

An estimated 126,967 Nevada residents, ages 18 and over, are problem gamblers. In addition, this disorder indirectly affects countless other family members, businesses, and communities.

VI. Treating problem and pathological gamblers saves Nevada taxpayer dollars.

While the economic impacts of problem gambling are great, social costs are immeasurable. Direct and indirect costs related to problem gambling could be minimized if this issue were adequately addressed.

VII. Treatment is effective and inexpensive.

Treatment is much less expensive than its alternatives, such as incarcerating addicted persons. In FY17 the average cost of gambling treatment was only \$1,407. UNLV research finds that 1 year after treatment, 39% having not gambled since starting treatment.

VIII. Funding for prevention, workforce development, and research is needed.

The Governor-appointed Advisory Committee on Problem Gambling developed a “Three Year Strategic Plan for Problem Gambling Treatment Services within the State of Nevada: Fiscal Years 2017 – 2019”. However, the current funding formula for problem gambling services insufficiently funds this plan. Investing in the implementation of this plan will save millions in future costs.