

Problem Gambling Services

16. Please provide the number of people historically using these services compared to current data.

Month	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21
July	254	210	178	209	156
August	250	213	182	207	152
September	246	205	183	203	152
October	248	197	192	198	157
November	244	186	197	196	159
December	234	190	196	191	158
January	235	190	206	188	158
February	232	188	199	196	168
March	234	184	211	197	169
April	231	188	217	192	180
May	215	193	216	187	177
June	214	193	213	182	178
Total	2,837	2,337	2,390	2,346	1,964
				1,964	11,874

Since 1982, Problem Gambling Services in the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has funded prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services guided by a public health approach that considers the biological, behavioral, economic and cultural determinants that influence gambling and health. This approach incorporates a balance of outreach, education, prevention, treatment and recovery support efforts that work together to minimize the potential negative impacts of gambling on individuals, families and communities, and recognizes gambling's availability, cultural and social acceptance, as well as monetary appeal. Bettor Choice Treatment provides counseling for problem gamblers and those affected by the gambling of a family member. This includes telehealth options for eligible persons with barriers to accessing certain face-to-face treatment services. Types of treatment available include individual, couples, family, and group therapy in addition to medication management. All clinicians providing services are master's level and licensed or licensed eligible. Clinicians are also required to obtain the International Certified Gambling Counselor (ICGC) certification or are working towards obtaining this certification. Peer Recovery Supports are on staff and provide case management, financial counseling, and other support services. Bettor Choice programs accept insurance when possible and have DMHAS grant funding to significantly decrease or eliminate financial costs, since financial issues are a known barrier for accessing services. Bettor Choice programs were re-procured in the Fall of 2019 and new contracts were executed January 1st 2020. Part of the procurement process was an alignment of service requirements/expectations, as well as a standardization of funding throughout the five DMHAS regions. Between State Fiscal Year (SFY) 17 through SFY 21 approximately 12,000 citizens statewide have received counseling services (see attached Excel spreadsheet). PGS contracts with local agencies to provide problem gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services statewide. Problem gambling treatment programs are licensed by DPH and are selected for contracting through a competitive request for proposals process. Helpline referral and education: PGS is legislated to provide funding (CGA 17a-713) to the CT Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG), of which a portion goes toward funding the Problem Gambling Helpline. Individuals have access to resources and education through the CT problem gambling Helpline, telephone (888) 789-7777 or Text "CTGAMB" to 53342 options, and the CT Council on Problem Gambling website (<https://ccpg.org>).

Prevention Services:

Problem gambling education and prevention services inform participants about the risks and responsibilities of gambling. This work encompasses the six prevention strategies identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: community-based process, environmental, information dissemination, education, alternatives, and problem identification and referral. Initiatives include: health promotion campaigns to encourage CT residents to evaluate their gambling behavior and seek help if they have a problem (Includes collaborative health promotion activities with the CT Lottery and the two tribal casinos); partnering with the CT Lottery to inform players that help is available for problem gambling; school-based prevention efforts for youth and educating the problem gambling treatment and prevention workforce on regional, statewide, and national trends and best practices aimed at continuous quality improvement in service delivery and outcomes.

Regional Gambling Awareness Teams provide a framework for CT's statewide gambling awareness prevention initiative. There are Regional Gambling Awareness Teams in each of the five DMHAS regions that focus on gambling informed prevention, intervention and treatment across the continuum of care and across the lifespan. The teams meet on a quarterly basis and each convening can range from 90 minutes to several hours in duration. Select meetings are identified as topic-specific and offer Continuing Education hours to participants. Members represent prevention, treatment, recovery and local community stakeholders. The focus of the teams is to increase the capacity of local communities to be "gambling informed"; strategically gather and assess community readiness data, and review and assess select programs for gambling awareness infusion; and strengthen, support and inform statewide gambling awareness infrastructure. Team members work to achieve the Gambling Awareness Certificate of Competency.

Congregation/Community Assistance Program (CAP): Provides trainings to faith based and local businesses/organizations throughout the state on topics such as raising awareness of the impacts of behavioral health concerns, including addiction, mental health, gambling and suicide; and mechanisms on how to identify and refer associate members for local assistance and support.

The Youth Peer Leadership and Media Development is currently organized through three important partnerships. Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) oversees statewide initiative working with one identified youth group in each of the five Regions on youth-led development and creation of a gambling awareness Public Service Announcement (PSA). The PSA's are released during Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) in March and featured at statewide youth-led peer leadership conference (each select group consists of five-ten youth with one-two adults); Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAO) identify a youth group from the region they represent, then are tasked with coordinating the youth media project in conjunction with CREC; and Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders (BCYL) conduct community-based education and skill building with identified groups of eight-ten middle and high school Latino youth, and provide ongoing training in gambling awareness, public speaking, and leadership skills. Trainings take place twice a month. Youth leaders partner with parents, schools and community organizations to deliver a minimum of three presentations on gambling awareness messages, including how to identify and refer those in need of assistance with problem gambling.

Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) program reflects a collaboration between PGS and Amplify (the region 4 RBHAO) to raise awareness about gambling in AAPI Communities. Six members of AAPI communities are identified and trained in gambling awareness and the evidence-based Community Conversation Model to outreach into their own communities for conversations on gambling, problem gambling, and how to access help for those in need of assistance with gambling concerns. Initiative currently being evaluated and will serve as a model for future collaborations with other identified populations and communities perceived as "at-risk" for developing gambling problems.