

2010

ARIZONA OFFICE OF PROBLEM GAMBLING



STAKEHOLDER REPORT



1.800.NEXTSTEP

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As is the case with service budgets throughout Arizona, our revenues have been significantly lower than in years past. Despite that, during this past year, our contracted behavioral health counselors treated more than 900 clients. Many treatment providers have provided services pro bono to some clients and we applaud them for this commitment to serving those in need.



We have continued to convey the message that help is available for problem gamblers. Gratefully, television, radio, and print media continue to have an interest in this message, and we were invited to provide interviews to many such organizations this past year—including NPR member radio station KJZZ, network affiliates in Tucson and Phoenix, and AZ Gaming Guide. We also distributed more than 10,000 awareness materials at events throughout the state.

In addition to our annual day-long symposium, we provided 72 hours of live training in various locations throughout Arizona. It is gratifying that more than 95% of participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their training experience. We have also partnered with ASU to design an online problem gambling training course for the public and treatment professionals. We hope to roll this out in early 2011 as an inexpensive, effective way to reach out to a much larger audience than we have been able to in the past.

We are glad to show in this report that progress is being made in reaching out to those in need.. A state survey we commissioned this year reveals that an increased percentage of Arizonans are aware of the state-wide problem gambling helpline number (1.800.NEXT STEP). More people are taking advantage of the casino self-exclusion program. And clients are reporting very favorable outcomes from treatment.

Together, we are making a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Pyper". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rick Pyper  
Director  
rickpyper@problemgambling.az.gov

We continue to analyze treatment data reported to us from our 28 current providers. Our web-based data management system allows us to learn more about the clients we are serving and how to best offer services to them. We are able to utilize increasingly more precise data to ensure our services are being delivered in the most effective and efficient way possible.

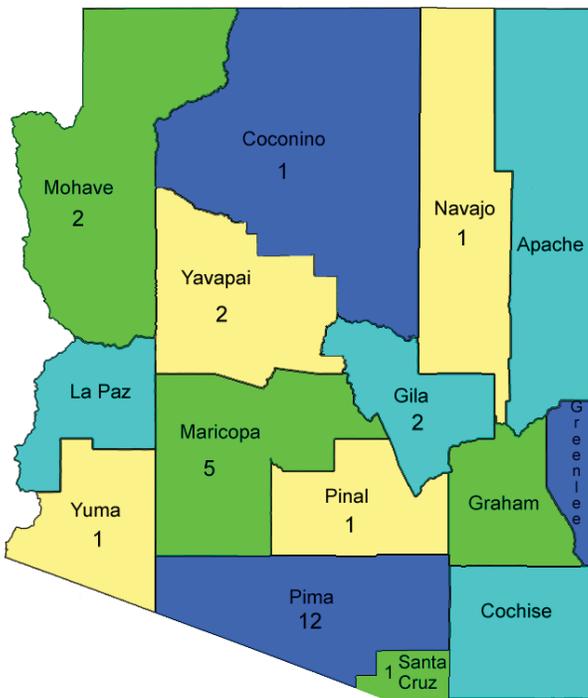
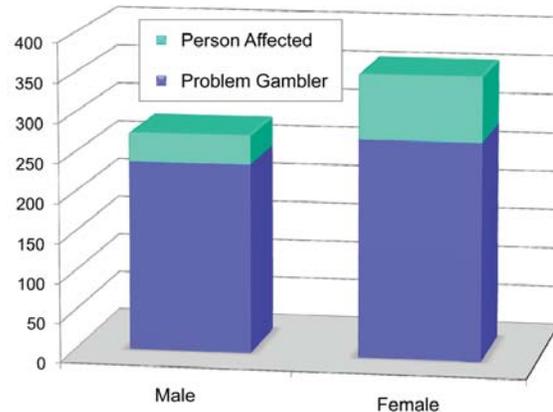
Prior stakeholder reports highlighted the significant growth of the system. This year, we focus on a more detailed snapshot of the program. We are pleased to present to you a clear picture of whom we are serving, how we are serving them, and the results we are achieving. The information provided is made possible because of our data management system, which was implemented in January 2009.

**Who is Being Treated?**

During this past fiscal year, 908 people received treatment services from OPG-funded providers. During this time period, 633 individuals were admitted to treatment and 534 were discharged from services. Of the persons admitted, 27 were former clients who were re-enrolled for further therapy.



Tim Christensen  
Treatment Administrator  
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Treatment locations as of October 1, 2010

**Client Profile**

The “typical” person receiving treatment is married, Caucasian, female, 46 years of age, college educated, and employed full-time, with a median household income comparable to that of the general population (about \$50,000). These observations represent averages, but it is important to note that the disorder can affect anyone, and services are provided to individuals across the spectrum of socio-economic status and ethnicity.

**Gambling Behavior**

Problem gamblers seeking treatment began gambling at an average age of 24, developed problems related to gambling at 37, experienced problems for 9 years before entering treatment, and report slot machines as the gambling activity causing the most problems. After slot machines, blackjack and video poker round out the three most common activities cited as causing the most problems.

**Other Issues**

Reporting an average gambling debt of over \$44,000 (excluding outliers of \$2,000,000 and above), it is not surprising 90% of clients are experiencing financial issues. In addition to financial pressures, 76% identify co-occurring mental health or substance use disorders – most commonly depression and anxiety. Of the clients with co-occurring disorders, 27% report suicidal ideation and 6% report having made suicide plans. These data reinforce the need for interventions that are easily accessed by the public and which are able to respond effectively to crisis situations.

### What Does Treatment Look Like?

Clients admitted to treatment during FY 2010 (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010) most frequently identified Gamblers Anonymous (21%), family/friends (17%), and the state's helpline (12%) as referral sources. Other common referral sources included current or former clients (10%), behavioral health professionals (10%), and the Arizona Council on Compulsive Gambling (7%). The wide range of referral sources speaks to the need to continually educate the community on the availability of treatment throughout Arizona.

Counselors provided an average of 22 hours of outpatient therapy to each client during FY 2010. In total, our providers delivered 20,249 hours of therapy. It is important to note that this figure does not include a significant number of pro bono hours our counselors provided to problem gamblers and persons affected by problem gambling.

### What Are The Results?

We developed a client Self Assessment Tool (SAT) to gather and report on the outcomes of clients receiving problem gambling treatment. The SAT was developed to collect direct client input on their quality of life, as well as gambling behaviors, in order to measure the impact of treatment. The tool consists of 9 questions about gambling behavior (urge strength, amount of gambling, etc.) and 14 items on quality of life indicators (level of satisfaction with family, friends, vocation, etc.). Each client completes an SAT every 90 days throughout the course of treatment.

Type of Therapy Provided in FY 2010\*

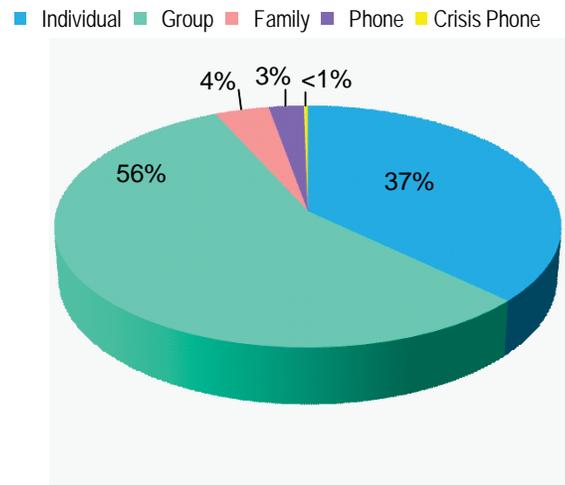


Table 1: Evaluations of Treatment Services

Statement	Average Score
I like the services that I received from this provider.	1.51
I would recommend this agency to a friend or family member.	1.47
Services were available at times that were good for me.	1.45
I was able to get all the services I thought I needed.	1.62
When I called for an appointment with my counselor, I was scheduled within a reasonable time frame.	1.20
I felt comfortable sharing my problems with my counselor.	1.38
Staff encouraged me to take responsibility for how I live my life.	1.18
Staff were sensitive to my cultural background (race, religion, language)	1.43
The distance and travel time required to meet with my counselor was reasonable.	1.79
I was encouraged to use Gamblers Anonymous and/or GamAnon on a regular basis.	1.40
I attended Gamblers Anonymous and/or GamAnon on a regular basis.	2.17
Treatment services were provided at a cost I could afford.	1.22
Group counseling was helpful.	1.66
Individual counseling was helpful.	1.48
Family counseling was helpful.	1.76
Overall, I was pleased with the results of my treatment program.	1.57

Although still early in the analysis of this outcome data, the initial results are encouraging. After the first 90 days of treatment, clients report a statistically significant improvement in their satisfaction with friendships, decision-making, and self-care. They also experience a reduction in their gambling behavior and problems caused by gambling. At both 90 days and discharge, clients report significant improvements in self-esteem, emotional health, and having money for needs. At the same time, they report both an improved ability to control their thoughts and urges relative to gambling and a reduction in the frequency and strength of urges to gamble.

Reinforcing these positive outcome findings was a recent report published by Dr. Bo Bernhard of the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, titled “The Arizona Problem Gambling Outcomes Report”. Dr. Bernhard and his research team contacted 77 former OPG clients via telephone and asked them a range of questions about their satisfaction with the treatment they received, their quality of life, and their gambling behavior as a result of treatment.

Table 1, to the left, displays the results of the clients’ assessment of the treatment services they received. The respondents were asked to rate each item from “1” to “5” with 1 being “Strongly Agree” and 5 being “Strongly Disagree”. As you will see, the clients overwhelmingly indicated satisfaction with their treatment.

## TREATMENT RESULTS (CONT'D)

The clients' self-evaluation of improvement as a direct result of the services provided was equally positive, as shown in Table 2 below.

And although the data certainly verifies the positive impact of treatment, perhaps the statements provided by the clients themselves best express this:

*"It made my recovery. They couldn't do it for me but I knew I didn't have to do it alone."*

*"For me, it was life saving literally. I don't think I would be here today if I did not enter that program."*

*"I am so thrilled that it has been there, it has saved my life and my marriage."*

*"I was suicidal, without her counseling I would not have been here. So I appreciate it very much. I am still struggling every day, but the program is wonderful. I really appreciate it. And now my goal is to help other people with same problem."*

*"The program was truly awesome. I would recommend it to anyone and it saved my life. And I'm definitely not a gambler (anymore). I don't think about it, I don't crave it, it's completely removed from my life. (Treatment) improved other areas of my life – it's an overall improvement of my life... other than (just) the gambling aspect. I would recommend the program to anyone."*

And, finally, the concluding thoughts of Dr. Bernhard:

*"Overall, these strong outcomes represent a genuine victory for those dedicated to helping problem gamblers turn their lives around in the state of Arizona."*

## TRAINING

Augmenting the annual Symposium celebrating National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, the Office of Problem Gambling provided an additional 72 hours of training on problem gambling. Sessions were held in Yuma, Flagstaff, Show Low, Tucson, and Phoenix during FY 2010. We continue to receive positive feedback on the training events, with more than 95% of participants reporting being "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the training they received.

In an effort to reach more behavioral health and human service professionals, the OPG is partnering with Arizona State University to make problem gambling training available online. We are expecting to have the Phase I training series, required for anyone providing treatment services under contract with us, available via the web by the end of 2010. This project was undertaken as a direct result of the input we received from our Stakeholders Forum in December 2009. We are excited by the possibilities of delivering critical problem gambling information in this "new" medium and look forward to hearing feedback on the product after it becomes available.

**Table 2: Self-Evaluation of Client Improvement**

"As a direct result of the services I received..."	Average Score
I deal more effectively with daily problems.	1.66
I am better able to control my life.	1.70
I am better able to deal with crisis.	1.91
I am getting along better with my family.	1.63
I do better in social situations.	1.79
I do better in school and/or work.	1.78
My housing situation has improved.	2.11
My symptoms are not bothering me as much.	1.93
My financial situation has improved.	1.84
I spend less time thinking about gambling.	1.77
I have minimized most of my problems related to gambling.	1.97

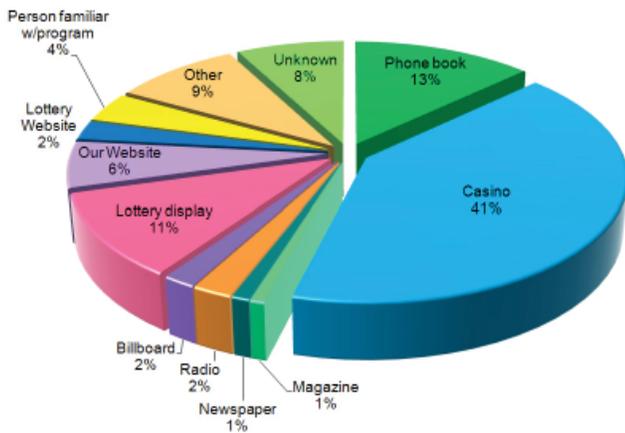
Score Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

## HELPLINE

The Office of Problem Gambling continues to sponsor a 24-hour, toll-free, helpline (1.800.NEXT STEP) for the public to call for help and information about problem gambling. We received 514 calls during FY 2010.

Following a two-year period of calls from women outnumbering calls from men, this year the number of calls from men was higher.

The top referral source, by far, remained the casinos. Of those calling the helpline, 41.1% reported that they learned about the helpline at a casino. This is the fifth consecutive year that the casinos have ranked number one.



Elise Mikkelsen

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The Office of Problem Gambling continues to utilize “Mystery Caller” test calls through its contractor, Behavior Research Center (BRC). This process aids with quality assurance by making sure helpline specialists are prepared to provide the following to our callers:

- Gambler’s Anonymous meetings in their city or county
- Nearby gambling treatment providers
- An offer of a transfer to a treatment provider while the caller is on the phone
- The Office of Problem Gambling web-site address
- Additional information to be mailed to the caller’s home
- Information about Arizona’s self-exclusion program

The BRC also helps to assure that the helpline specialists are collecting data, such as gender, ethnicity, and income, etc. These data are important so that we can target our prevention and outreach efforts most effectively. Behavioral Research Center reports that the helpline consistently meets these outcome measures.

## SYMPOSIUM

The Office of Problem Gambling held its annual symposium on Monday, March 8, 2010. This all-day event marked the beginning of National Problem Gambling Awareness Week in Arizona.

Dr. Lia Nower was the keynote speaker. She is an Associate Professor and Director of the Rutgers University Center for Gambling Studies. Dr. Nower discussed treatment outcomes derived from the data we collect here in Arizona. Several other presenters spoke about research and treatment here. Once again, we had a recovery panel featuring individuals sharing their stories of hope.

The symposium entitled “Problem Gambling: Understanding and Meeting the Challenge” focused on issues directly affecting Arizona. The symposium was supported by our generous co-sponsors: The Arizona Lottery, Harrah’s Ak-Chin Casino, and SociaVault PG. There were 70 attendees at this year’s event.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Office of Problem Gambling once again participated in many state-wide events in FY 2010.

These events included:

- Art of Recovery Expo
- Southwestern School for Behavioral Health Studies Conference
- Lovin’ Life Expos
- ASU Center for Behavioral Health Policy Conference
- National Council on Problem Gambling Conference
- Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day

At these and other events, we distributed more than 10,000 awareness materials.

## STATE-WIDE SURVEY

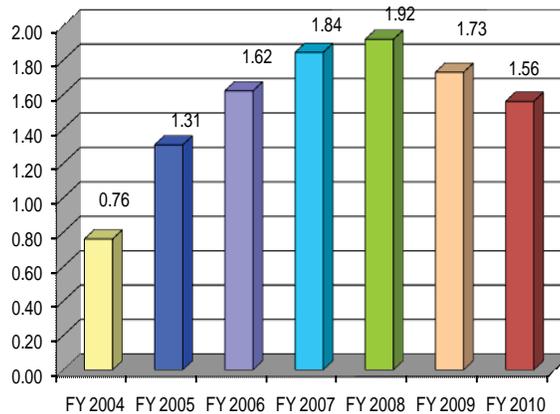
In an effort to gauge our outreach success, we asked Behavior Research Center to replicate a survey it conducted for us five years ago. We were very encouraged by the results. Highlights of the findings include:

- 28 percent of adults and 34 percent of gamblers say they know people with a gambling problem.
- The percentage of people aware of the 1-800-NEXT STEP phone number remains modest (2%), but among those who recognize the number, the proportion associating it with gambling grew to 35 percent from 9 percent in 2005.
- Overall, it appears that the public is very aware of problems associated with gambling, supports efforts to do more to help problem or addicted gamblers, and would rely increasingly on the Internet to seek information or advice about a gambling problem.
- 19 percent of those surveyed have a friend or family member they believe has a gambling problem -- down from 24 percent in 2005.
- There is a widespread belief that the prevalence of gaming on TV contributes to youth gambling.
- The proportion of Arizonans who would know where to go for information about a gambling problem rose to 72 percent from 59 percent in 2005.
- A vast majority of people surveyed (96%) believe that gambling can become a problem.

## TRIBAL CONTRIBUTIONS

One manifestation of the recession has been a reduction in casino gaming revenues in Arizona. Tribal contributions for problem gambling are formula driven—the lower the casino gaming revenues the lower the amount contributed for problem gambling.

FY 2010 is the period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010



Tribal Contributions in Millions of Dollars

## SELF-EXCLUSION

As of September 30, 2010, 2,528 people were participating in the casino self-exclusion program administered by the Department of Gaming and Arizona's Indian Tribes with casinos.

An analysis of the data over the last five years shows that approximately 35% of the individuals entering into the program choose a duration of 10 years, 25% choose 5 years, and 42% choose 1 year. Of the ones who initially choose 1 year, 33% renew after their term expires and 45% choose 5 or 10-year terms.

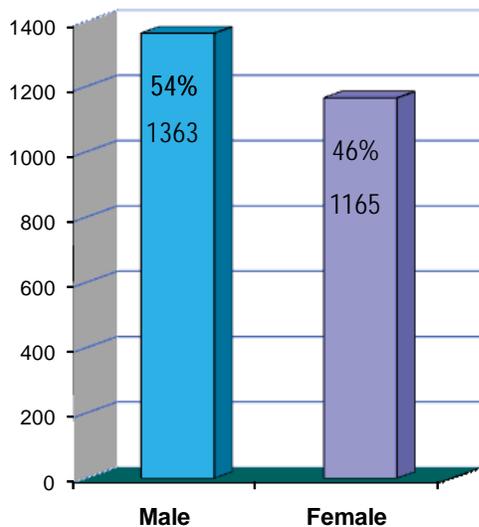
The charts below represent a snapshot of the individuals in the program as of September 30, 2010.



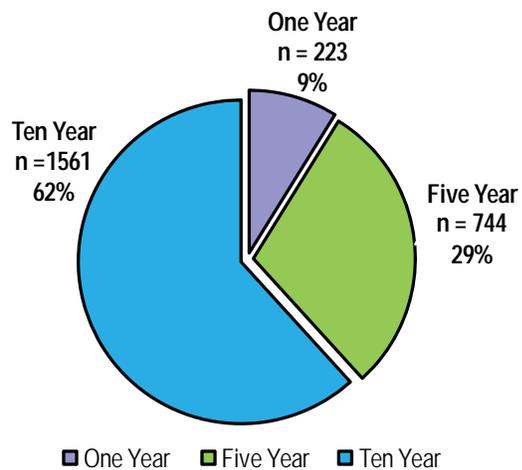
Larissa T. Pixler  
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Individuals Enrolled in the Statewide Self-Exclusion Program  
as of September 30, 2010

2,528 Individuals



Duration Period Chosen



## MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to provide and support effective problem gambling prevention, treatment, and education programs throughout Arizona.

## VISION

A sustainable continuum of services that reduces to a minimum level the impact of problem gambling in Arizona.

## VALUE STATEMENT

The Office of Problem Gambling is committed to a public health approach to address problem gambling issues. This takes into consideration biological, behavioral, economic, cultural, policy, and environmental factors influencing gambling and health. We will accomplish our mission and realize our vision by being culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of our partners and those we serve. We will be professional, collaborative, equitable, and innovative in our solutions to address problem gambling.

## TELL US HOW WE ARE DOING

We would like to hear from you. Please take a few moments to complete an anonymous satisfaction survey at our web site: [www.problemgambling.az.gov](http://www.problemgambling.az.gov). You can also email your comments, concerns, and/or praise to us at: [contact@problemgambling.az.gov](mailto:contact@problemgambling.az.gov).



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