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**Contact:** Katie Mintz  
Communications  
651-431-5606  
[kathryn.mintz@state.mn.us](mailto:kathryn.mintz@state.mn.us)

## **‘Have the conversation’ about problem gambling this month**

*Help for Minnesotans is available at 1-800-333-HOPE, [GetGamblingHelp.com](http://GetGamblingHelp.com)*

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is encouraging Minnesotans to “have the conversation” during Problem Gambling Awareness Month as part of nationwide efforts to spread the word that there is help and hope for recovery.

“For most people, gambling is harmless fun, but for a significant portion of the population, it can be devastating to their lives and the lives of their families,” said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. “One in three people know someone with a gambling problem. Now is the time to let them know that they don’t have to suffer alone or in silence. There is help and there is hope.”

Problem gambling signs and symptoms often go undetected until the problem is severe. Although they can be difficult to spot, common signs include frequent mood swings, elaborate stories to account for a sudden increase or loss of money, and shutting out of friends, family and other activities that compete with the opportunity to gamble. Left untreated, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide. No other addiction has a higher rate of suicide than gambling disorder.

“People affected by problem gambling should be aware of the help available to them. If you know someone who may have a problem, you can play a valuable role in helping him or her seek assessment and counseling,” Jesson said.

Join the discussion at [Facebook.com/NoJudgment](https://www.facebook.com/NoJudgment), where videos, facts and other information will be shared all month to promote and equip Minnesotans to reach out to friends and family members in need.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services offers free treatment to qualifying individuals. To get help, call 1-800-333-HOPE, a statewide, toll-free, confidential way to get advice, information and referrals to counseling and treatment, or visit [GetGamblingHelp.com](http://GetGamblingHelp.com). Resources for health care providers, attorneys and other professionals are available at [TreatmentandHope.com](http://TreatmentandHope.com).

### **Have the conversation:**

- Tell them you care and are concerned about their behavior
- Be specific about your goals.
- Don’t judge. Instead, listen.

- Say what you want them to do.
- Offer to help. Explain what you're willing to do.
- Keep the door open for future talks.

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