



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PROBLEM GAMBLING – A REAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE IN WASHINGTON

New Awareness Campaign Reaches Statewide During National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

**OLYMPIA, WA**—Reaching out in a big way during the first National Problem Gambling Awareness Month will help bring greater awareness of problem gambling as an addiction and a real public health issue in Washington State. The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling (ECPG) and Washington State Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration (BHSIA) has launched an awareness campaign that includes public service announcements, presentations, and an appearance on *New Day Northwest's Wellness Wednesday*.

Problem gambling is a devastating disorder that can cause significantly severe and life-altering consequences for gamblers and the ones closest to them.

Approximately 100,000 Washington residents struggle with a gambling disorder, but this number does not represent the full range of people who are negatively affected by problem gambling. It is estimated that 8 to 10 people whose loved ones have a gambling problem will also struggle with financial, emotional, and physical issues as a result of the disorder.

"Problem and pathological gambling can have a direct impact on families," reported Cheryl Wilcox, Problem Gambling Program Manager for BHSIA. "Help is available for family members as well as the problem gambler. Counselors are trained specifically in problem and pathological gambling and can help the family deal with the consequences of a family member's gambling."

The goals of NPGAM include educating the public on the signs and symptoms of problem gambling, how to gamble responsibly, and where to go for help. In addition to a public service announcement created by ECPG in partnership with DBHR (view on [YouTube](#)), Seattle-based Psychologist Dr. Chuck Maurer and ECPG Executive Director Maureen Greeley will be guests on *New Day Northwest*, on March 12, as part of a wellness panel. Dr. Maurer and

BE PART OF THE  
**NEW DAY NORTHWEST**  
STUDIO AUDIENCE!

**new**  
NORTHWEST  
**Day**

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

10–11:30 a.m.

Contact [Rachelle Alongi](#)  
to reserve your seat!

**CAN'T MAKE IT?**

Check your local listings for  
**New Day Northwest** on KING 5 TV  
or watch the show [online](#)!

Greeley will discuss problem gambling as a health concern and answer questions from a live studio audience.

"Problem gambling is a real public health concern," said Greeley. "While most people can enjoy gambling for entertainment, for some, gambling can become a severe or even devastating problem. We welcome the opportunity to share information about problem gambling and the programs and services available in Washington with a wide audience. It's an important topic during National Problem Gambling Awareness Month and throughout the year."

If you or a loved one has a gambling problem, there is hope. Help starts today by calling **1.800.547.6133**.

**ABOUT ECPG:**

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling provides treatment, training, and awareness programs and services about problem and responsible gambling. ECPG provides statewide confidential support through its 24-hour Problem Gambling Helpline (**800.547.6133**) and public awareness, education, prevention, and resource development services for individuals, families, employers, the gaming industry, and business and community groups.

**About BHSIA:**

Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery's Problem Gambling Program is part of Washington State Department Social & Health Services. DBHR assesses and treats patients with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, and is committed to providing evidence-based, cost-effective services that support the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Washington State.



ECPG BLOG: [www.evergreenecpg.org/blog](http://www.evergreenecpg.org/blog)

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