



Problem Gambling

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New Funding Available For Gambling Addiction Counseling

DENVER – A newly-created state fund should make it easier for problem gamblers in Colorado to get help. The Gambling Addiction Account, created through House Bill 1314, will provide grants to entities offering gambling addiction counseling. The fund will also be used to aid counselors seeking certification in gambling addiction.

“There are approximately 2,500 addiction counselors in Colorado, but only two or three gambling addiction counselors,” said Judy Moor, Clinical Training Coordinator in the Division of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services, which is in charge of administering the grants. “Prior to the establishment of this bill, there weren’t that many places to refer somebody with that kind of a problem.”

The Problem Gambling Treatment and Research Center at the University of Denver has provided counseling, consultation, support, therapy groups and referrals to problem gamblers and their families since 2004. But there are few resources outside the metro-area for problem gamblers.

“This was about getting funding for treatment and education that could be widespread,” said Amber Bunch, executive director of the Problem Gambling Coalition of Colorado, which pushed for the account’s creation.

Moor says Human Services is still working out the rules regarding how grants from the account will be awarded. The account is funded through the Local Government Limited Gaming Impact fund, which is financed through taxes on gaming activities in Gilpin and Teller counties. That revenue stream should provide about \$105,000 for grants this fiscal year.



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The goal, said Moor, is to provide grants to raise awareness of problem gambling issues as well as offer more opportunities for individuals to seek specific treatment for problem gambling issues.

“These grants will eventually help to provide subsidized treatment to people who need it,” said Moor.

With the creation of the Gambling Addiction Account, Colorado joins 38 other states that provide publicly funded services to treat gambling addiction.

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