

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS

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Office of Problem Gambling Releases Largest Prevalence Study in the Nation

Today, the Office of Problem Gambling (OPG) today unveiled the most comprehensive prevalence study of problem gambling ever conducted in the nation. The survey found that between 750,000 and 1.2 million California adults are considered pathological or problem gamblers.

"The legislation that created the Office of Problem Gambling focused resources on prevention and research," said Steve Hedrick, director of OPG. "Now with this prevalence study we'll be able to develop more effective prevention strategies and better understand how to help people with gambling problems."

Key findings include:

- The prevalence of problem and pathological gambling is particularly high among men, people with disabilities and unemployed individuals.
- Between 296,500 and 490,000 adults in California are classified as lifetime pathological gamblers.
- Between 450,000 and 713,400 others experience significant problems but do not meet the established criteria for pathological gamblers.
- The majority of adults in California (83%) have gambled some time in their lives.
- Playing the lottery is the gambling activity for Californians in the past year. Casinos are the preferred place to gamble. Card rooms and internet gaming account for the greatest personal losses.

The multi-lingual telephone survey was conducted between 2005 and 2006 and included California residents aged 18 and over.

Over the past three years, OPG completed implemented a number of prevention programs including:

- Public awareness campaigns



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For energy saving tips, visit the Flex Your Power website at
<http://www.flexyourpower.ca.gov>

- Two gambling help lines
- Community and government organization training on recognizing problem gambling and available resources

About Problem Gambling: Gambling problems vary in severity and duration. Pathological gambling is the most severe gambling problem. Pathological gambling is a treatable mental disorder characterized by loss of control over gambling, lies and deception, family and job disruption, financial bailouts and illegal acts.

For help with problem gambling call 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537).

The study is available online at: <http://www.problemgambling.ca.gov/>.

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