



30% Spike in National Problem Gambling Helpline Calls Expected in March

Gamblers chasing losses are particularly susceptible to problems

Monday, March 27, 2017, Washington, DC

As March Madness reaches a crescendo with an estimated \$10 billion in bets placed on the NCAA basketball championship games, calls to the National Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-522-4700) spike an average of 30% during the month. As a result, NCPG expects at least 30,000 calls in the month of March during Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The National Council on Problem Gambling urges media outlets to include a responsible gaming message to help raise awareness to bring help and hope to the millions of Americans who struggle with gambling addiction.

NCPG Executive Director Keith Whyte noted: "We know that these tournament games are a huge media event and that gamblers, especially those with money on the line, pay particular attention to media coverage. *And the media, who currently widely promote betting lines on a variety of professional and amateur sporting events, effectively giving free advertising space to promote gambling, should promote the Helpline as well.*"

If you or someone you know has a problem with gambling call or text the National Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-522-4700 or chat at www.ncpgambling.org/chat. The Network is a toll free and confidential single point of access for problem gambling help anywhere in the U.S. The Helpline Network is the national "9-1-1" safety net for problem gamblers and their loved ones and received 323,000 calls last year.

Calling, chatting or texting the Helpline is an easy but important first step to take. The good news is that a majority of problem gamblers who complete treatment are able to stop gambling and improve their financial and emotional wellbeing.

NCPG's mission is to lead state and national stakeholders in the development of comprehensive policy and programs for all those affected by problem gambling. Our purpose is to serve as the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families in order to improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling. NCPG is neither for nor against legalized gambling.

Please include Problem Gambling Awareness Month in your March Madness coverage. Keith Whyte is available for interviews. Contact: 202-547-9204 x 23 or keithw@ncpgambling.org

###