

## **2008-2009 AD 80 Problem Gambling Prevention and Outreach Annual Reports: Highlights**

Below is a summary of some of the input from annual reports on local problem gambling prevention and outreach efforts. Some editing and paraphrasing has been done, and not all comments that were included in the reports are presented below—this is a representative sample, however.

There are three summary sections” challenges are areas we can help to alleviate over time; the information on “what worked” is there to give you ideas and inspiration; your recommendations for help we can provide will shape our efforts in this biennium.

All in all, given an extraordinary set of economic and other circumstances, the prevention and outreach efforts done at the local level were themselves extraordinary. Oregon is fortunate to have such a skilled and dedicated prevention and outreach workforce and remains a leader in the field across the country.

### **Challenges faced:**

Economic climate during the fiscal year was very uncertain, and many schools and community services were focused on staff reductions or layoffs and not available for outreach opportunities.

Being new to the position or the field of problem gambling prevention was a challenge.

Multiple changes in local agency programming and supervision impacted the program.

Significant difficulty getting into various agencies where we had previously presented in order to refresh and update information.

Surveying our youth remains a challenge.

Apathy on the part of some groups we would like to collaborate with: A&D treatment agencies, mental health providers, and other prevention entities. We find that we must “convince” organizations that gambling is potentially a risky activity, and that it needs to be included when educating about other issues, such as substance addiction.

Outreach efforts continued to show minimal penetration rates within the region regarding actual treatment enrollments.

Getting permission to enter the schools was difficult. We have had contact with the Principals and will be modifying our approach next year

Although we had many plans to implement the gambling education-based programs into the schools, the schools wanted to implement a literacy program and would not allow any other programming.

There appears to be some denial over the impact of gambling in local communities. We will hear presentation from students and community members that gambling is the number one issue not being addressed locally. When we offer up trainings and presentations on the warning signs of compulsive gambling, amazingly the problem disappears.

The plan to educate and raise awareness among medical partners in the community has not yet yielded any identifiable responses.

It is an ongoing challenge to find projects that are cost effective. By the time part of the funds are dedicated to staff time there isn't much left to fund projects

Primarily that the public is not informed, especially teens, and as such, there are limited requests for services. Outreach to organizations and institutions is often refused due to other priorities of target population.

<b>Local efforts that worked best:</b>
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**Prevention/awareness**

High School tours were the most successful experience. More than 400 high school students in an interactive experience and were able to gain understanding of the issue of teen gambling. Most indicated they didn't realize gambling was an addiction, and many took materials to share with a close friend or family member they were concerned about.

Strong network and relationship with schools, coalitions, etc. Our reputation for providing competent, valid information in an effective and age-appropriate manner has opened our resource center doors for school groups to bring youth, educators and administrators to us for resources and technical assistance.

Created relationships with other service providers so that problem gambling prevention pieces can be incorporated into already established programs.

Introduction of a session on Problem Gambling (particularly video and computer gaming) to Girls Support Group was very successful. The students were very receptive and had many insightful things to say about the progression of games to gambling.

Help and support of other local organizations, the Children's and Families Center, County Commission for Children and Families, the Drug Free Communities Coalition and other organizations geared toward the support and improvement of our community have been strong allies.

Continued expansion of our prevention and education efforts to local schools. Child and family team doing problem gambling prevention education.

The Life Skills Training program continues to be very successful. Integration of problem gambling prevention into alcohol and other drug activities has grown. Retail employees in the county received information about problem gambling at a merchant education training. Problem gambling and its relationship to youth alcohol and other drug use was discussed at Together coalition planning meetings.

Problem gambling prevention was discussed at five County parenting classes.

This year's focus was on incorporating problem gambling information and activities into pre-existing events held in the County.

The integration of problem gambling prevention into existing substance abuse prevention programs has been a great success. Staff have embraced the process and youth have been very interested in the "brain" connections. Teachers have been amazed at the number of youth who admit to various gambling behaviors and, of that group, the number who appear to be at risk for future problems related to problem gambling.

Including problem gambling prevention and treatment information in seven community college human services classes and other professional training events has been very rewarding.

We believe the most successful strategy is the integration of problem gambling information and resources into all of our prevention efforts. We continue to provide the Teens and Drugs family addiction workshop and Strengthening Families Parenting 10-14 in both English and Spanish.

Showing the Youth Gambling video to all County Health Department new employees and volunteers in the monthly New Employee Orientation.

We were also able to show the new Youth video to the County Board of Commissioners and the presentation was broadcast on local cable TV.

The work begun in the previous year of partnering with the LADPC in order to increase awareness of other service agencies has continued to grow.

Participation in County Faith Based Coalition.

A partnership over the past year with a local AOD program has given us the opportunity to finally get into a couple of local middle schools last year.

Problem Gambling Art Search is one of the most successful because it has opened up contact with middle schools. Their involvement is a step forward for schools seeing Problem Gambling as an issue to discuss with youth.

Successfully facilitated two Problem Gambling Presentations in the faith-based community.

Participated in three cable access shows addressing gambling in the African American Community.

Ongoing relationship with the National Guard--this population is in need of our services and they are beginning to access it statewide.

Facilitating partnerships was also a priority this year. We worked with the county's Commission on Children and Families and spoke at their annual Youth Summit. This allowed us to engage with students representing most of the high schools, including alternative schools, and several middle schools throughout the county.

Gambling staff serves on the board, and is a coalition member, of a local A&D prevention group. In that capacity gambling is being introduced into the general agenda as much as possible.

Our college Problem Gambling Awareness Project has become a very successful venture in forging partnerships at the university and development of age and education appropriate materials.

The County Problem Gambling Prevention website received 29,701 visits (more distinct than counting web "hits") during FY08-09, an average of 2,475 distinct visits per month. The site was a major asset.

Poster search was again very successful at both continuing school connections and fostering in-roads with schools in helping us distribute information and build connections with community and regional partners, schools, and community members alike.

Utilizing youth spokesperson to create media messages that showed the impact of gambling on the family from a youth view point, and speaking to parents regarding the risk of gambling was effective in generating awareness in our community. We utilized the Minnesota Institute of Public Health Community Readiness to measure change in five areas: perception, permissiveness, support for prevention efforts, perceived access and level of community commitment to change.

Youth Leadership Retreat included problem gambling as a topic and the action plans that were generated by the groups represented at the Retreat were designed and implemented by youth. The projects were all creative and did a wonderful job of infusing gambling into alcohol and drug prevention activities. Additionally, staff from the schools were able to see that gambling is an activity that carries risk and several were inspired to include problem gambling information in their curriculums.

Our contracts with local providers to include gambling in their existing ATOD curriculums, MIP classes, and general education presentations resulted in 1,309 County

Middle and High School students receiving problem gambling information and 82% of those youth who completed the post survey reported that their awareness that gambling is an activity that carries risk had increased.

Additional emphasis on annual art search produced more entries; top ten county entries were displayed at a local visual arts center's student art show and students were given framed certificates of appreciation and a store gift card, both donated.

Supported efforts of local Safe and Drug Free Schools/Reconnecting Youth coordinator to integrate problem gambling information into those evidence-based prevention programs. Presentation, youth video, pre and post test, OPGAW art search and other info provided.

As in past years, we have continued to have success in working with regional middle schools. We continue to provide annual prevention/awareness presentations to the schools which include pre and post testing. Those tests have shown significant gains in increased awareness of the risks associated with problem gambling as well as increased awareness on how to refer someone for help. We have been successful in these endeavors due to making personal connections with school staff. We have also allocated time to spend in the classroom directly providing the service.

Providing information to Powwows and Native American activities. Provided a supply of helpline brochures specific to Native American population, including information on how to order more. Distributed to 10 Native specific sites, food boxes throughout the county, DHS offices, employment offices, bankruptcy clinic, colleges, clinics and churches.

## **Outreach**

We modified workloads to free up more staff time for prevention and outreach.

As a result of having a weekly presence in the agency case management meetings, there have been increases in problem gamblers being identified among the mentally ill population.

Providing trainings to various police agencies about mental illness and addictions and how to work with individuals with such issues; an opportunity to talk about how addictions such as drugs, alcohol, and gambling can lead to risky and desperate behaviors.

Improved our website coverage of problem gambling and listed all available services. Those looking for Gambling Services can access information on those provided here. We will continue to make improvements to this website.

One way we search for problem gamblers is through the South Oaks Gambling Screening Tool. We use this on every client that enters the County Mental Health & Addictions

system. Both mental health and addictions clients are given an American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) assessment, although the ATOD assessment is more inclusive for screening for drugs of abuse and other risky behaviors. In both cases, however, both the mental health and ATOD assessments have the two Lie-Bet questions within Dimension five. Having the screening tools and the questions grounded in all the assessments, provides the opportunity to address problem gambling at the prevention or early onset of treatment level.

Contact with community providers was very successful in that the majority of the referrals were from a provider who had knowledge of our new services. Also successful was having our information available through community television evidenced by the number referrals from that area as well.

<b>What the State should do to support local efforts:</b>
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Continue

- trainings and webinars; web based meetings save us time and money
- having the statewide message be consistent throughout Oregon.
- reminders, tip sheets, PowerPoint templates, and regional specific information and newsletters
- technical assistance
- flexibility in adjusting plans
- facilitating inclusion of gambling into statewide prevention activities

Develop or Increase:

- more state developed brochures, posters and psas
- increase cultural focus: working with the tribes to addressing problem gambling, reaching the Latino community, strategies to increase African American engagement.
- develop a wider variety of posters for middle and high school age youth
- informing us of contacts in our county, like the Drug-free Schools contracts
- more networking and info on what others are doing that is working for them
- standardized pre/post presentation survey