

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Concerned about Gambling? Have the Conversation**

### ***Prelude Behavioral Health observes Problem Gambling Awareness Month***

Prelude Behavioral Health joins the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) in observing March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month. For most people, gambling can be a way to have fun. For others, however, gambling can lead to personal and financial problems. According to IDPH, almost 1.8 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months; of that number, an estimated 8,000 could be classified as ‘problem’ gamblers.

“During Problem Gambling Awareness Month, we are encouraging individuals to have the conversation about gambling with those they care about,” said Ron Berg, CEO. “We know the majority of Iowans who gamble do so because it’s fun and they don’t have any problems as a result of it, but studies show 16 percent of adult Iowans are classified as ‘at risk’ gamblers – meaning they may have one or more symptoms of problem gambling.”

Have a conversation about how gambling affects your life if you or someone you know shows symptoms of problem gambling, including:

- Thinking a lot about gambling, such as past gambling experiences, future gambling ventures, or ways of getting money for gambling
- Needing to gamble with larger amounts of money or with larger bets in order to get the same feeling of excitement
- Repeatedly trying to cut down or stop your gambling without success
- Feeling restless or irritable when trying to cut down or stop gambling
- Gambling to run away from problems or to get relief from feeling depressed, anxious, or bad about yourself
- After losing money gambling, often returning another day in order to win back your losses

- Lying to family members, friends, or others in order to hide your gambling from them
- Losing or almost losing a significant relationship, job, or an educational or career opportunity because of gambling
- Relying on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling

For more information about services available to individuals concerned about problem gambling, contact Prelude Behavior Health at 319-351-4357 (Eastern Iowa) or 515-262-0349 (Central Iowa). If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call 1-800-BETS OFF or go to [www.1800BETSOFF.org](http://www.1800BETSOFF.org).

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