

# An Introduction to Problem Gambling

Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, and Recovery

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# Problem Gambling Services

- Gambling Neutral
- Multi team approach (P, I, T, R)
- Funds- Casino revenue
- Goals:
  - Promote responsible gambling
  - Raise awareness about PG
  - Provide resources and supports

# GAMBLING 101



# Definitions

- Gambling: to risk money or anything of value on the outcome of something involving chance
- Addiction: chronic relapsing “illness” evidenced by continued use of substances or engaging in behaviors despite health or social consequences

# Definitions

- Problem Gambling: preoccupation with gambling and obtaining money to gamble; irrational thinking; and a continuation of the behavior despite adverse consequences. Someone with “Problem Gambling” does not meet full diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling, but meets one of more of the criteria and are experiencing problems in their life due to their gambling.
- Pathological Gambling: Clinically diagnosed 5 or more symptoms

# Forms of Gambling

## Examples:

Race Track Betting

Sports Betting

Bingo

Scratch Tickets

Office Pools

Dice Games

Animal Fighting

Table Games

Lottery Tickets

Online Gaming

Poker

Card Games

Slot Machines

Keno

# Gambling Addiction

- Similar characteristics to other types of addiction:
  - The “high”
  - Brain activity/dopamine release
  - Craving the original high
  - Withdrawal symptoms
  - Use of family resources to support habit
  - A means to escape from problems/trauma

# Gambling Addiction

- Different from other addictions:
  - Gambling addiction is also called behavioral or process addiction.
  - Consists of a compulsion to repeatedly engage in an action in spite of negative consequences to a persons physical, mental, social and/or financial well-being.

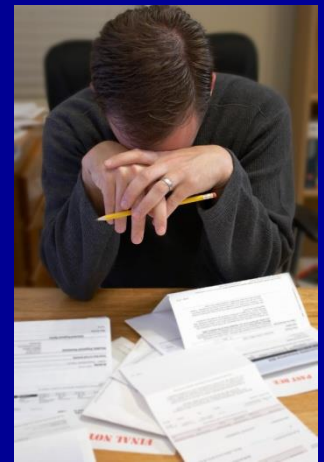


# Gambling Addiction

- Alters a person's mood...the person keeps repeating the behavior attempting to achieve that same effect.
- Just as tolerance develops to drugs or alcohol, the gambler finds that it takes more and more of the gambling experience to achieve the same emotional effect as before.
- This creates an increased craving for the activity and the gambler finds they have less and less ability to resist as the craving grows in intensity and frequency.

# Gambling Addiction

- Typically a co-occurring condition
- More prevalent among youth and seniors
- Hard to detect....  
“can’t smell it on your breath”
- Rock bottom:
  - Loss of home, family, employment
  - High risk for suicide



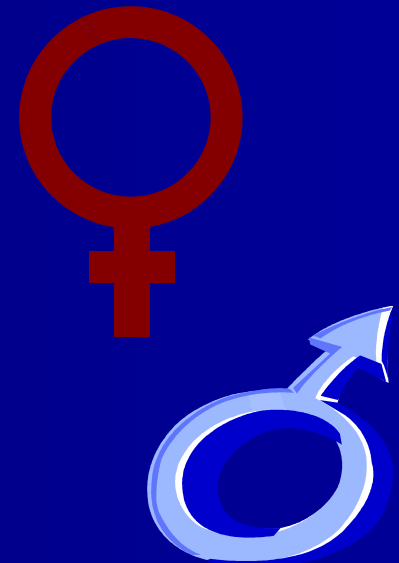
# Gambling Risk Factors

- Emotional Difficulties
- Stress
- Distorted expectations of winning
- Social pressure to gamble (youth)
- Attention deficits
- Addiction history (including family history)
- Impulsivity
- Illusion of control over outcomes



# Gender Differences

- Women begin gambling later in life, but develop problems quicker than men.
- Women:
  - “Escape” gambling
  - Calming and Sedating
- Men:
  - “Action”
  - Excitability



# Signs/Symptoms of Problem Gambling



# Symptoms of Problem Gambling

- Increase in gambling time/places
- Gambling when there is a crisis
- Drop off in other activities/interests
- Withdrawal from family
- Personality changes
- Using fund earmarked for other purposes
- Excessive phone use
- “Chasing” losses

# Symptoms of Problem Gambling

- Secretive about gambling habits/defensive when confronted
- Increase bet amounts in order to achieve desired high
- Trying to unsuccessfully control, cut back, or stop gambling
- Restless or irritable when not gambling
- Gambling to escape problems

# Symptoms of Problem Gambling

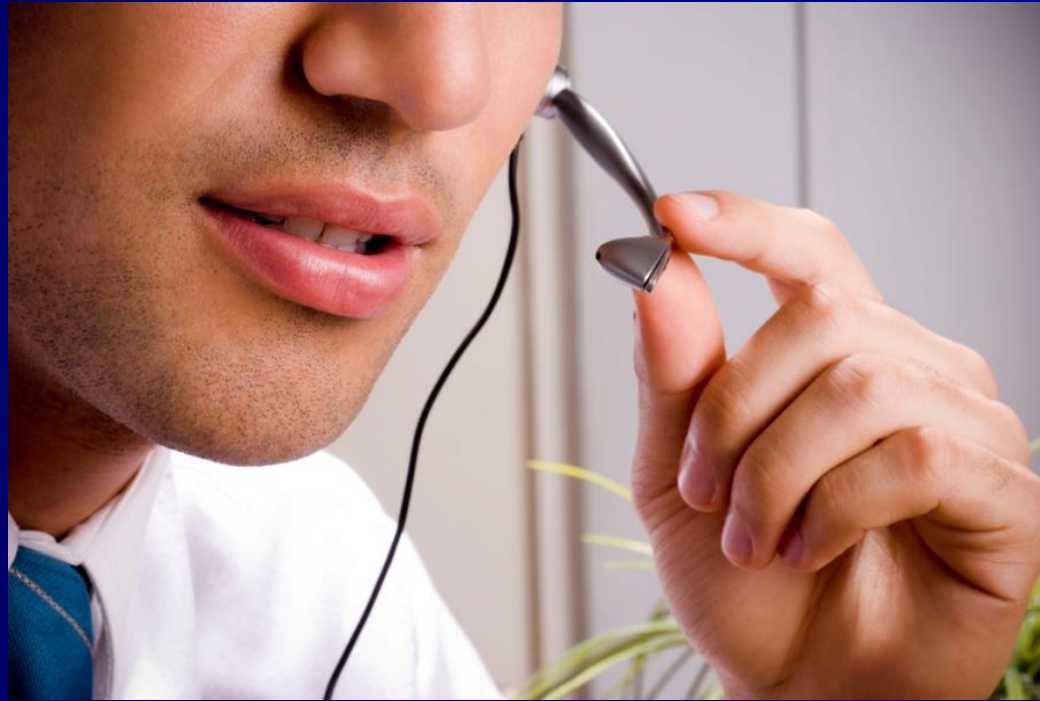
- Lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of gambling
- Has committed illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement to gamble
- Jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling



# Video resources

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg\\_aXDq1bR\\_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg_aXDq1bR_g) Youth Gambling
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZfemmJ7gx0> John's Story
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aQgpcxVtu0> CBS news

# Intervention & Referral



# Self-Exclusion

- Self Exclusion: Self directed intervention where a person excludes themselves from a casino
  - 1, 3, 5 year, or lifetime bans
  - Signature of SE document
  - Photo ID
  - 14 locations across the state
  - Criminal charges if violated
  - Across all casino's
  - [www.maine.gov/selfexclusion](http://www.maine.gov/selfexclusion)



# Screening Tools

- Lie-Bet Tool
- National Opinion Research Center (NORC)
- South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS)
  - For adolescents
  - For adults



# Screening Tool:

## Brief Bio-social Gambling Screen (BBGS)

1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling?
2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?
3. During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble that you had to get help from family or friends?

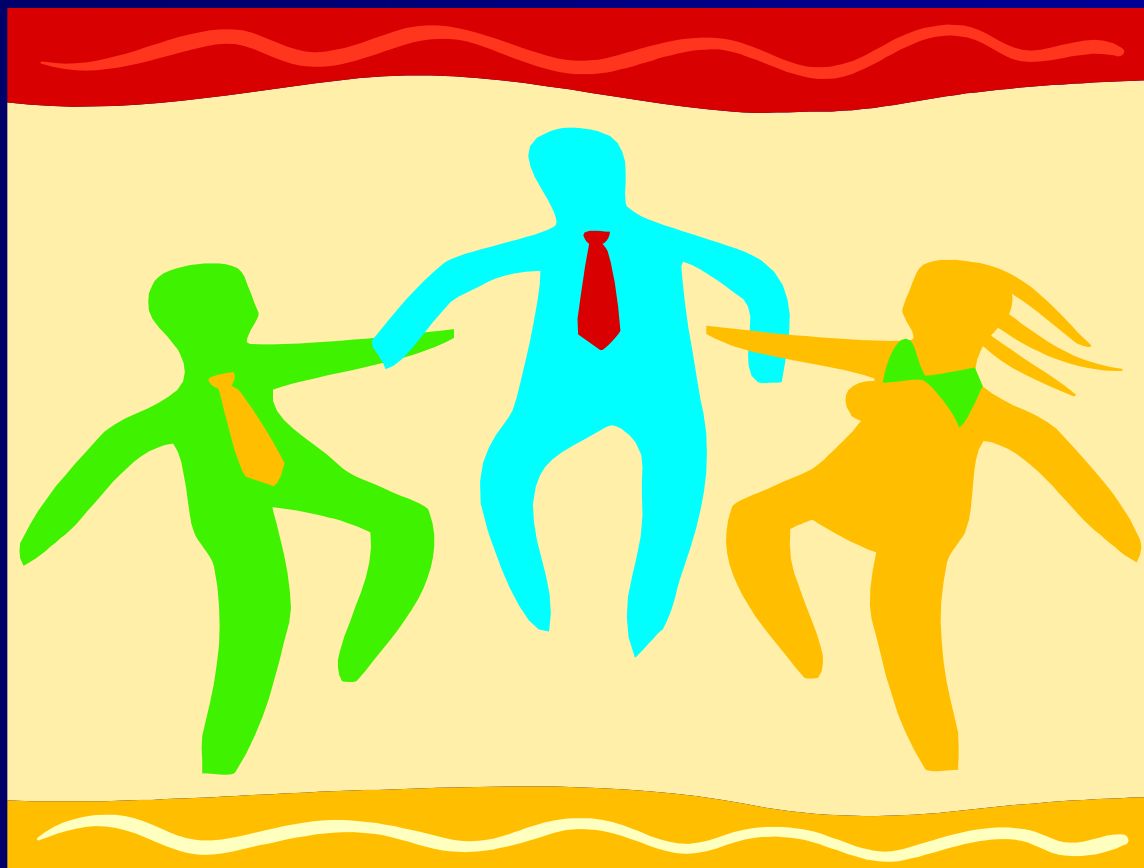
A yes to one or more questions likely indicates pathological gambling.

# Finding Help....

- SAMHS website/treatment directory:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/help/sa.shtml>
- Dial 2-1-1 (In Maine Only) or visit  
[www.211Maine.org](http://www.211Maine.org)



# Problem Gambling Treatment



# Problem Gambling Treatment

- No real defined evidenced based treatment practices for problem/pathological gambling.
- The strongest empirical evidence exists for cognitive and behavioral treatments, but there is also promising and growing research in the area of self-help approaches, pharmacological treatment and other therapies such as motivational enhancement.

(Toneatto & Ladoucer, 2003; Westphal, 2008)



# Problem Gambling Treatment

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps by:
  - Focuses on changing unhealthy gambling behaviors and thoughts (such as rationalizations and false beliefs.)
  - Teaches problem gamblers how to:
    - fight gambling urges
    - deal with uncomfortable emotions rather than escape through gambling,
    - solve financial, work, and relationship problems caused by the addiction.

# Problem Gambling Treatment

- Individuals may be receiving treatment for other co-occurring conditions and not immediately identify gambling as a problem.
- Individuals may have a hard time recognizing their behavior as gambling or that it is causing problems in their life.

Screening is key!!

# Problem Gambling Recovery



# Problem Gambling Recovery

- Everyone has a different pathway to recovery. No one path is right for everyone.
- Urges/Triggers – Identifying what a person's triggers are, and how these can be managed in a way that supports ongoing recovery.
- Managing Problems – People frequently turn to addictive behaviors to either escape from or avoid addressing problems. It is important to learn problem-solving tools to help them manage challenges along the path to recovery.

# Problem Gambling Recovery

- Lifestyle Balance – Its important to balance both short and long-term goals, pleasures and needs to prevent relapse.
- Maintaining recovery from problem gambling or gambling addiction depends a lot on the reasons why a person was gambling in the first place. It is important to identify these.
  - Once someone has quit gambling, reasons such as depression, loneliness, or boredom will remain, so in order to maintain recovery, it is important to address these and come up with a plan B for how to address these reasons.

# Problem Gambling Prevention



# Information Dissemination & Education

- Raising awareness about:
  - What is problem gambling.
  - What to do if you or someone you know has a problem.
  - What are ways people can gamble responsibly so it does not become a problem.
  - Impact of parent modeling on gambling behaviors.



# Information Dissemination & Education

- Safe Bet: Responsible Gambling Campaign: outlines tips for how to gamble responsibly
  - 3 Rack Cards
  - Posters 8 x 11
  - Website:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/gambling/index.htm>
- Youth Gambling brochure for parents
- “Problem Gambling: Recognizing the Signs” brochure
- “They don’t look like Problem Gamblers” brochure



# Information Dissemination & Education

- Hospitals/Health Care providers
- Elder populations
- Pizza box tops
- Community forums
- Retailers
- Higher education
- Restaurants
- Credit counseling services



# Responsible Gambling



# Responsible Gambling Tips

- Don't borrow money to gamble.
- Don't let gambling interfere with or become a substitute for family, friends or work.
- Don't chase losses. Chances are you'll lose even more trying to recoup your losses.
- Don't use gambling as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.
- Know your personal risk factors.

# Responsible Gambling Tips

- Understand that you'll probably lose, and accept the loss as part of the game.
- Think of the money you lose as the cost of your entertainment. Consider any money you win a bonus.
- Set a dollar limit and stick to it.
- Set a time limit and stick to it. Leave when you reach your limit, whether you're winning or losing.

# The Data....



# Problem Gambling Data: U.S. Adults

- Est. 85% of the population has gambled at least once during his/her lifetime
- Research shows that most adults who gamble are able to do responsibly
- 1% of the U.S population has experienced pathological gambling
- 2-3 % of the U.S. population has experienced problem gambling
- Rate of PG doubles within 50 miles of casino

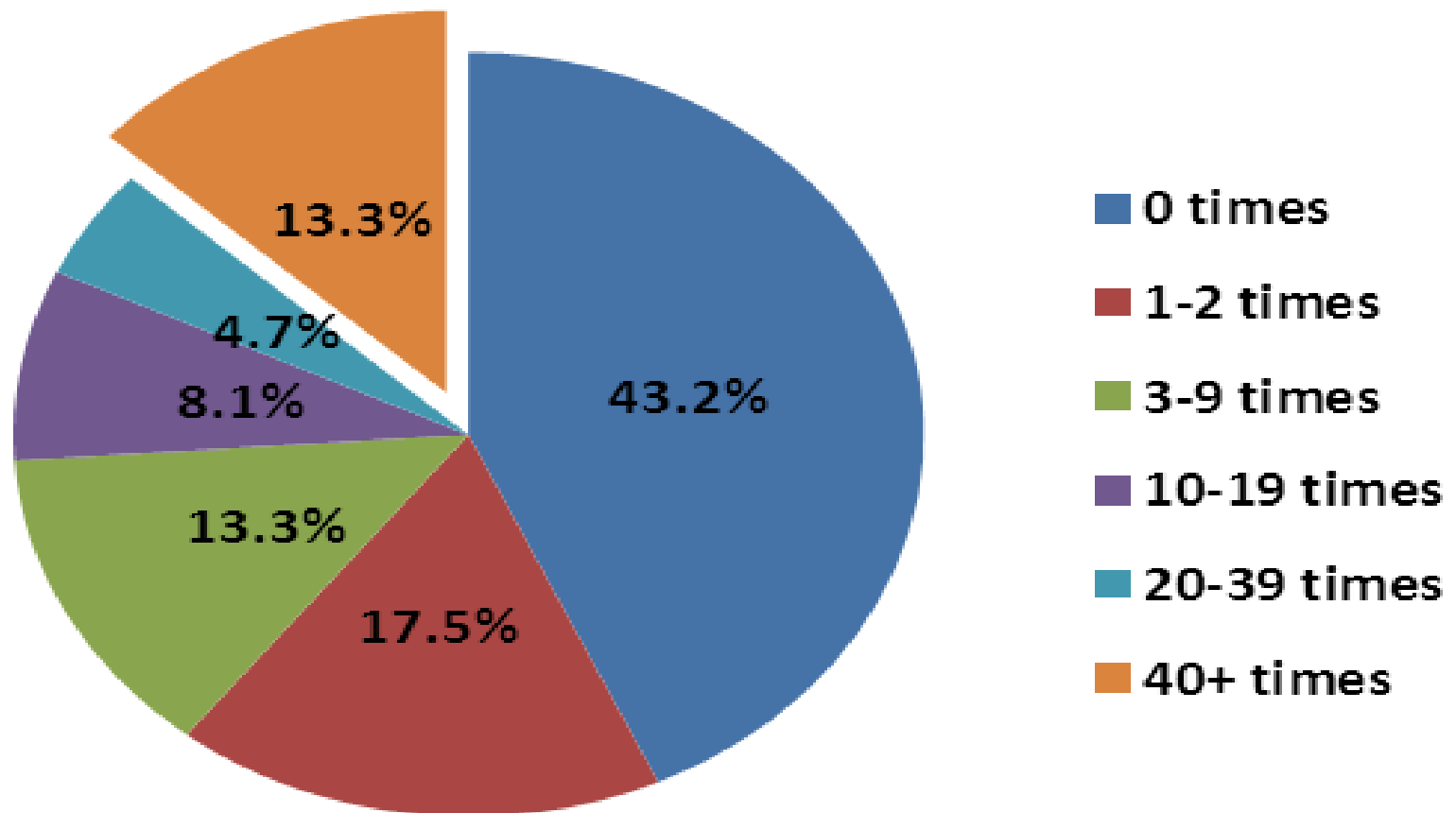
# Problem Gambling Data: U.S. Youth

- 68% of 14-21 olds have gambled in the past year
- Pathological .4% Problem 2.2%
- Important factors:
  - Parental attitudes and behavior
  - Parental modeling
  - Age of exposure



# Maine Data: Adult Population

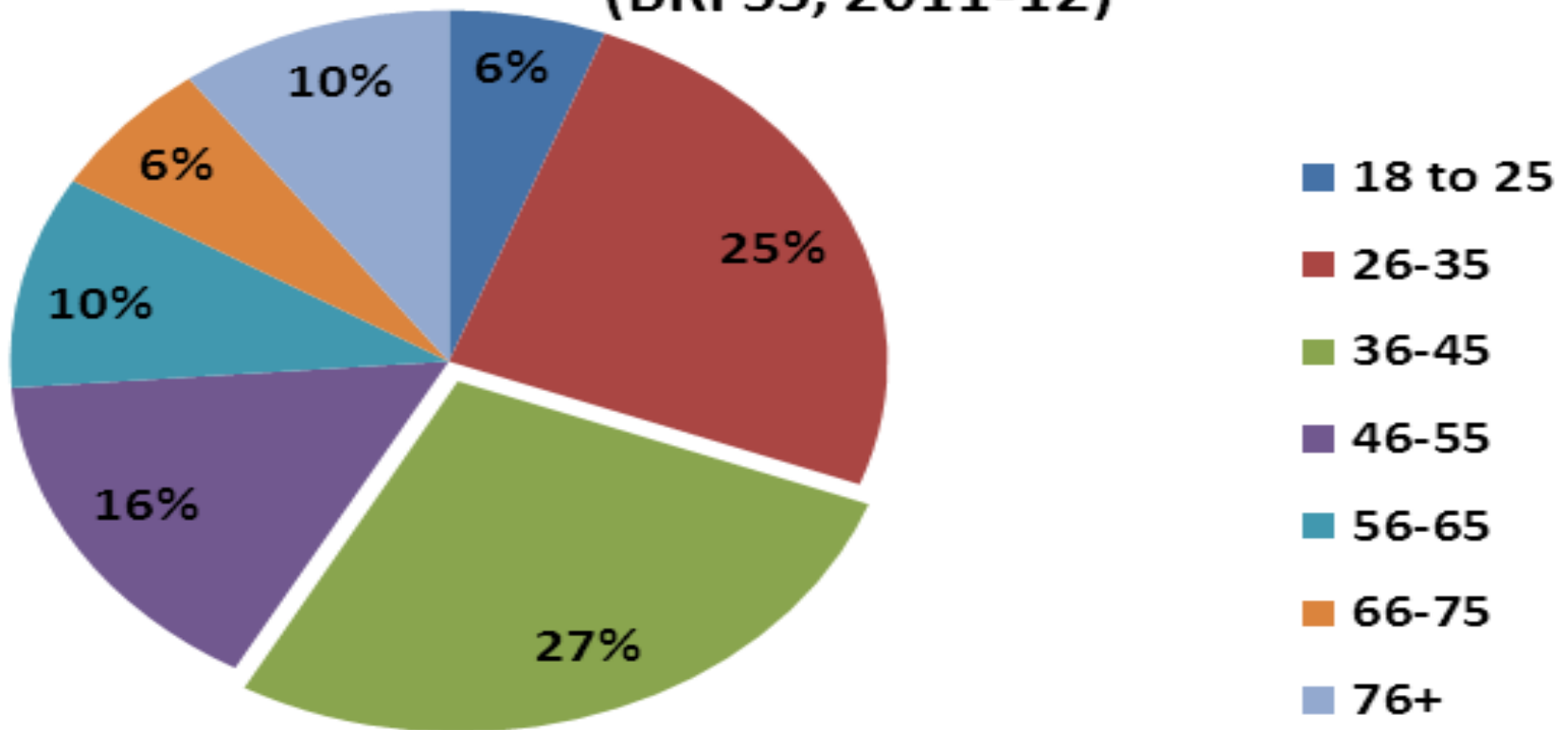
Number of times gambled (18+) in lifetime (BRFSS, 2012)



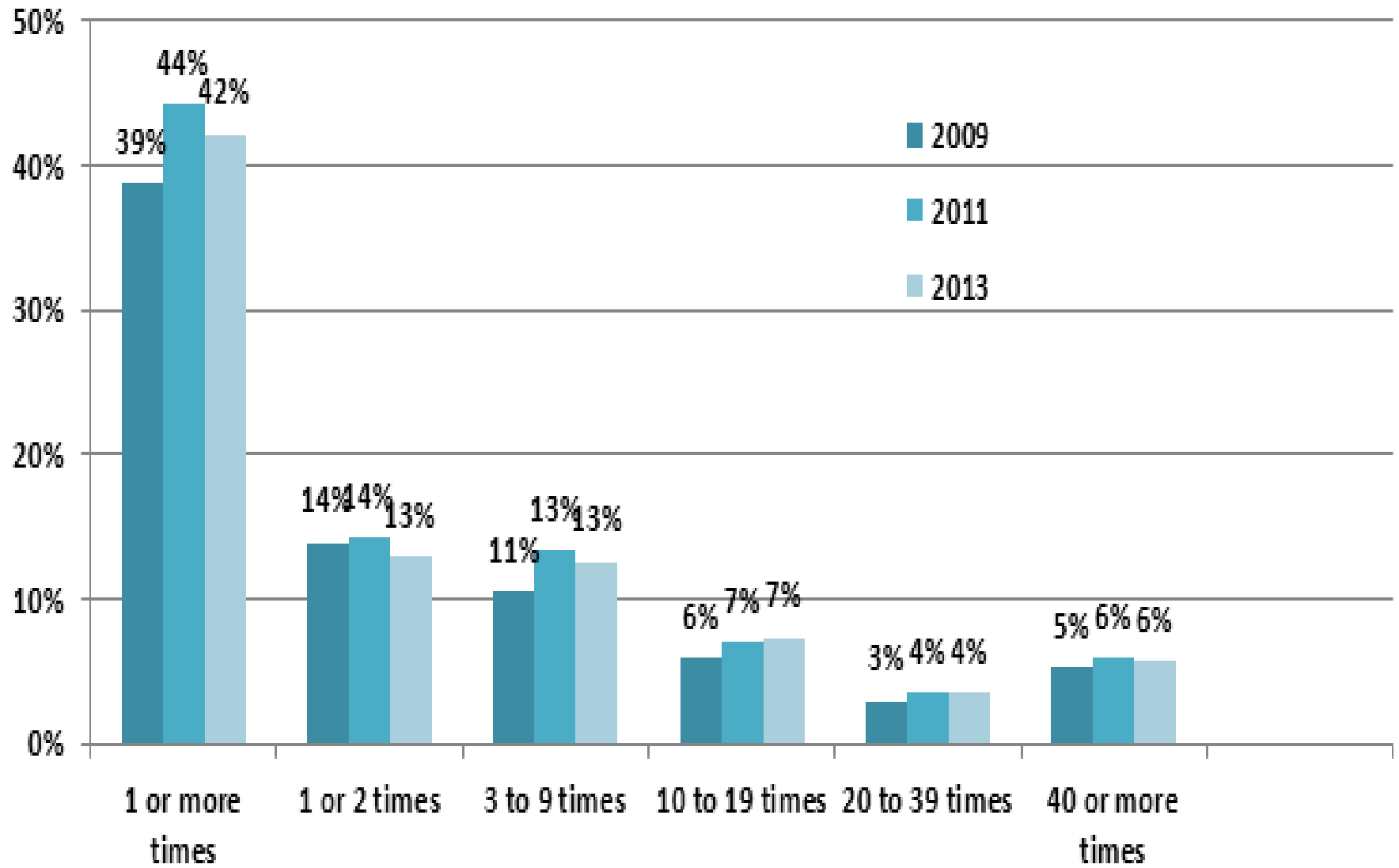


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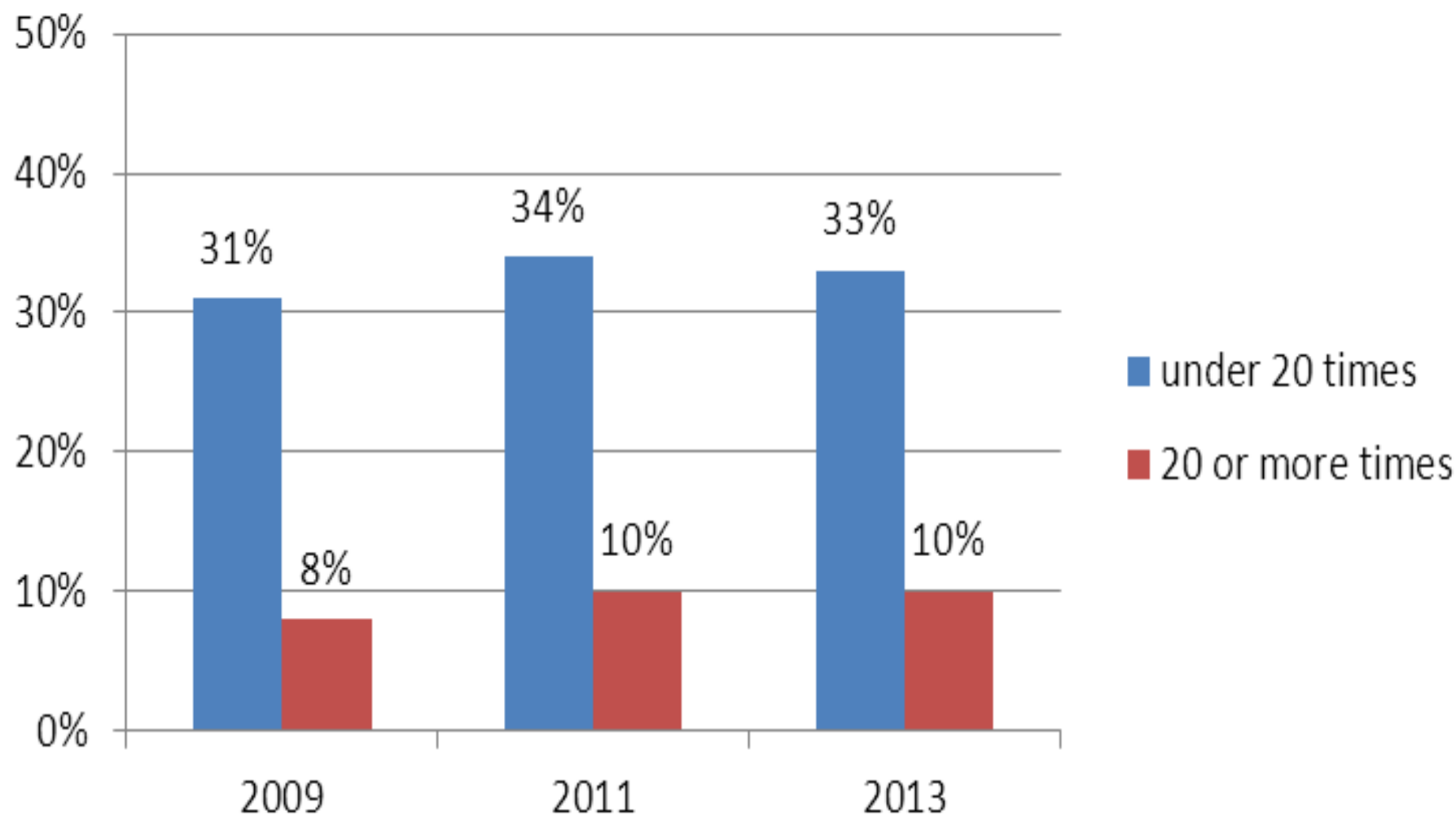
**Adult Gamblers By Age**  
Identifying Gambling has led to problems  
(BRFSS, 2011-12)



## Lifetime Gambling Among High School Students (MIHYS, 2009-2013)

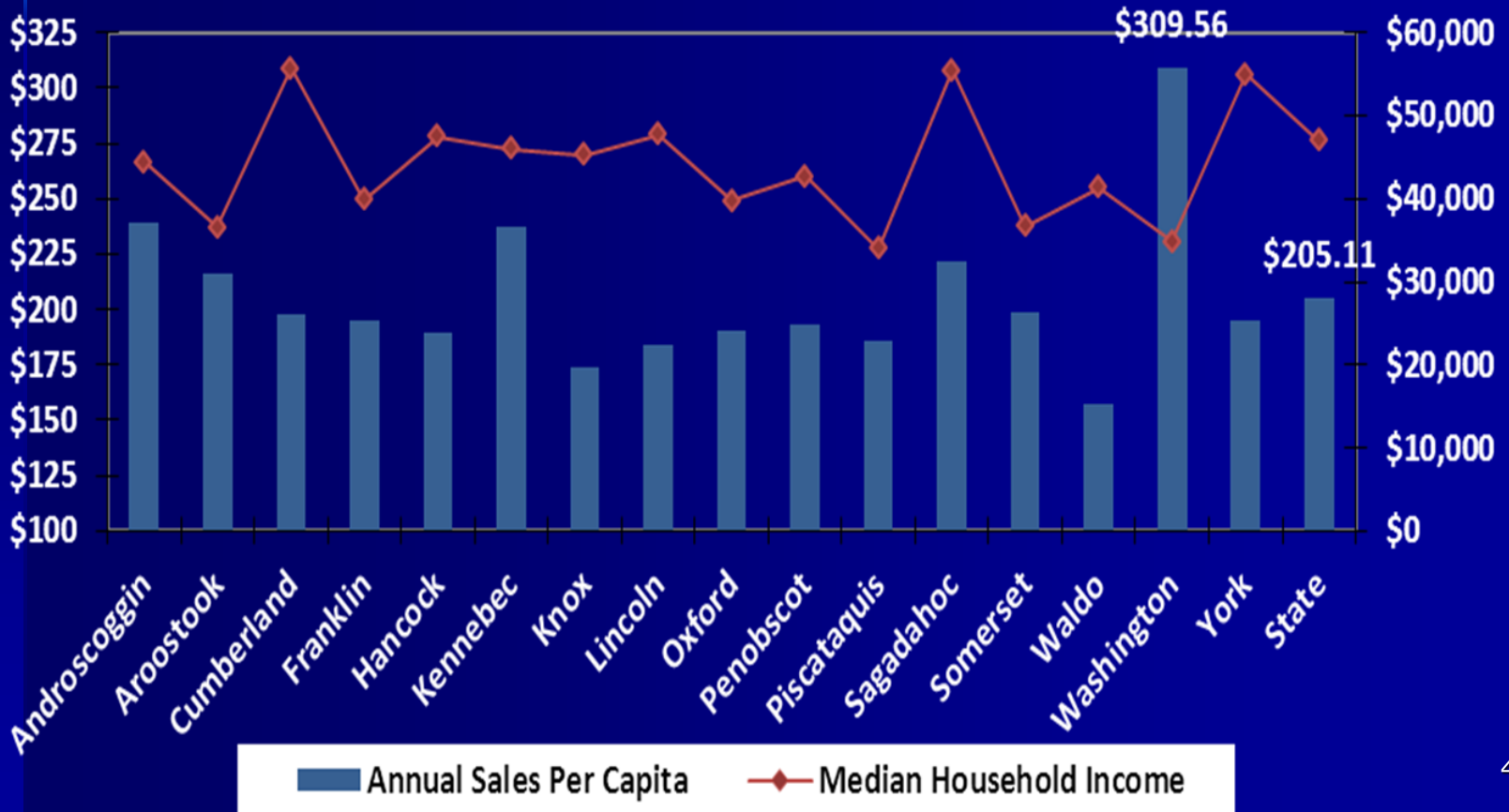


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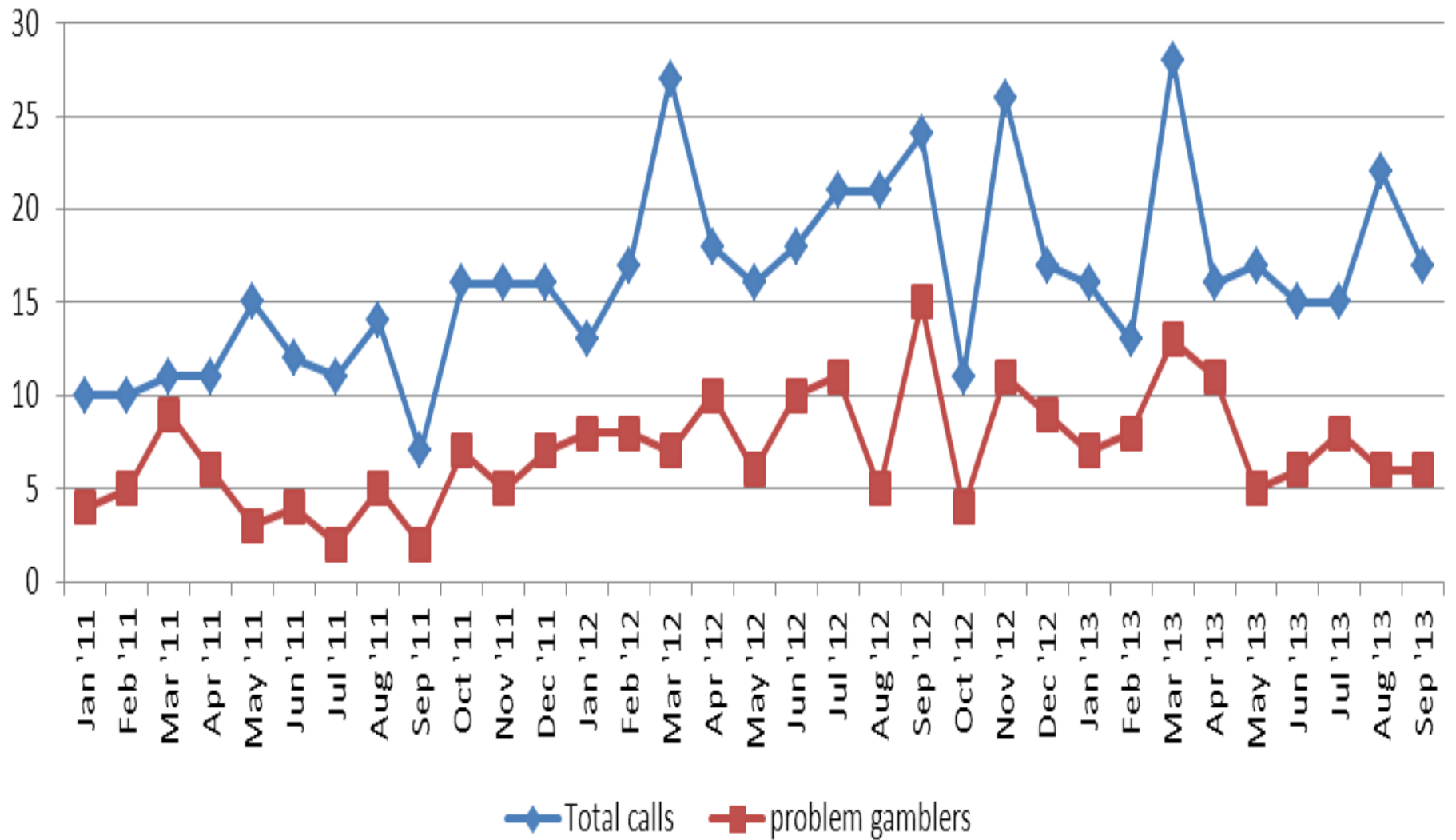


# Lottery Sales by County

FY 12 Eligible Players (18+)  
Sales by County



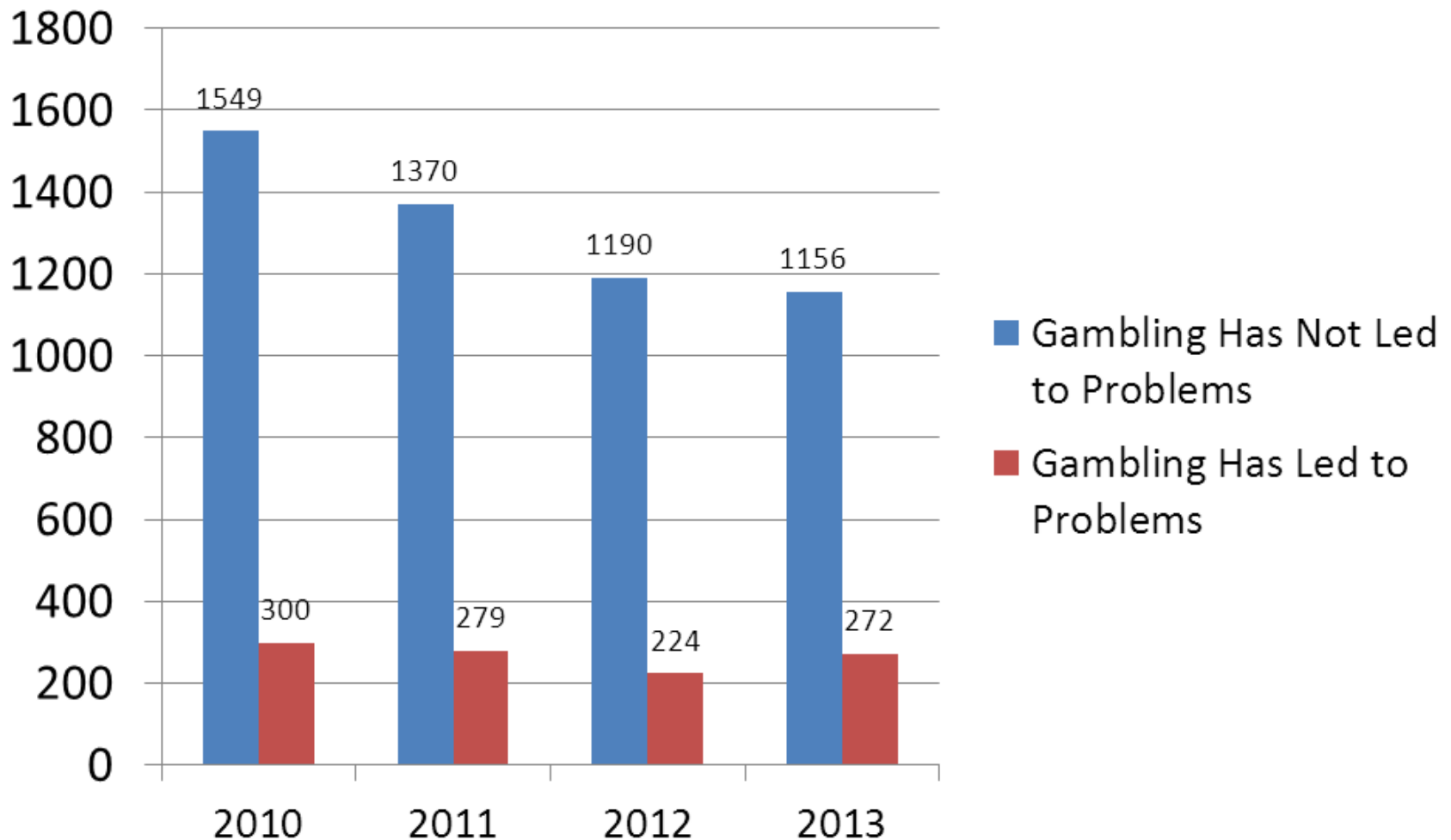
# Gambling Hotline Calls (2011-present)



# Treatment Data:

## Adults Gambling 40 or more times

(Has the money or time that you spent on gambling led to financial problems or problems in your family, work, school or personal life?)



# Gambling Services in Maine

Prevention

Intervention

Treatment

Recovery<sub>47</sub>



# Gambling Services in Maine

## Prevention Services

- 9 HMP Prevention Sites
  - Information dissemination/self-exclusion sites
- Safe Bet (responsible gambling campaign)
- Brochures
- Online Ads
- Educational Opportunities
- Data Collection





# Gambling Services in Maine

## Intervention Services

- 12 Self-Exclusion Sites (Pilot)
- Self-exclusion webpage  
([www.maine.gov/selfexclusion](http://www.maine.gov/selfexclusion))
- Screening tool booklet developed (NORC)
- Intensive Case Managers in jails/prisons doing screening
- Some funding to 2-1-1 Maine (call center)

# Gambling Services in Maine

## Treatment Services

- Former network of certified providers
  - 12 hours of training necessary
- Currently no mechanism for reimbursement for LADC
- LCSW, LCPC – reimbursement if co-occurring condition exists

# Gambling Services in Maine

## Treatment Services

- 4 GA meetings in Maine

<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/mtgdirME.html>

- SAMHS is working on developing the PG treatment capacity in Maine.
- Currently 2 Treatment pilot sites:
  - Wellsprings, Bangor
  - Merrimack River Medical Services, Portland

# Gambling Services in Maine

## Recovery Services

- Training completed with Recovery Center in Portland (more to come)
- Working on collaboration with Gamblers Anonymous
- Priority to include engage recovery into existing collaborations.



# Collaborative Partnerships are Key to Success

- Monthly calls with key stakeholders
  - Hollywood & Oxford Casino
  - Gambling Control Board
  - Prevention/Treatment/Recovery service providers
  - Maine Council on Problem Gambling
  - Maine Youth Action Network
  - Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations
  - Maine 2-1-1



# For more information....

- <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/gambling/index.htm> (SAMHS)
- [www.ncpg.org](http://www.ncpg.org) (National Council)
- [www.npgaw.org](http://www.npgaw.org) (PG Awareness)
- [www.masscompulsivegambling.org](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org)
- [www.ccpng.org](http://www.ccpng.org) (CT Council)
- [Christine.Theriault@maine.gov](mailto:Christine.Theriault@maine.gov)
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