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Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

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Gambling Alert - April 15, 2022



Illinois gamblers bet \$286M on March Madness

That includes \$278.4 million wagered on about two and a half weeks' worth of games in the men's NCAA basketball tournament, and another \$7.8 million bet on the women's tourney, the Illinois Gaming Board reported. That's the state agency that polices legal gambling in the state, including sports betting, which became a legitimate operation in Illinois two years ago. [Read](#)

Online sports betting cause concerns for those recovering from gambling addiction

Gambling addiction help is available: 1-800-GAMBLE

That ease of use has some former problem gamblers concerned.

"It's a lot quicker path to distraction today than it was when I came in just because of that. You have so many different ways you can gamble," said Brian Brost with Gambler's Anonymous.

Brost has been in recovery with Gambler's Anonymous for 24 years. He lost money, but more importantly his marriage of 30 years, because of his disease. "Not only did it cost me money, but it cost me a lot of different things you can never get back," he said. He said the ease and ubiquity of online betting is worrisome for the 2-4% of gamblers that develop a problem. "When you're a compulsive gambler, your life is like Groundhog Day. That's all you do," Brost said. The Illinois Council on Problem Gambling

said the number of calls for help are going up. According to the council, there were 401 gamblers calling for help in Illinois in 2020. That jumped up to 750 last year. [Read](#)

How Gaming And Gambling Are Converging

The gaming industry and the gambling industry are among the biggest entertainment industries in the world. Gambling has grown in popularity over the past years as more and more states are legalizing gambling, both in land-based casinos and online.

Similarly, video games sometimes introduce gambling elements into their gameplay. For example, several video games feature casino games as a minigame within the game. You can, as the character, play a hand of poker in a casino. No real money is at stake, yet the culture of gambling and the atmosphere of a casino goes well with gaming and the storylines of a lot of games. [Read](#)

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