



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Wolf Administration Kicks off Problem Gambling Awareness Month by Highlighting Available Resources and Help**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Jen Smith was joined in Strawberry Square by individuals in recovery, stakeholders, advocates, and community members to kick off statewide activities during the month of March in observance of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

“We come together today to promote awareness of problem gambling and highlight community resources for individuals in need,” said DDAP Secretary Jennifer Smith. “As legalized gambling expands and becomes more prevalent around the commonwealth, we urge individuals and their loved ones to recognize when a recreational hobby becomes a more serious problem. Understanding that treatment and resources are available can help in having conversations with loved ones in need.”

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month as recognized by the National Council on Problem Gambling. To commemorate, this year’s theme is Awareness + Action. The goals of the national campaign are to increase public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of treatment and recovery services, and to encourage health care providers to screen clients for problem gambling.

DDAP was joined by the Pennsylvania’s Gaming Control Board and the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania. Together, the agencies fund and operate the Pennsylvania Problem Gambling 24 hour a day, 365 days a year confidential helpline, 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537). More resources, including a 24-hour chat services, are also available at [www.pacouncil.com](http://www.pacouncil.com).

Gambling, even through legal avenues, becomes a problem when individuals begin to develop strained relationships with loved ones, borrow money to gamble, gamble to see a high or feeling, miss work, school, or other activities and obligations in order to gamble. These behaviors can have a serious impact on a person’s financial, physical, and mental health. Other symptoms of problem gambling include trying to hide or lying about gambling, using gambling as an escape to avoid dealing with others problems, and feeling like the habit is out of control but being unable to stop.

For more information on how to recognize the warning signs of a gambling problem and to find treatment options around Pennsylvania, visit [www.ddap.pa.gov](http://www.ddap.pa.gov) or 1-800-GAMBLER.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Rachel Kostelac, DDAP, 717-547-3314

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