

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We will start with Doctor Randy
2 Stinchfield.

3 DR. STINCHFIELD: Good morning. Thank you for
4 inviting us. We're going to be speaking on youth and adolescent
5 gambling and one of the issues that we look at is what are the
6 signs of problems. And David Letterman has offered suggested
7 signs of that and I'd like to read a few of those. These are
8 signs your kid is addicted to gambling.

9 "Number 5, he has converted the hamster's treadmill
10 into a crude roulette wheel. Number 4, he knows the Vegas odds
11 on where Waldo might be. Number 3, there's a bookie sleeping in
12 his tree house. Number 2, he's changed his middle name to 'The
13 Greek', and number 1, he's nine and he's dating a show girl". So
14 that's a humorous account of signs to look for and we're going to
15 be dealing with the more serious ones now.

16 I'd like to first start with just looking at the
17 context in which youth gambling occurs. I think that's a good
18 place to start. And gambling, as you know, is now legal in all
19 but two states in the U.S. There's also been the creation of new
20 lotteries that have come across the country and new casinos.
21 Estimates of wagers for the entire country were about 300 billion
22 in 1991 and more current estimates are around 500 billion.
23 Gambling advertising is present on television, radio, newspaper,
24 billboards, et cetera.

25 These gambling advertisements entice the public with
26 a message that gambling is a quick and easy way to get rich.
27 Newspaper ads show pictures of winners with the by-line, "This
28 could be you." Of course, advertisements do not show the masses

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1 of people who lose their money gambling. It is unknown what
2 effect this exposure will have on youth. Some youth may not
3 understand the inherent risks of gambling and the low probability
4 of winning and, therefore, may be more susceptible than adults to
5 this type of promotion.

6 Gambling has become a common activity for many
7 Americans. It is estimated that about 80 percent of the U.S.
8 population gambles. Gambling is also a very common activity
9 among youth. Most studies show that about 80 percent of youth
10 have gambled in their life and about 60 percent have gambled in
11 the past year. The public seems to be either divided or unsure
12 of whether gambling is a good thing or a bad thing.

13 For example, in Minnesota when the state lottery was
14 put to popular vote, it passed by just a slim margin, so you
15 essentially have almost half who are not wanting legalized
16 gambling. The ambiguity regarding gambling is also apparent in
17 state government. On the one hand, youth are instructed by their
18 teachers and ostensibly their state departments of education that
19 the way to get ahead in life is to study and work hard. On the
20 other hand, their state lottery tells them they only need to be
21 lucky.

22 So now what are our concerns about gambling? With
23 the growth of commercial gambling, there has also been increasing
24 concern about the negative social and personal consequences of
25 easy access to a variety of gambling venues. There is a good
26 deal of concern about underage gambling and youth problem
27 gambling. This is the first generation of youth to be exposed to
28 easy access to a variety of gambling venues, widespread gambling

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1 advertising and a general social approval for an inherently risky
2 activity that was once prohibited.

3 There have been both national and local media reports
4 of problems associated with youth gambling; for example, students
5 acting as bookies in schools, adolescent gamblers getting in debt
6 with bookies with subsequent threats and acts of violence,
7 adolescent boys who are arrested for breaking and entering homes
8 for the purpose of supporting their gambling habit to name a few.

9 So now what do we know about youth gambling? There
10 are a number of recurring findings that cut across studies and
11 serve as a foundation upon which to build our knowledge base.
12 Youth gambling occurs on a continuum of involvement from kids who
13 don't gamble at all to those who experiment, to those who gamble
14 occasionally, to those who have a regular habit all the way to
15 those who are over-involved and become preoccupied and also
16 suffer serious adverse consequences. So that's the range of
17 gambling.

18 Most youth have gambled at some time and many
19 under-age youth have played a legalized game. Although many
20 youth gamble, most do so infrequently and do not suffer any
21 adverse consequences. It's also a finding that comes across in
22 most studies that boys are much more involved in gambling than
23 girls. Older youth gamble more often than younger youth. And
24 some studies have found racial ethnic differences in youth
25 gambling with some ethnic minorities showing higher rates of
26 gambling than whites.

27 Youth start gambling at an early age, often times in
28 grade school. Rates of youth gambling and problem gambling

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1 appear to be fairly stable. There is a small percentage of youth
2 who appear to be over-involved with gambling and some show signs
3 of pathological gambling.

4 Prevalence rates of pathological gambling are
5 reportedly higher among youth than adults. Dewey Jacobs estimated
6 from his review that four to six percent of youth have serious
7 gambling problems and Shaffer and Hall in their recent review
8 give a similar estimate of between four to seven percent of youth
9 have serious gambling problems.

10 Youth gambling is also related to other behaviors
11 including use of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana, anti-social
12 behaviors and parental gambling. Youth gambling starts earlier
13 than use of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. I'd like to focus on
14 the question of whether youth are gambling more or less or about
15 the same. There have been three studies that have looked at this
16 question; two in Minnesota and one in Texas. And in summary it
17 appears that youth gambling has remain fairly stable in the
18 general population.

19 However, there does appear to be an increase in play
20 of legalized games for youth who turn 18 years old and an
21 increase in the number of youth particularly males, who are
22 over-involved in gambling. Therefore, the answer to the question
23 are youth gambling more or less or about the same, is that for
24 most youth it is about the same and for the small percent that
25 we're talking about, that does seem to be increasing.

26 So now what we don't know about youth gambling;
27 public health officials, policy makers, parents and teachers want
28 to know the extent of under- age and problem gambling and what

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1 can be done to prevent it. The field of youth gambling research
2 is in its infancy. There are a number of gaps in our knowledge
3 about youth gambling and so some of the questions that we are
4 looking at addressing are why do youth have reported rates of
5 problem and pathological gambling four times the rate of adults?
6 This isn't the case in alcohol and drug abuse, so it's peculiar
7 that it is the case in gambling.

8 Will youth gambling increase, decrease or remain
9 stable over time? The studies that I mentioned earlier only
10 looked at two points in time and it will be important to continue
11 to monitor kids, particularly since this is the first generation
12 of youth to be exposed to this. It will be important to monitor
13 them over longer periods of time. The other question is why do
14 youth gamble and when we asked kids about that they have
15 different reasons. Some kids gamble to have fun. Some gamble
16 because they're bored.

17 At the more serious end, kids are gambling to avoid
18 thinking about their other serious problems in their lives, like
19 family problems. The other question is, why does an individual
20 move from being a social recreational gambler to becoming a
21 pathological gambler and then do prevention efforts work?

22 So in terms of what needs to be done next, I would
23 suggest that we need to develop reliable and valid screening,
24 assessment and diagnostic instruments specifically for youth. So
25 far what we've done is we've taken adult instruments and adapted
26 them for kids and that practice is questionable. And so we need
27 to develop instruments specifically for kids.

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1 Another thing we need to do is to monitor gambling
2 and pathological gambling among youth similar to the way that
3 alcohol and drug use is monitored by the University of Michigan
4 for NIDA (ph) where on a regular interval graduating seniors are
5 assessed for their level of alcohol and drug use and so we have a
6 very nice picture of trends in the country and it would be very
7 helpful to have that for youth.

8 We also need longitudinal studies to determine the
9 causes of youth problem gambling. We need to develop and
10 evaluate prevention programs targeted for specific gambling types
11 of youth. For example, youth who are already involved in
12 gambling will likely require a different prevention message than
13 the general population. And finally, we need to develop a
14 continuum of care for those youth with gambling problems,
15 including screening, assessment, referral, intervention,
16 treatment, after care and support groups. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

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