



Hello,

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of our 211 newsletter, where we share information on 211 services and benefits, funding updates, and opportunities for you to become an advocate for 211.

## **Problem Gambling: Help is Available**

In recent years, gambling accessibility has widely increased. Traditional forms of gambling, like casinos, racetracks, bingo halls and off-track betting are no longer the only games in town. Video gaming and lottery are increasingly available in many local communities, including in bars, restaurants, grocery stores, and gas stations, making it easier to gamble than ever before. And with online gambling, opportunities to gamble are as close as our smart phones.

There are more than 43,000 locations across the state to place a bet, and the recently passed Illinois expansion bill approved up to 80,000 locations. An estimated 250,000 people in Illinois and 14,000 people in Lake County have a diagnosable gambling disorder. With more ways and opportunities to gamble, it is important that people are aware of the risks and know where to go for help.



Many people can gamble without incident but when gambling becomes a problem, it can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide.

According to the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#), symptoms of problem gambling include:

- Increasing preoccupation with gambling
- A need to bet more money more frequently
- Restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop
- “Chasing” losses
- Loss of control

Certain populations are more at risk:

- Adolescents and young adults
- Seniors
- Military/veterans
- Athletes
- Individuals with a family history of alcoholism or other addiction
- Those exposed to gambling at a young age

"Families that are impacted by problem gambling can find themselves struggling with any number of crises: housing, employment, legal, relationship, financial, even substance use and mental health crises," said Elizabeth Thielen, Senior Director of Substance Abuse Treatment Services at Nicasa Behavioral Health Services and Board Member of the Illinois Council on Problem Gambling. "211 is a resource that can connect our community with resources specific to these areas, as well as to services that can help with any underlying gambling issue."

United Way of Lake County's 211 is a free, confidential, 24/7 information and referral helpline for a wide range of health and human services, including problem gambling. 211 expert navigators are trained specialists who will listen, identify underlying problems, and connect people in need to available resources. For example, Nicasa provides counseling for problem gambling, including individual, family, group and tele-counseling, access to 12-step support, and assistance signing up for Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program.

"Lake County is the only entity that I'm aware of to devote all its video gaming revenue to fund

gambling addiction treatment and other behavioral health services,” said Linda Pedersen who represents District 1 on the Lake County Board. “It’s the right thing to do for our community and I am pleased the County Board has been so supportive. 211 is crucial to addressing this critical need by connecting people struggling with a gambling addiction to available resources with a simple call or text.”

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month and an opportunity to increase public awareness of problem gambling, and the availability of prevention, treatment, and recovery services. Help spread the word to improve and save lives in Lake County!

## GivingTuesday Campaign a Success!



A BIG thank you to everyone who gave to our **GivingTuesday** campaign in support of United Way of Lake County’s new **211** program. Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County sponsored our campaign and matched all new or increased gifts up to \$5,000. We are thrilled with the support from our community and happy to announce that we exceeded our goal!

Everyone who made a gift of \$211 or more is now a part of our 211 Club. You can join our 211 Club or learn more [here](#).

## Our Community of 211 Donors

Thank you to the following community partners and individuals for their generous financial support in bringing 211 to our community:

- Advocate Aurora Health
- Astellas USA Foundation
- AT&T
- Avon Township
- Benton Township
- BMO Harris Bank
- The Buchanan Family Foundation
- Comcast
- First Midwest Bank
- Chuck and Teresa Bartels\*
- Judy and Larry Berliant\*
- Kristine and Brian Blaser\*
- Monica Burmeister\*
- Nancy Coolley\*
- Irene Hrusovsky\*
- Joe and Sherry Pray\*
- Mark and Sarah Schweitzer\*
- Karen and Andrew Warrington\*

- Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County
  - Lake County Government
  - Lake County Health Department
  - Lake County Workforce Development
  - Libertyville Township
  - Lundbeck
  - MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions
  - Metra
  - Moraine Township
  - NorthShore Highland Park Hospital
  - Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital
  - Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Community Fund
  - Sysmex America, Inc.
  - Trustmark Companies
  - United Way of Lake County
  - Vernon Township
  - Village of Gurnee
  - Warren Township
  - Wauconda Township
  - Waukegan Township
  - West Deerfield Township
  - Zion Township
- Donovan Young\*
  - Mike Zafirovski\*

*\*211 Club Members*

**211 Club Members - [View the full list here](#)**

## How Can You Help?

1. Share this email and encourage your network to [opt-in to 211 communications](#).
2. Follow United Way of Lake County on social media to receive more timely 211 updates. (Click the social icons below.)
3. [Help to sustain 211 in its second year!](#)
4. **Invite us to present 211 to your company. [Click here to submit a request](#).**



Best regards,

**Deanna Olmem**

Manager, Safe & Stable Families

---