



For Immediate Release: February 25, 2019

## **March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

### ***Are Your Children Gaming? Then They May Be Gambling, Too!***

(COLUMBUS, OHIO) Videogaming has been expanding its reach into an area that has traditionally been off limits for children – gambling. In recent years, researchers have been looking into how gaming has been weaving gambling into the virtual stories. Unfortunately, while the situations are virtual, the money spent to participate is real.

Governor Mike DeWine has declared March 2019 as Ohio Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The Governor resolves to recognize March 2019 as Ohio Problem Gambling Awareness Month and, “encourage all Ohioans to participate in the theme, ‘Awareness + Action,’ to ensure that friends, family and healthcare access points develop a growing awareness of responsible gambling and resources available for gambling addiction.”

While the most recent Ohio Gambling Survey puts 1 of 10 Ohio adults at-risk of problem gambling, only 1 percent would potentially have a Gambling Disorder or addiction. The survey also said that young adults ages 18-24 are at the highest risk for problem gambling. With that knowledge, state officials are looking at youth gambling and where the risks may be developing over time.

Games with gambling built in include Overwatch, Red Dead Redemption, Call of Duty: Black Ops, FIFA Ultimate Team, Casino Kid, and any games with “loot boxes.” Loot boxes are like the “mystery bags” that children used to buy on the chance of finding something of value within. However, in video games players may compete to buy loot boxes with real dollars, and the contents can be worth pennies or thousands of dollars in real or virtual prizes.

Researchers have found that the more money a player wagers on loot boxes, the more at-risk for problem gambling he or she will be.

The Ohio for Responsible Gambling state partners, the Commissions of Casino Control, Lottery and Racing and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, want to make sure that if you gamble, you gamble responsibly. Consider these questions:

- Have you ever bet more than you could afford to lose?
- When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
- Have you ever borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble or pay bills?
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling or felt guilty about gambling?

Along with the ORG partners, Ohio’s county Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards and community service agencies want to ensure that gambling remains a fun pastime for those who want to take part. For any individual or family members who need help because of a gambling problem, Ohio offers quality prevention and treatment services available at no cost.

To keep gambling in a “safe zone,” the tips below will help:

- Set a limit on how much money and time will be spent gambling.
- Never borrow to gamble or use credit.
- Pay bills first and spend only what you can afford to lose.
- Know that gambling will not solve money concerns.
- Gamble for fun, not to avoid being depressed or upset.

Anyone who gambles can develop a problem. Groups at higher levels of risk include young adults, older adults, adolescents, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities. Individuals new to taking medications for Restless Leg Syndrome or Parkinson’s might also develop a gambling problem.

To learn more or get help for yourself or a loved one, visit [www.beforeyoubet.org](http://www.beforeyoubet.org), webchat with a counselor, or talk to the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-589-9966. To text with someone, text “4hope” to 741741.

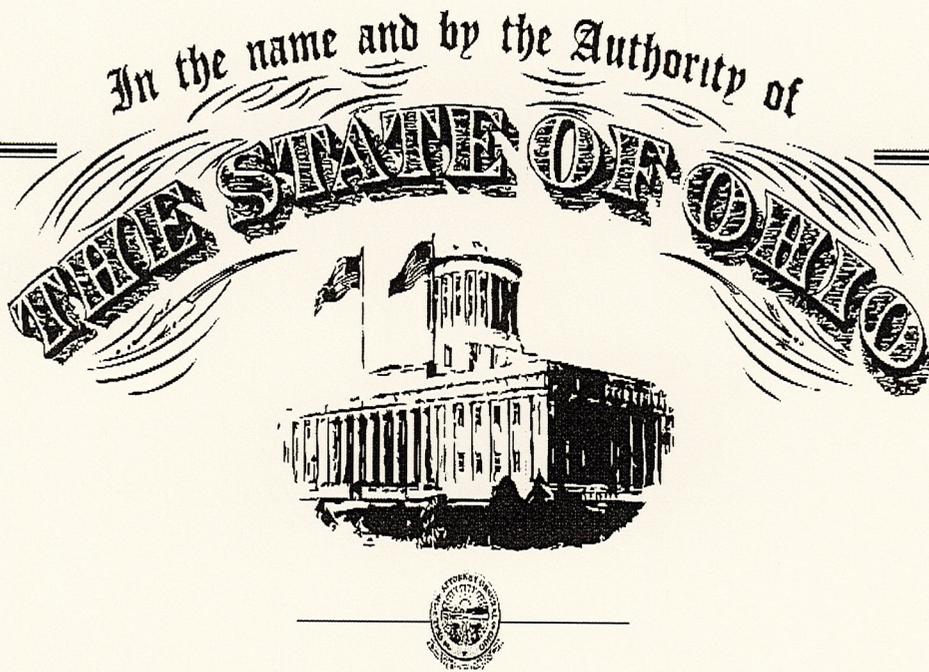
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**Contacts:**

**OhioMHAS** | Eric Wandersleben, Director of Media Relations & Outreach, 614.728.5090

**Ohio Casino Control Commission** | Jessica Franks, Communications Director, 614.914.2529

**Ohio Lottery Commission** | Danielle Frizzi-Babb, Communications Director, 216.774.5685



**WHEREAS**, the State of Ohio, Ohio for Responsible Gambling and the National Council on Problem Gambling, have designated March 2019 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month; and

**WHEREAS**, problem gambling is a public health issue affecting up to 900,000 Ohio adults of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds; and

**WHEREAS**, problem gambling often begins as youth, at home, who gamble with family and friends and within video games; and

**WHEREAS**, problem gambling has a significant societal and economic cost for individuals, families, businesses and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, problem gambling is treatable, and treatment is effective in minimizing this harm to both individuals and society as a whole; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous individuals, professionals and organizations have dedicated their efforts to the education of the public about problem gambling and the availability and effectiveness of treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Ohio, Ohio for Responsible Gambling and the National Council on Problem Gambling invite all residents of Ohio to participate in Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

**NOW, THEREFORE, We, Mike DeWine and Jon Husted, Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Ohio**, do hereby recognize March 2019 as

## PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

throughout Ohio and encourage all Ohioans to participate in the theme, "Awareness + Action," to ensure that friends, family, and healthcare access points develop a growing awareness of responsible gambling and resources available for gambling addiction.

On this 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 2019;

Mike DeWine  
Governor



Jon Husted  
Lieutenant Governor