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**CONTACT:** Jennifer Kruse, (407) 865-6200

## **CALLS FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING HELP EXPECTED TO RISE FOR SUPER BOWL LV AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Kansas City Chiefs are meeting at Super Bowl LV this Sunday, February 7, 2021, for the finale of the National Football League season at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa. It's the second year in a row that the Super Bowl is being held in Florida, though this year's game will be markedly different as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) is preparing for a surge in contacts to its 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine.

With face masks required to attend the game and the stadium's seating capacity capped at just over 30%<sup>1</sup>, you can say that this year's Super Bowl is unprecedented -- but so too is the opportunity to place bets on it. With the expansion of legal sports betting in recent years, along with the growing popularity of online gambling due to the pandemic, many Americans have easy access to place their wagers on this year's big game. According to the American Gaming Association (AGA), \$17.3 billion was wagered on sports between January and November of 2020, and more than 4 in 10 Americans now live in a jurisdiction where wagering on sports is legal.<sup>2</sup> PlayUSA.com projects that Americans will legally wager over \$500 million in total on Super Bowl LV, up from an estimated \$300 million last year<sup>3</sup> – but these figures don't include illegal sports betting. The AGA found that 23.2 million Americans plan to wager a total of \$4.3 billion on Super Bowl LV, expected to be the largest handle for a single event in American sports betting history.<sup>4</sup>

"Although sports betting has not been legalized in the State of Florida, the impact of the sports betting expansion nationwide on problem gamblers is still very much present," cautioned Jennifer Kruse, Executive Director of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG). "As many as 6-9 million people in the U.S., including hundreds of thousands of Floridians, suffer either directly or indirectly from the disorder commonly known as the hidden addiction, due to the lack of outward visible symptoms." Over the past year, 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine data reveals a 19.7% increase in Floridians citing sports betting as the type of gambling causing the most problems, indicative of local impacts resulting from this expansion.

"The Super Bowl represents a cultural tradition in America and should be an event all can enjoy, free from pressures to bet. With big changes in the sports betting landscape across the country and the COVID-19 pandemic increasing many problem gambling risk factors, we need to make sure raising awareness about gambling disorder is part of the discussion and be spreading the word that help and hope are available in Florida through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine for anyone who needs it," concluded Kruse.

If you think you or someone you know may be suffering from problem gambling, Florida's 24/7, Confidential, and Multilingual Problem Gambling HelpLine, 888-ADMIT-IT, will continue to be available before, during, and after the game and offers help and hope for those feeling the impacts of gambling addiction. HelpLine Specialists can also be reached by texting to 321-978-0555, starting a live chat at [gamblinghelp.org](http://gamblinghelp.org), or reaching out to the FCCG on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/fccg) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/fccg). The 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine is also available as a resource to those who will be traveling to Tampa for this year's game.

*The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. (FCCG) is a not-for-profit corporation under contract with Florida State government, serving as the designated state affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). In addition to operating the 24-hour Problem Gambling HelpLine (888-ADMIT-IT), the FCCG increases awareness of problem gambling through education and outreach efforts throughout the state of Florida, advocates on behalf of the public regarding issues relating to problem gambling, and provides programs, resources, and other population specific supports to those in need of assistance.*

<sup>1</sup>Kerr, Jeff. "NFL Reveals Attendance, Other Details for Super Bowl: What to Expect for the Game and Plans for 2021 Season." CBSsports.com, 22 Jan. 2021, [www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/nfl-reveals-attendance-other-details-for-super-bowl-what-to-expect-for-the-game-and-plans-for-2021-season/](http://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/nfl-reveals-attendance-other-details-for-super-bowl-what-to-expect-for-the-game-and-plans-for-2021-season/).

<sup>2</sup> Received by Eric Randazzo, PGA TOUR Joins Have A Game Plan®, 19 Jan. 2021. Email message from Casey Clark of the American Gaming Association ([pa@americangaming.org](mailto:pa@americangaming.org)).

<sup>3</sup> "PlayUSA.com Predicts Super Bowl to Attract More Than \$500 Million in Legal Wagers." CISION PR Newswire, 28 Jan. 2021, [www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/playusacom-predicts-super-bowl-to-attract-more-than-500-million-in-legal-wagers-301217668.html#:~:text=28%2C%202021%20%2FPRNewswire%2F%20%2D%2D.of%20the%20U.S.%20gaming%20industry.](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/playusacom-predicts-super-bowl-to-attract-more-than-500-million-in-legal-wagers-301217668.html#:~:text=28%2C%202021%20%2FPRNewswire%2F%20%2D%2D.of%20the%20U.S.%20gaming%20industry.)

<sup>4</sup> "23.2 Million Americans to Wager on Super Bowl LV." American Gaming Association, 2 Feb. 2021, [www.americangaming.org/new/23-2-million-americans-to-wager-on-super-bowl-lv/](http://www.americangaming.org/new/23-2-million-americans-to-wager-on-super-bowl-lv/).