On Independence Day, the United States remembers the sacrifices made in order for our country to become the “land of the free.” Our founding fathers fought for the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That’s the independence we value and wish for everybody to pursue.

This month, we want to promote independence from problem gambling. In the state of Florida, the number of at-risk problem gamblers is estimated to be approximately 801,855 adults[1]. Problem gamblers are more likely to participate in all types of gambling activities, both regulated and non-regulated. Our goal is to work closely with individuals, their loved ones, and others experiencing gambling-related problems while maintaining expanded efforts to help train professionals in the field and raising awareness among others suffering from the effects of disordered gambling.

Understanding that problem gambling does not discriminate and has severe impacts is the first step to engaging and taking action towards this disorder.

While we are living in different times, we must understand that the different steps towards independence are understanding the times that we live in. Gambling opportunities are no longer confined to casinos or places where one can buy lottery tickets or play cards. There is another side to gambling that has grown rapidly in the last few months, due to COVID-19.

While the world of sports betting isn’t new, another kind of betting has been on the rise because of the cancellation of traditional sports events. If you are unfamiliar, esports are essentially video game sports. Some bookmakers have seen increases in esports betting of more than 40 times since early March [2]. This is alarming and shows that traditional sports bettors are switching to esports due to the lack of live events due to the pandemic. Esports statistics have also shown that worldwide esports gambling revenue is expected to double this year to about $14 billion [3]. To promote independence from and prevention of problem gambling, it is important to monitor activity and limit the amount of time spent on gaming platforms. If you are concerned that a loved one is experiencing problems with e-sports betting or any kind of gambling, or if you’re worried about yourself, know that help and hope are available through the 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine. It is important to understand that there are many different channels in which problem gambling can present itself, and the success is in prevention! We are prepared to provide confidential and multilingual help, 24/7.

The FCCG’s 24-Hour Confidential and Multilingual Helpline May Be Reached By Calling 888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848), Texting (321) 978-0555, Emailing FCCG@GAMBLINGHELP.ORG, Initiating A Live Chat At GAMBLINGHELP.ORG, Or By Reaching Out To Us On Social Media Platforms.
REFERENCES

