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Fact Sheet: Gambling & Addiction Among Servicemembers and Veterans

September 2022

1. **Triple Rate of Problems:** Civilian rate is 2%, military and veteran rates are consistently higher. Risk factors for gambling addiction include individuals who are male, young, high risk taking, substance use, high stress, depression and PTSD--all issues known to be more likely among military personnel.

Year	Population	At Risk / Moderate Problem	Serious Problem	Combined Rate
1992	Active Duty	7.1%	2%	9.1%
1998	Active Duty	8.1%	1.2%	9.3%
2002	Active Duty	8.6%	1.2%	9.8%
2022	Active Duty	Not surveyed	1.6%	?
Average:				9.7%

2. **Consequences of Gambling Addiction for Veterans:**
 - a. Higher rates of co-occurring substance abuse.
 - b. Veterans with gambling problems are 50% more likely to be homeless.
 - c. 40% of veterans seeking treatment for gambling report a suicide attempt.
3. **Military Slots:** Only allowed on bases **Outside CONtinental United States (OCONUS)**. Located on base in officers and enlisted clubs. A 2017 GAO report found military personnel and their families deposit (put into slot machines) more than \$1 billion per year. They lose (annual revenue to DoD) more than \$100 million dollars per year. Revenues go to Morale, Welfare & Recreation (MWR). OCONUS bases do not provide educational materials or other resources on how to get help for a gambling problem.
4. **Screening Question History:** Gambling questions were included in large scale surveys of active-duty personnel throughout the 1990s until 1998 when the questions were removed. DoD began putting the questions back only recently thanks to NCPG’s advocacy work on the 2019 NDAA.
5. **Legislative History:** Report language to prevent and treat gambling problems among military personnel was submitted in 2016, included in the Senate NDAA committee report in 2017, incorporated into the full NDAA and signed into law in 2018. The majority of service branches have updated their screening policies, the first report was made public in July 2022.
6. **Screening is only the first step.** NCPG believes when surveyed properly, high rates of problems will be revealed and that military personnel need and deserve world-class gambling addiction prevention, education, treatment, enforcement, research, responsible gaming & recovery services.
7. **Every dollar spent on treatment saves at least two dollars in social costs.** The most ethical and effective way to balance costs and benefits of providing legalized gambling to troops is to provide warnings, information, and updated healthcare. This improves morale, welfare, and readiness.

Questions? Contact NCPG Government Relations Manager Cole Wogoman (ColeW@NCPGambling.org).