

Renz Center offers help for gambling

Americans spend more on gambling than all other recreation combined. And while it's a fun diversion for many people, for some it can be a social, economic and psychological problem.

In recognition of National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 9-15, Renz Addiction Counseling Center will offer free gambling assessment screenings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. March 12 at Two American Way in Elgin.

Problem gambling symptoms are not always easily recognizable. Signs and symptoms of problem gambling include:

- Gambling to calm nerves, forget worries or reduce depression.
- Talking/thinking about, or

planning to gamble and not doing other activities.

- Lying about gambling habits.

- Gambling alone or gambling more often.

- Getting into arguments about gambling.

- Going without basic needs in order to gamble.

- Needing to gamble more and more money in order to get the desired effect.

- Experiencing health problems related to gambling like anxiety and depression.

- Having financial problems caused by gambling.

"Many times people associate problem gambling with wealthy, middle-aged individuals," said Jerry Skogmo, Renz Center executive director.

"When, in fact, problem gambling is linked with all

income levels and from people of all ages, including teens and retired seniors. Cards, raffle tickets, dice and board games, bingo, lottery and casinos are some of the more accessible and common types of gambling and sometimes the most habitual."

Renz Center provides a continuum of care dedicated to the prevention, intervention and treatment of addictive behaviors related to alcohol, drugs and gambling. Services range from prevention programs for youth in the schools to outpatient treatment programs for adolescents and adults. Offices are in Elgin, St. Charles and Streamwood.

To find out more about Renz Center's programs, call (847) 742-3545 or visit www.renzcenter.com.