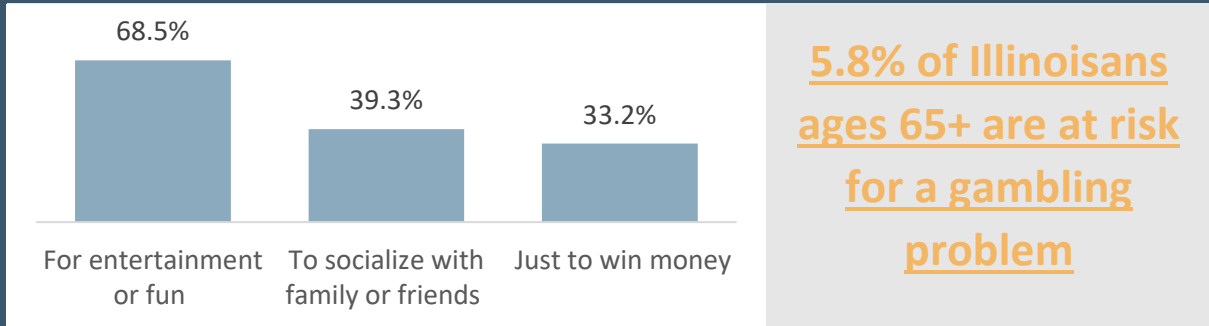# Problem Gambling in Older Adults

In Illinois older adults on average have similar prevalence of problem gambling compared to younger adults, with estimates ranging from 0.2% to 12.9%. However, factors such as low income, social isolation, and comorbid health problems may increase risk of developing problem gambling among some older adults [1-4]

An estimated 3.8% of Illinoisans have a gambling problem.

Reasons for Gambling, among Illinois Residents 65+ Reporting Ever Gambling, 2021

68.5% For entertainment or fun
39.3% To socialize with family or friends
33.2% Just to win money

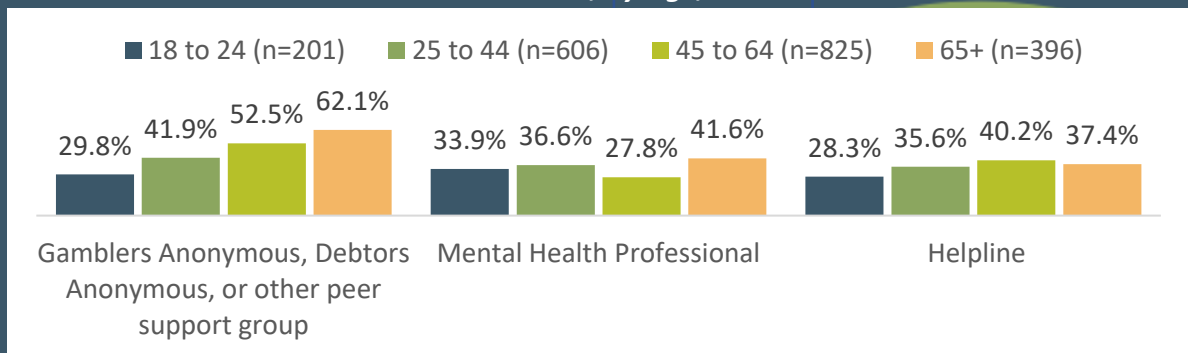### 5.8% of Illinoisans ages 65+ are at risk for a gambling problem

DATA SOURCE: IL Problem Gambling Assessment, Representative Population Sample, Weighted %s, 2021

- Lottery (84.3%), casino (74.2%), and gambling with friends or in the community (68.5%) were the top forms of gambling among older adults 65+
- The top reason for gambling among older adults was for *"entertainment or fun"*(68.5%), followed by *"socializing with family/friends"*(39.3%), and *"just to win money"* (33.2%), which were similar to Illinoisans overall
- While gambling for entertainment can be harmless for many adults, older adults using gambling to escape anxiety and depression arising from loneliness, physical health issues, and limited mobility may be at heightened risk for developing a gambling problem [1-2,4]
- Community discussions noted that older adults are also targeted by casino shuttle buses

"Seniors who lack mobility gladly participate because they view this as an outing, but this convenient arrangement is predatory."

- Illinois older adults are the age group most likely to seek more structured sources of support such as peer support groups, mental health professionals, and the Illinois Helpline

Where Would You Seek Advice for a Gambling Problem for You or Someone Else, among Illinois Residents, by Age, 2021

Legend: 18 to 24 (n=201) | 25 to 44 (n=606) | 45 to 64 (n=825) | 65+ (n=396)

Gamblers Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, or other peer support group: 29.8%, 41.9%, 52.5%, 62.1%

Mental Health Professional: 33.9%, 36.6%, 27.8%, 41.6%

Helpline: 28.3%, 35.6%, 40.2%, 37.4%

DATA SOURCE: IL Problem Gambling Assessment, Representative Population Sample, Weighted %s, 2021

If you or someone you know is experiencing problems with gambling, contact the State's Gambling Hotline at:
1-800-GAMBLER, weknowthefeeling.org, or Text: "ILGamb" to 833234