F. ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: A 2018 SURVEY OF ADULT IOWANS

Report 6 of 7

Prepared for
Iowa Department of Public Health
Iowa Gambling Treatment Program

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Protecting and Improving the Health of Iowans

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

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ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ABOUT GAMBLING[1]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: A 2018 SURVEY OF ADULT IOWANS

Prepared for the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Gambling Treatment Program
Prepared by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa

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BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

The 2018 Survey of Public Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Gambling was conducted by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) and funded by the Iowa Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP) at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

The 2018 Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Gambling used dual-frame (land and cell) random digit dial (DF-RRD) telephone sampling methodology. A total of 1,761 interviews (190 landline and 1,571 cell phone) were completed from September 12, 2018, to January 16, 2019. Similar studies were conducted in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

The primary purpose of this study was to collect data from adult Iowans to assess types and frequency of gambling activities, prevalence of problem gambling, and awareness and opinions of publicly-funded gambling treatment services.

The 2018 data have been weighted in order to obtain point estimates to allow population generalization of non-institutionalized adults in Iowa (weighting variables included age, ethnicity, race, education, place and telephone status).

KEY FINDINGS

Less than half of adult Iowans (44%) said that the harm of gambling outweighs the benefits gambling has for society. The percent of Iowans endorsing this negative perception has been steadily decreasing since 2013. As would be expected, people who gambled were more likely to have more favorable views of gambling in society than those who did not gamble.

Public funding to provide problem gambling treatment was important to 9 in 10 Iowans (28% *very important, 35% important,* 29% *somewhat important*). A similar level of support was found for education of youth, adults and seniors regarding the risks of gambling.

Almost 9 in 10 adult Iowans (88%) indicated they were aware of the gambling helpline 1-800-BETS OFF. However, the 1-800-BETS OFF website was lesser known. About half of adult Iowans (54%) indicated they have seen or heard of the website *www.1800BETSOFF.org*. This was an increase from 41% in 2015. About 1 in 10 (8%) adult Iowans have ever heard or seen Your Life Iowa (YLI). The awareness of the YLI website *www.yourlifeiowa.org* was about 6%.

Awareness of publically funded gambling treatment programs was 41%. Adult Iowans who have seen or heard of 1-800-BETS OFF or YLI were more likely to be aware of the publically funded gambling treatment programs than those who did not know about 1-800-BETS OFF or YLI.

About 1 in 4 (24%) adult Iowans knew about the state's gambling self-exclusion program. Adult Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months were more likely to be aware of the statewide gambling self-exclusion programs than were those who did not gamble in the past 12 months.

[1] This is the sixth report of a series (seven in total) produced from the 2018 Survey of Public Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Gambling.

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SECTION F. ATTITUDES ABOUT GAMBLING AND OPINIONS ABOUT GAMBLING PREVENTION & TREATMENT

In this section, knowledge and attitudes about gambling and problem gambling treatment programs available in the state are presented with special attention given to the characteristics of the respondents' social support networks. This information can be relevant to understanding adult Iowans' gambling and help–seeking behaviors.

The measures to assess gambling knowledge and attitudes were obtained from multiple sources. The attitudes toward gambling measures were obtained from the 2009 Canadian Internet Gambling Study (Wood & Williams, 2009). The knowledge and attitudes toward gambling treatment measures were obtained from Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes (IGTO) and IGTP data collection system (I-SMART/Problem Gambling Domain).

In this section, the results are presented for all respondents. Subgroup analysis is presented when there are relevant differences between gamblers: 1) Non gamblers in the past 12 months, 2) Not-at-risk gamblers in the past 12 months, and 3) At-risk gamblers in the past 12 months. See Figure E-1 for a summary of the prevalence of each type of gambler in the population.

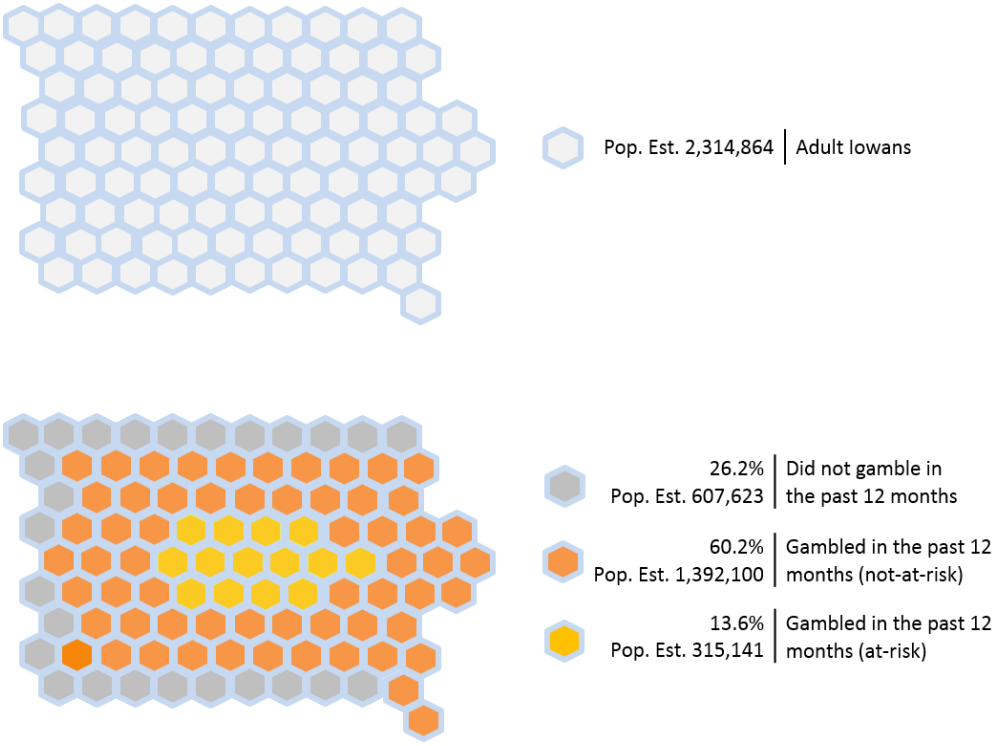

Figure F-1. Adult Iowans and gambling subgroups

ATTITUDES TOWARD GAMBLING

Respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding the benefits and harm that gambling may have for society (see Figure E-2). Slightly less than half (44%) of respondents stated that the harm outweighs the benefits.

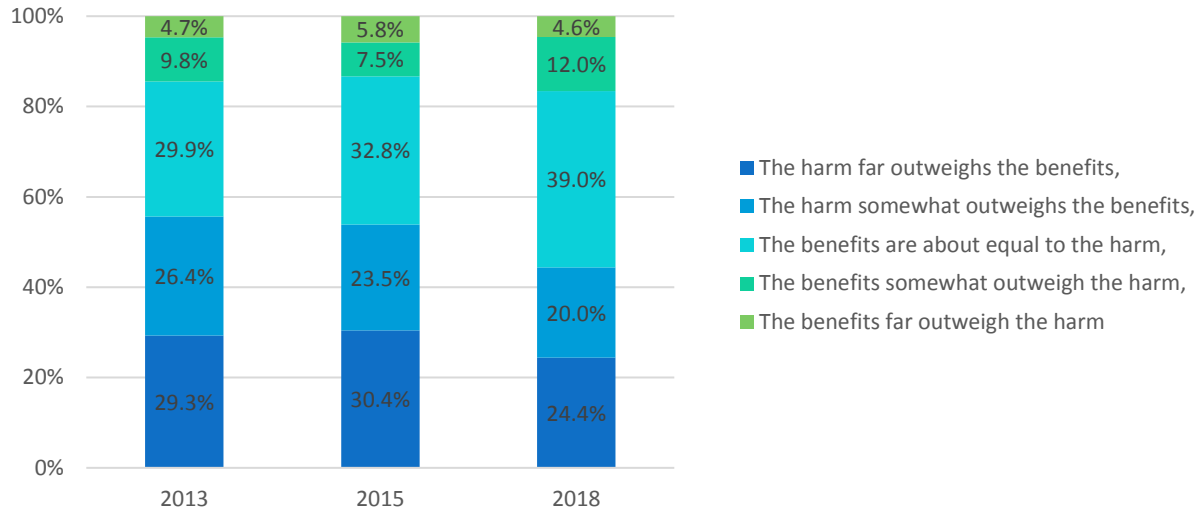

Figure F-2. Harm and benefits that gambling has for society

Opinions about these gambling-related statements varied by whether or not a person had gambled during the 12 months and by whether or not they had experienced any symptoms of problem gambling during these time periods. People who had gambled in the past year had more favorable attitudes toward gambling than those who had not gambled in the past year. Similarly, people who are at-risk (by exhibiting one or more problem gambling symptoms) had more favorable attitudes toward gambling than did those who had not gambled in the past 12 months (see Table E-1).

Table F-1. Harm and benefits that gambling has for society by gambling subgroups*

	All adult Iowans			
	Gambled in the past 12 months			Total %
	No	Yes		
	%	Not-at-risk %	At-risk %	
The harm (far or somewhat) outweighs the benefits	66	38	35	45
The benefits are equal to the harm	23	45	41	39
The benefits (far or somewhat) outweigh the harm	11	17	24	17

* $p < .05$

OPINIONS ABOUT PUBLIC FUNDING FOR GAMBLING TREATMENT

Respondents were asked their opinions about the importance of public funding for gambling-related prevention and treatment goals. Specifically, they were asked their opinions about public funding (a) to provide problem gambling treatment, (b) to educate youth about the risks of gambling, (c) to educate adults about the risks of gambling, and (d) to educate seniors about the risks of gambling.

Public funding to provide problem gambling treatment was important to 9 in 10 Iowans (28% very important, 35% important, 29% somewhat important). Similarly, 95% of adult Iowans said public funding to educate youth about the risks of gambling was important. Likewise, about 9 in 10 adult Iowans said it was important for public funding to educate adults (93%) or seniors (89%) about the risks of gambling. These opinions did not vary by gambling subgroups.

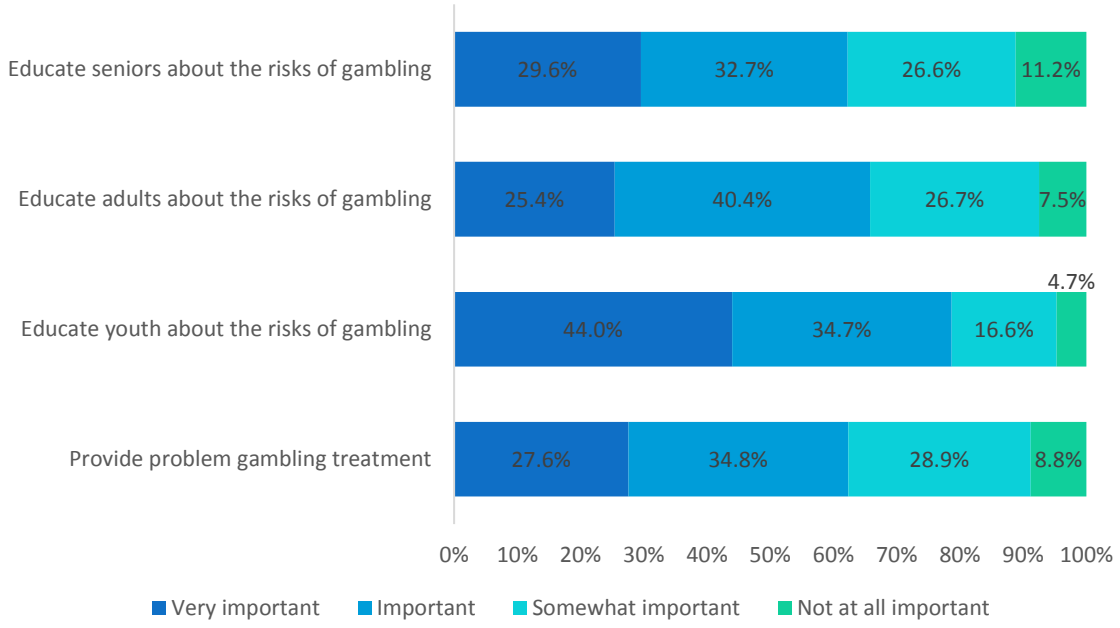

Figure F-3. Opinions about public funding for gambling-related prevention and treatment

STATE HELPLINE (1-800-BETS OFF) AND WEBSITE (WWW.1800BETSOFF.ORG)

The state-funded helpline has been in operation since 1987. This was the most recognizable prevention effort in the state with almost 9 in 10 adult Iowans (88%) indicating they are aware of the gambling helpline 1-800-BETS OFF. The 2018 level of awareness was similar to past studies. The source where they had last seen or heard about the helpline was TV (39%), radio (21%), billboards (17%) and casinos (13%) (see Figure E-4).

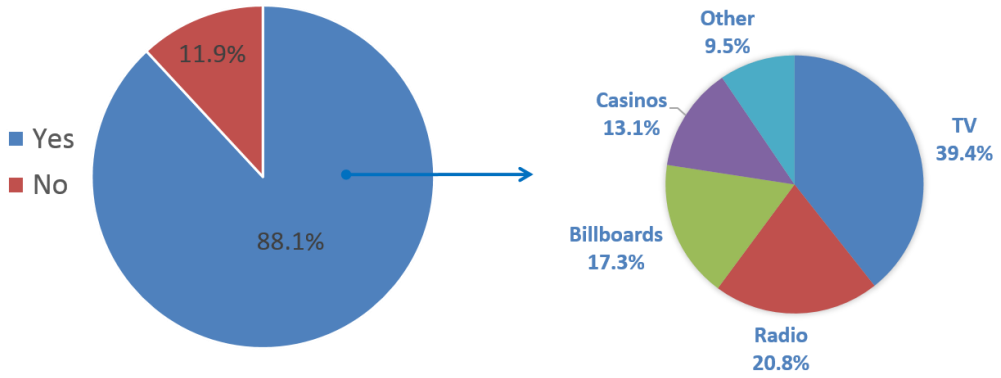

Figure F-4. Awareness of the telephone helpline 1-800-BETS OFF in the state

The 1-800-BETS OFF website was lesser known compared to the telephone helpline 1-800-BETS OFF. However, the awareness of the website has increased from 2015 (41%). About half of adult Iowans (54%) indicated they have seen or heard of the website *www.1800BETSOFF.org*. The source where they had last seen or heard about the website had similar distribution to the helpline (see Figure E-5).

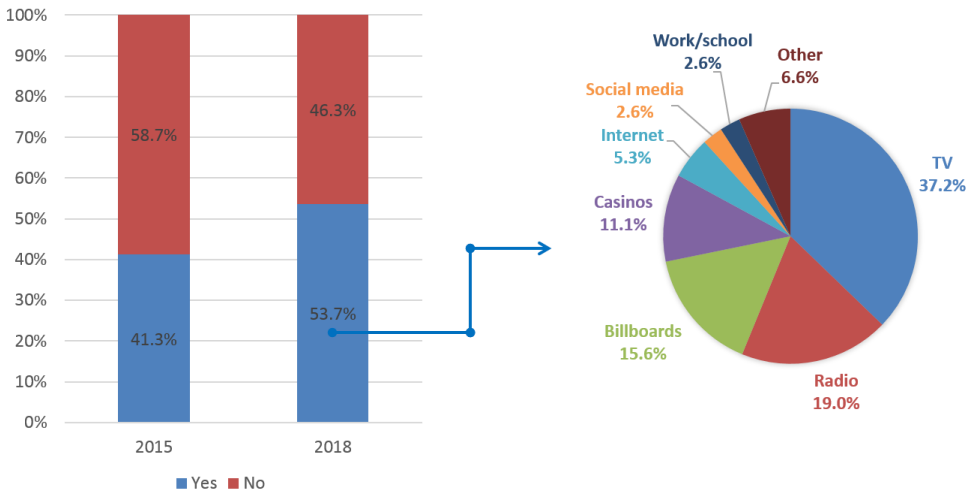

Figure F-5. Awareness of the website *www.1800BETSOFF.org* in the state

In general, the level of awareness of 1-800-BETS OFF and *www.1800BETSOFF.org* was significantly higher among those who gambled in the past 12 months. In addition, the source of information for the helpline and website differed by gambling subgroups. At-risk gamblers recalled casinos as one of the most frequent sources. Table E-2 shows data regarding these findings.

Table F-2. Adult Iowans who have seen or heard of the 1-800-BETS OFF helpline and website by gambling subgroups

	All adult Iowans			
	Gambled in the past 12 months			Total %
	No	Yes		
Have seen or heard of the	%	Not-at-risk %	At-risk %	
Helpline 1-800-BETS OFF *	80	90	95	88
Where last seen or heard*				
TV	48	39	29	39
Radio	19	23	16	21
Billboard	20	18	12	17
Casino	2	13	30	13
Website ***www.1800BETSOFF.org*** *	46	54	65	54
Where last seen or heard*				
TV	51	33	34	37
Radio	17	22	12	19
Billboard	16	17	11	16
Casino	2	12	22	11
Internet	7	5	5	5

* $p < .05$

The increase of awareness of the website *www.1800BETSOFF.org* was found across all three sub-groups. The highest increase was among those who gambled in the past 12 months and were also classified as at-risk gamblers, from 46% in 2015 to 65% in 2018 (see Figure F-6).

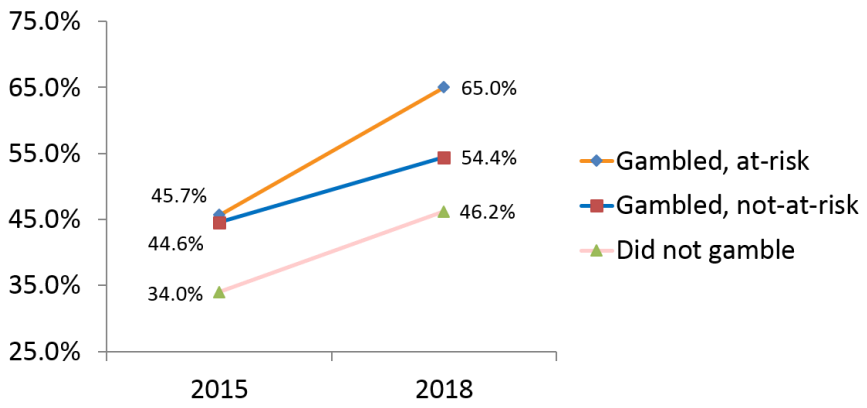

Figure F-6. Change in awareness of the website *www.1800BETSOFF.org* change by risk group

STATE INITIATIVE *YOUR LIFE IOWA*, AND WEBSITE (*YOURLIFEIOWA.ORG*)

Your Life Iowa is the state-funded integrated hub/system for free and confidential help and information for Iowans seeking support and help in the areas of alcohol, drugs, gambling, and suicide prevention. About 1 in 10 adult Iowans (8%) stated that they have seen or heard of "Your Life Iowa (YLI)." Among these adults who have ever seen or heard of YLI, the source where they had last seen or heard was TV (23%), internet (16%), work or school (14%), radio (11%), billboards (9%), casinos (7%), brochures (4%) and social media (4%) (see Figure F-7).

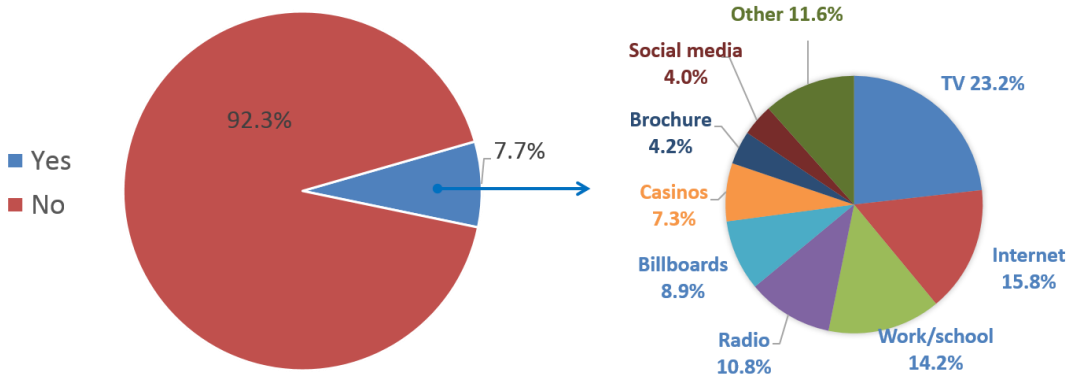

Figure F-7. Awareness of the Your Life Iowa (YLI)

The YLI website was lesser known compared to the YLI name. About 1 in 20 adult Iowans (6%) indicated they have seen or heard of the website *www.yourlifeiowa.org*. The source where they had last seen or heard about the website is shown in the Figure F-8.

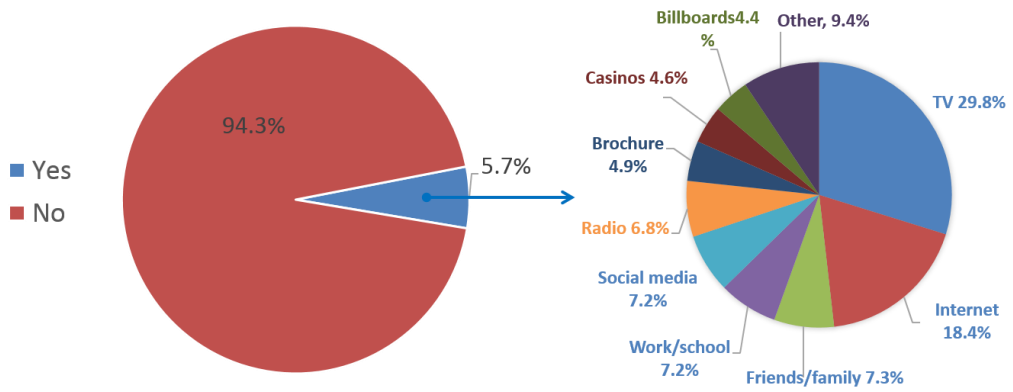

Figure F-8. Awareness of the Your Life Iowa (YLI) website

STATE GAMBLING TREATMENT

In contrast to the awareness of YLI, 4 in 10 adult Iowans (41%) were aware that publicly-funded gambling treatment services were available in Iowa. Specifically, 59% were not aware, 25% said they knew publicly-funded treatment was available but did not know who provided it, and 16% said they knew IDPH provided publicly-funded gambling treatment services (see Figure F-9). The awareness of treatment programs declined from 2013 to 2015, but increased since 2015.

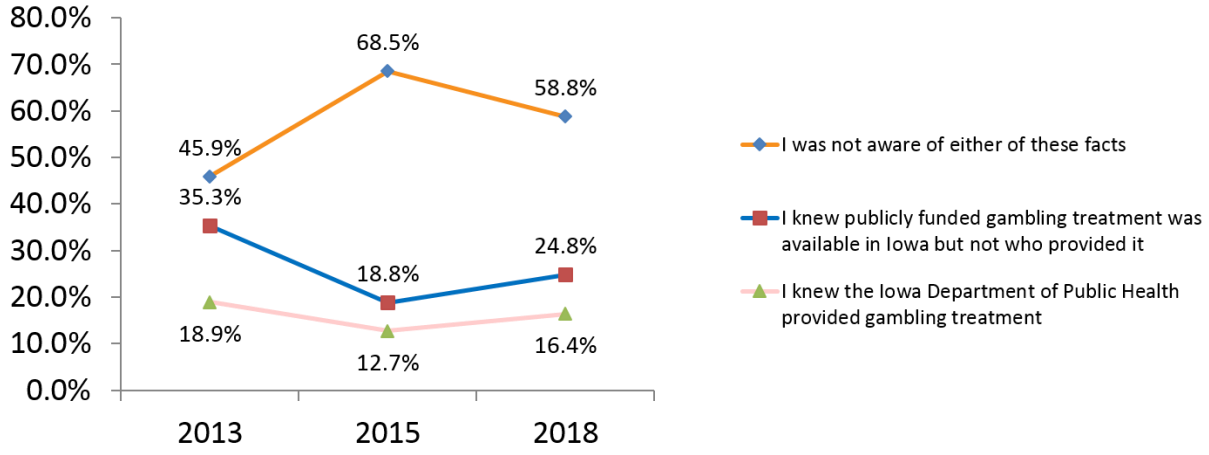

Figure F-9. Awareness of publicly funded gambling treatment by year

In general, the level of awareness of Iowa gambling treatment programs was significantly higher among those who gambled and were at-risk in the past 12 months. Table F-3 shows data regarding these findings.

Table F-3. Awareness of Iowa gambling treatment program by gambling subgroups

	All adult Iowans			
	Gambled in the past 12 months			Total %
	No	Yes		
Aware of publicly funded gambling treatment*	%	Not-at-risk %	At-risk %	
No, I was not aware of either of these facts	62	60	51	59
Yes, I knew publicly funded gambling treatment was available in Iowa but not who provided it	26	23	29	25
Yes, I knew the Iowa Department of Public Health provided gambling treatment	13	17	20	16

* $p < .05$

When examining the relationship between awareness of 1-800-BETS OFF, Your life Iowa (YLI) and awareness of publicly-funded gambling treatment, adult Iowans who have seen or heard of the gambling helpline or have heard or seen YLI were significantly more likely to know that there are publicly-funded gambling treatment services available in Iowa (see Table F-4 and Table F-5).

Table F-4. Awareness of 1-800 BETS OFF by awareness of treatment

	Seen or heard of 1-800BETSOFF (From 88% of adults)			Seen or heard of www.1800BETSOFF.org (From 54% of adults)		
Aware of publicly funded gambling treatment*	Yes %	No %	Total %	Yes %	No %	Total %
No, I was not aware of either of these facts	56	84	59	47	73	59
Yes, I knew publicly funded gambling treatment was available in Iowa but not who provided it	27	11	25	30	19	25
Yes, I knew the Iowa Department of Public Health provided gambling treatment	18	5	16	24	8	16

* $p < .05$

Table F-5. Awareness YLI by awareness of treatment

	Seen or heard of Your Life Iowa (From 8% of adults)			Seen or heard of www.yourlifeiowa.org (From 6% of adults)		
Aware of publicly funded gambling treatment*	Yes %	No %	Total %	Yes %	No %	Total %
No, I was not aware of either of these facts	27	62	59	30	61	59
Yes, I knew publicly funded gambling treatment was available in Iowa but not who provided it	35	24	25	31	24	25
Yes, I knew the Iowa Department of Public Health provided gambling treatment	38	15	16	40	15	17

* $p < .05$

IOWA'S VOLUNATARY SELF-EXCLUSION PROGRAMS

Iowa has two statewide Voluntary Self-Exclusion programs. One is operated through the Iowa Racing and Gaming Comssions, and one through the Iowa Lottery. Both offer a five year (as of July 1, 2017) and lifetime (irrevocable) option.

About 1 in 4 adult Iowans (24%) were aware of Iowa's voluntary self-exclusion programs (VSEP). Among those who were aware of the VSEP program, more than half (51%) were unable to specify the timeframe of the SE program and about 1 in 3 (35%) were aware of the lifetime VSEP program (see Figure 10).

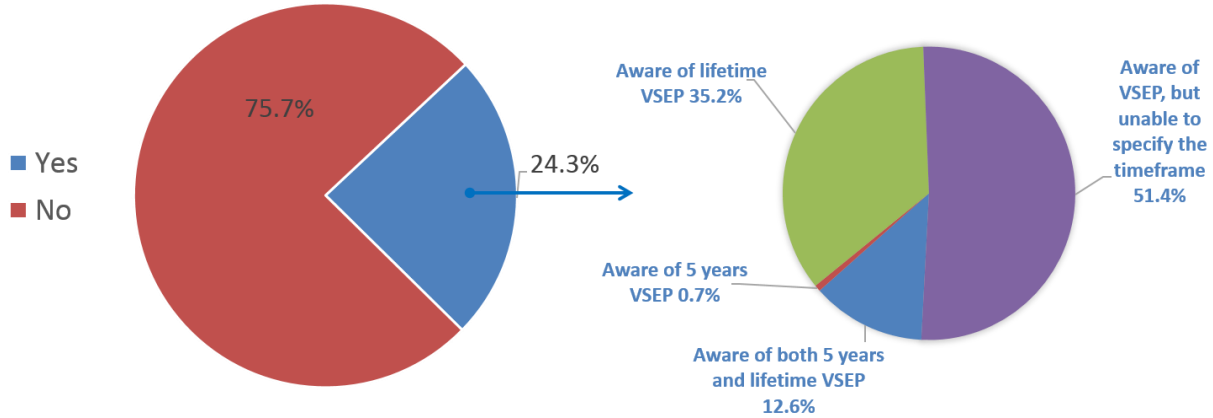

Figure F-10. Awareness of Iowa's voluntary self exclusion programs

The awaress of Iowa's VSEP program was significantly greater for those who gambled (see Table F-6).

Table F-6. Awareness of the Iowa's voluntary self-exclusion program by gambling subgroups

	All adult Iowans			
	Gambled in the past 12 months			Total %
	No	Yes		
Aware of publicly funded gambling treatment*	%	Not-at-risk %	At-risk %	
Yes, I was aware of statewide SE program	12	28	35	24
No, I was not aware of statewide SE program	88	73	65	76

* $p < .05$