

THE CONVERGENCE OF VIDEO GAMING & GAMBLING:

**COVID's Acceleration
of Public Health Need**

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ocpg
OREGON COUNCIL on PROBLEM GAMBLING

THANKS FOR BEING HERE!

My background:

- 22 years public health; registered dietitian turned prevention specialist.
- 18 years in addictions prevention, concentrating in problem gambling, in local govt, research, higher ed, nonprofit sectors.



WHY WE SHOULD ALL CARE ABOUT PROBLEM GAMBLING.

- **2.6% of Oregonian adults have a gambling problem.¹**
- **Youth have 2-4 times higher rates of gambling problems.²**
- **Public health issue with little attention!**



OBJECTIVES IN A NUTSHELL

1

**Trends &
research**

2

**Signs &
commonalities.**

3

**Addressing
the issues.**



1

TRENDS, DEFINITIONS & IMPACTS

COVID-19 GAMING TRENDS

- 30% growth in gamers playing > 5hrs/week
- 39% growth in money spend
- Permanent 21% increase in monthly spend by gamers
- 11 percent increase in time spent gaming

DEFINING GAMBLING LEGALLY.



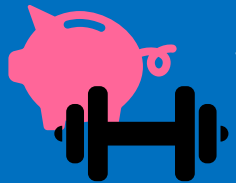
1. PRIZE:

Anything of value the sponsor awards in a promotion.



2. CHANCE:

Outcome is beyond the participant's direct control.



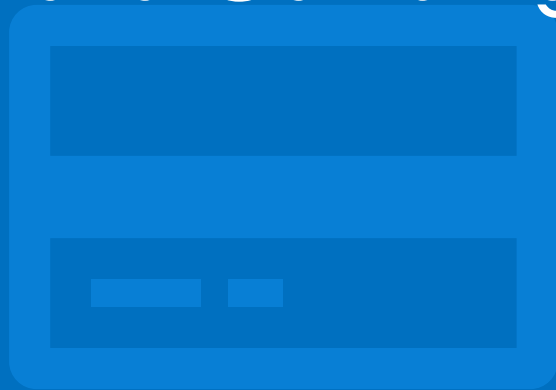
3. CONSIDERATION:

Requires money or significant effort.



CONVERGENCE.

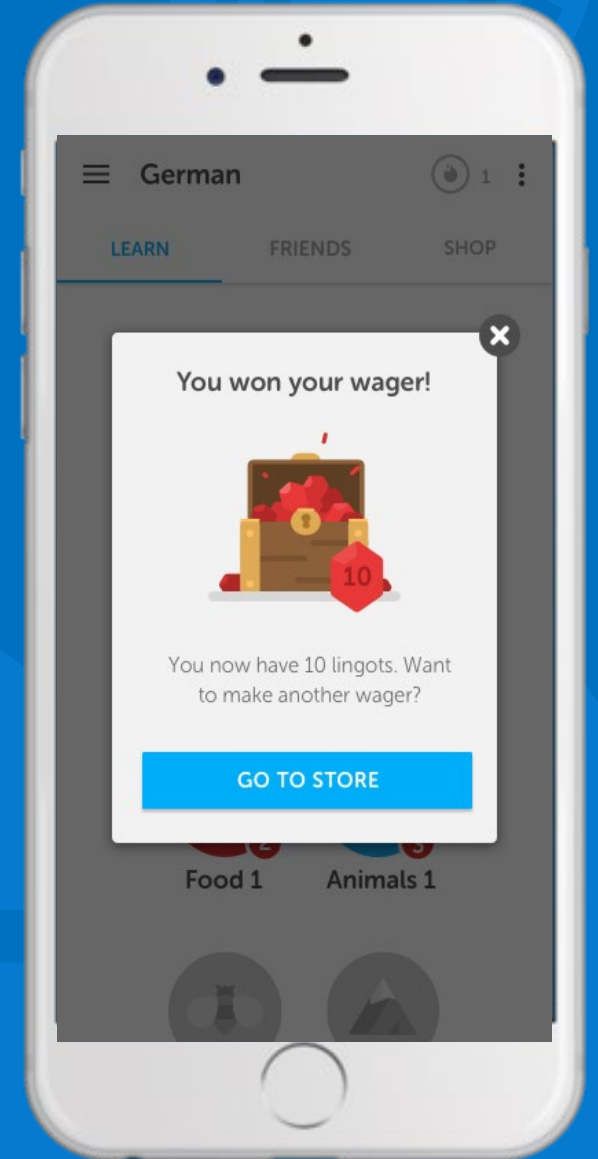
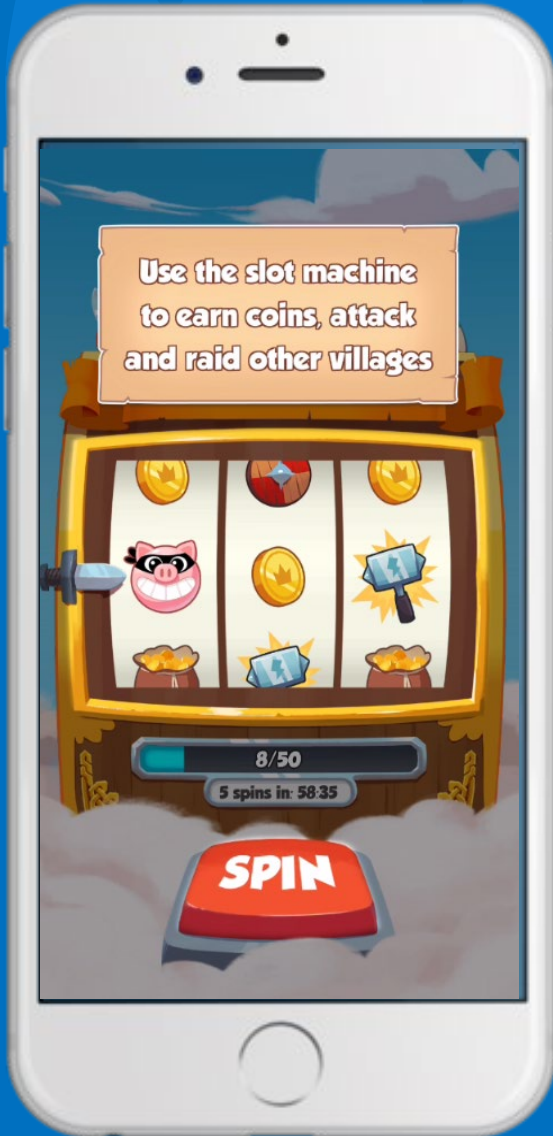
Of Gaming and Gambling...in a nutshell



NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS.

GAMES WITH SLOT-BASED MECHANICS ARE EVERYWHERE.

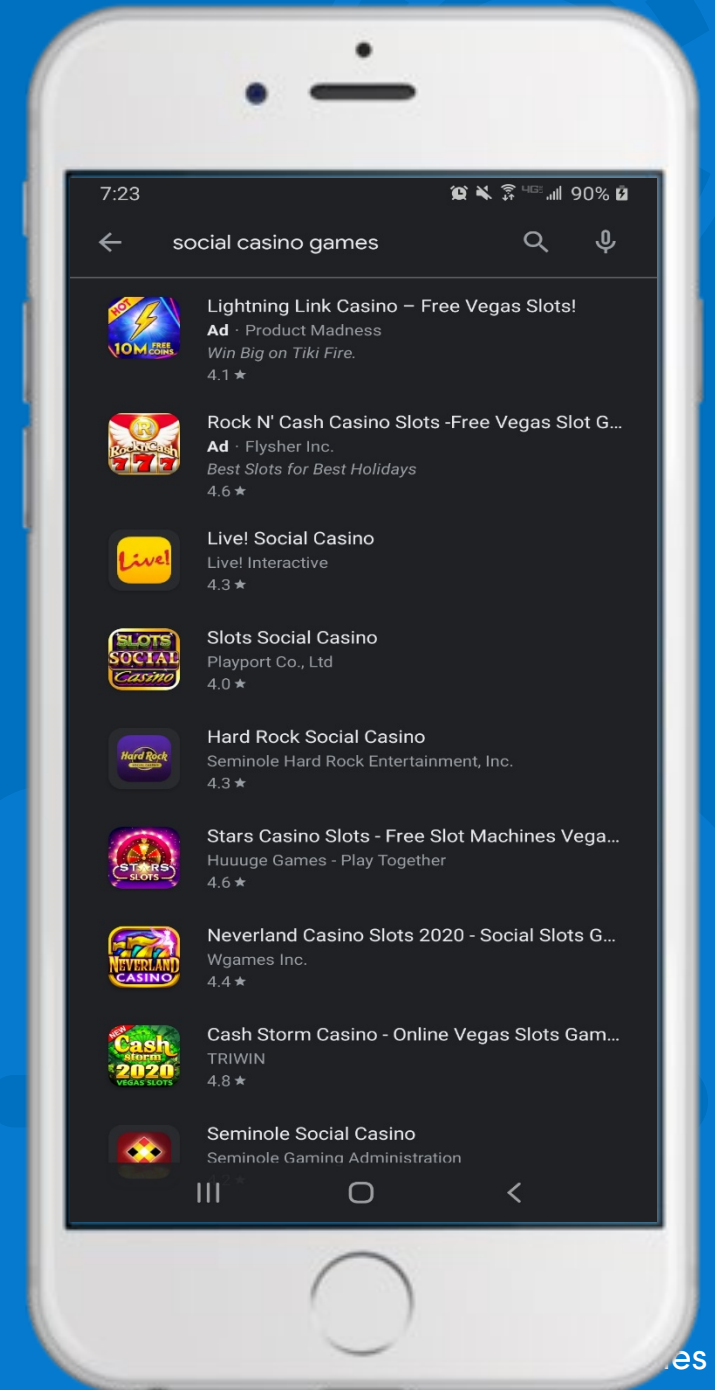
(i.e., games like this are not considered “social casino” games)



AVAILABLE TO ANYONE.

97% of social casino games are accessible to under 12

Source: Zendle & Scholten (2020, 3/23/20, in press)
Screenshot: Hynes / Google Play Store



RESEARCH: SIMULATED GAMBLING GAMES.

Adolescents playing simulated gambling games more likely to later move to real gambling...

...and are also more likely to have later gambling problems

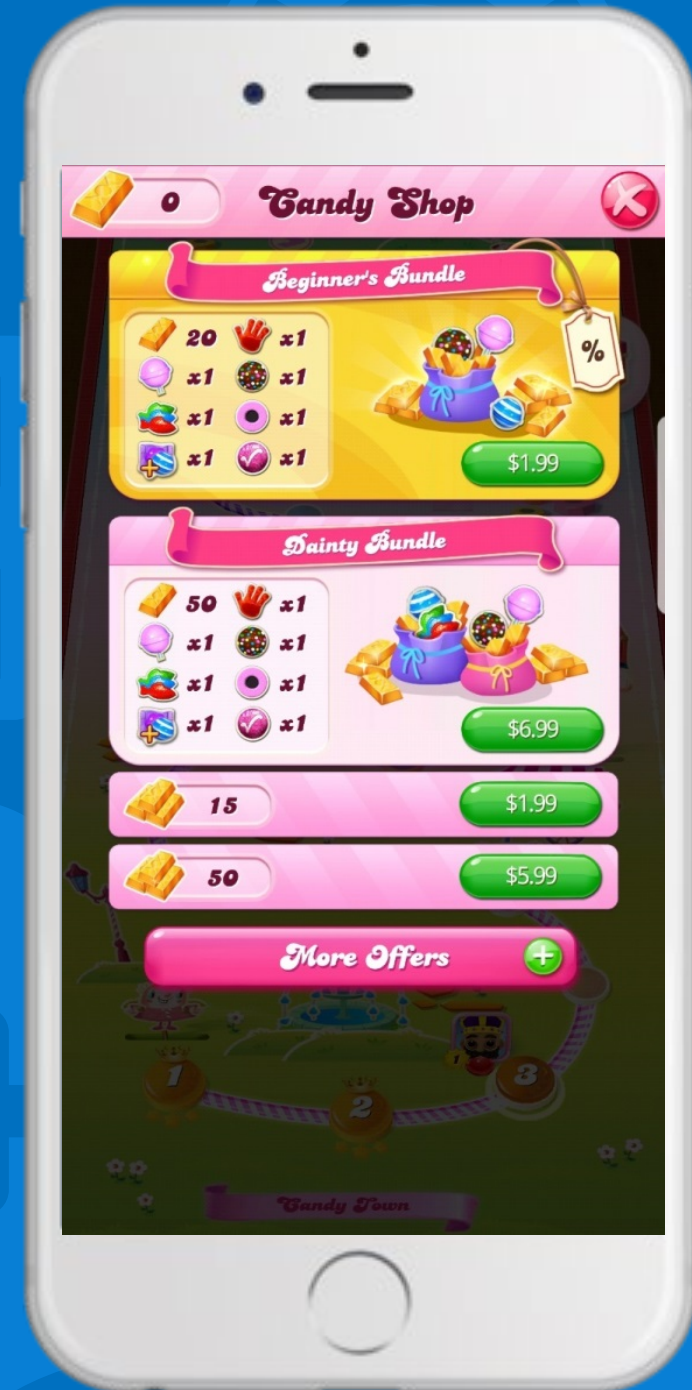


“MICROTRANSACTIONS”

REAL \$, VIRTUAL PRIZES

(BTW, this game has earned \$473M
in the U.S. from January to
September 2020.)

Data source: sensortower.com



COVID: CATALYZING ESPORTS BETTING

TRADITIONAL SPORTS



etc...

ESPORTS



etc...

COVID: CATALYZING ESPORTS BETTING

Scoreboard Approved Market Addition: Simulated Motor Racing

NASCAR and INDYCAR iRacing

With actual motor racing on hold, industry has turned to virtual racing events

What makes it different?

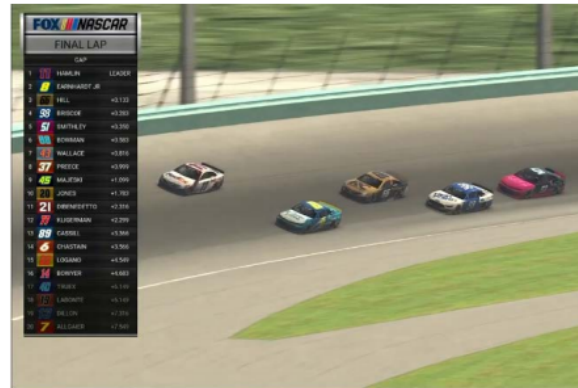
- Live streamed
- Professional drivers
- Racing industry has used iRacing for years to get ready for actual races

Cross-Play Appeal

- Digital simulation provides similar concept to Virtual Sports but with outcome based on competitive, live event (not RNG)
- Test the waters with introduction into an “e-space” market similar to eSports

Scoreboard Markets

- NASCAR Pro Invitational iRacing Series
 - ✓ Follows NASCAR Integrity Policies
 - ✓ Approved by New Jersey DGE and Nevada Gaming Control Board
- INDYCAR iRacing Challenge
 - ✓ Endorsed by NTT INDYCAR Series including integrity policies



Denny Hamlin holds off Dale Jr. for Homestead-Miami win in iRacing Pro opener

With Real-Life Games Halted, Betting World Puts Action on E-Sports

Computer-vs.-computer games of FIFA livestream to gamblers on Twitch. Fantasy contests carry League of Legends lineups. In the coronavirus age, video games have grown into a darling for casinos.

By Seth Schiesel
June 8, 2020

The New York Times

“LOOT BOXES” – Random Prizes

- **>93%** of the Android & iPhone games that featured loot boxes were deemed **suitable for children aged 12+**¹
- Paying for loot boxes linked to problem gambling²
- Rare loot box opening triggers arousal & rewards responses, greater urge to open more³





2

CONNECTIONS & RISKS

KEY COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS & WHY ISSUES WILL ONLY RISE



Isolation



Boredom



Less opportunity for competition



Unemployment



Racism & health inequities



Youth specific:

- parents occupied,
- less schoolwork, activities

TRAUMA



DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA COMPARED (DSM-5)

Gambling Disorder =
4 or more of the following:

Withdrawal
Tolerance

Unable to cut back/quit
Preoccupation

Gambling when distressed
Chasing losses

Lying/concealing
Jeopardizing relationships, jobs, educ.

Proposed
Internet Gaming Disorder criteria:

Withdrawal
Tolerance

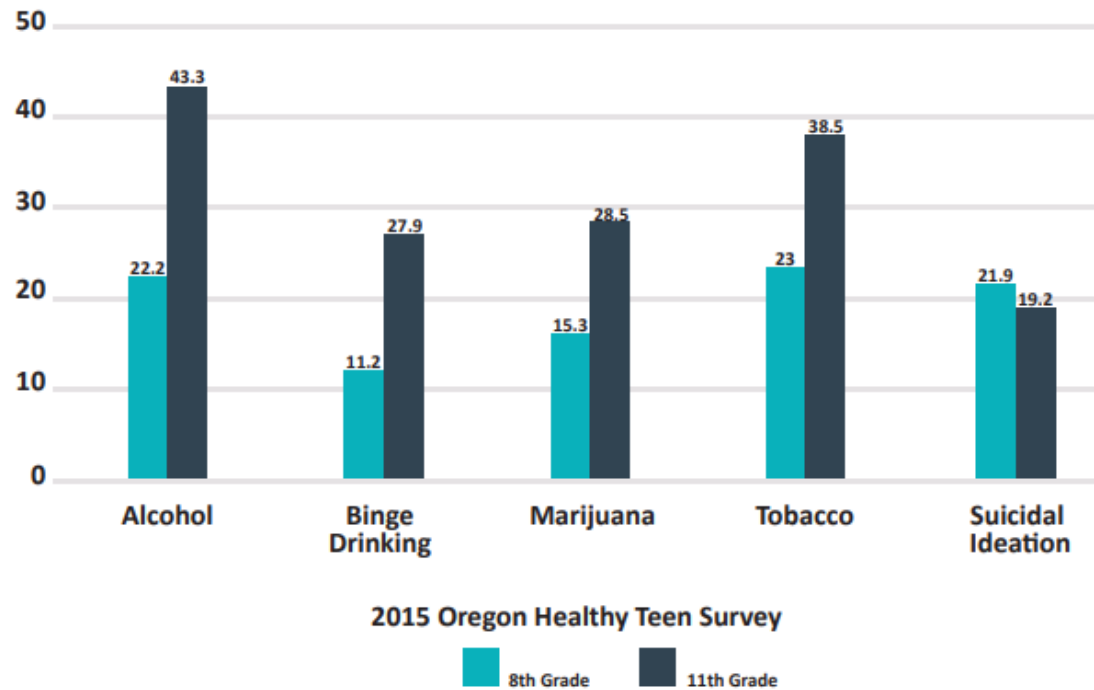
Unable to cut back/quit
Preoccupation

Gaming to relieve negative moods
Continuing to game despite problems

Deceiving family members or others
Jeopardizing relationships, jobs, educ.

YOUTH RISKY BEHAVIORS DATA

Youth who report gambling also report engaging in these risk behaviors



Data Source: Oregon Health Authority;

report at http://oregoncpg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/OCPG_Handbook_3-12-18.pdf

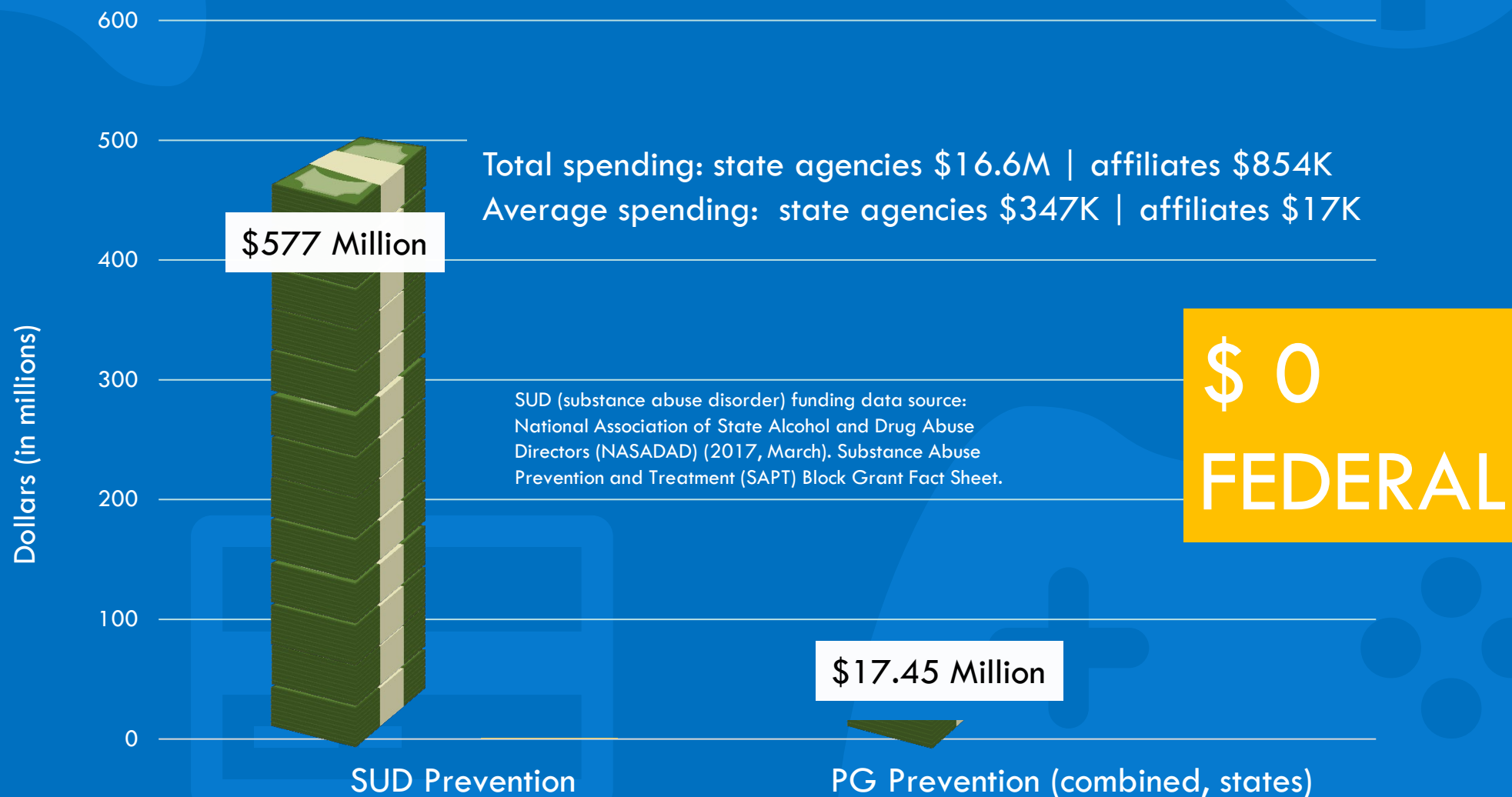
There is no current collection of youth gambling data on WA State Healthy Youth Survey



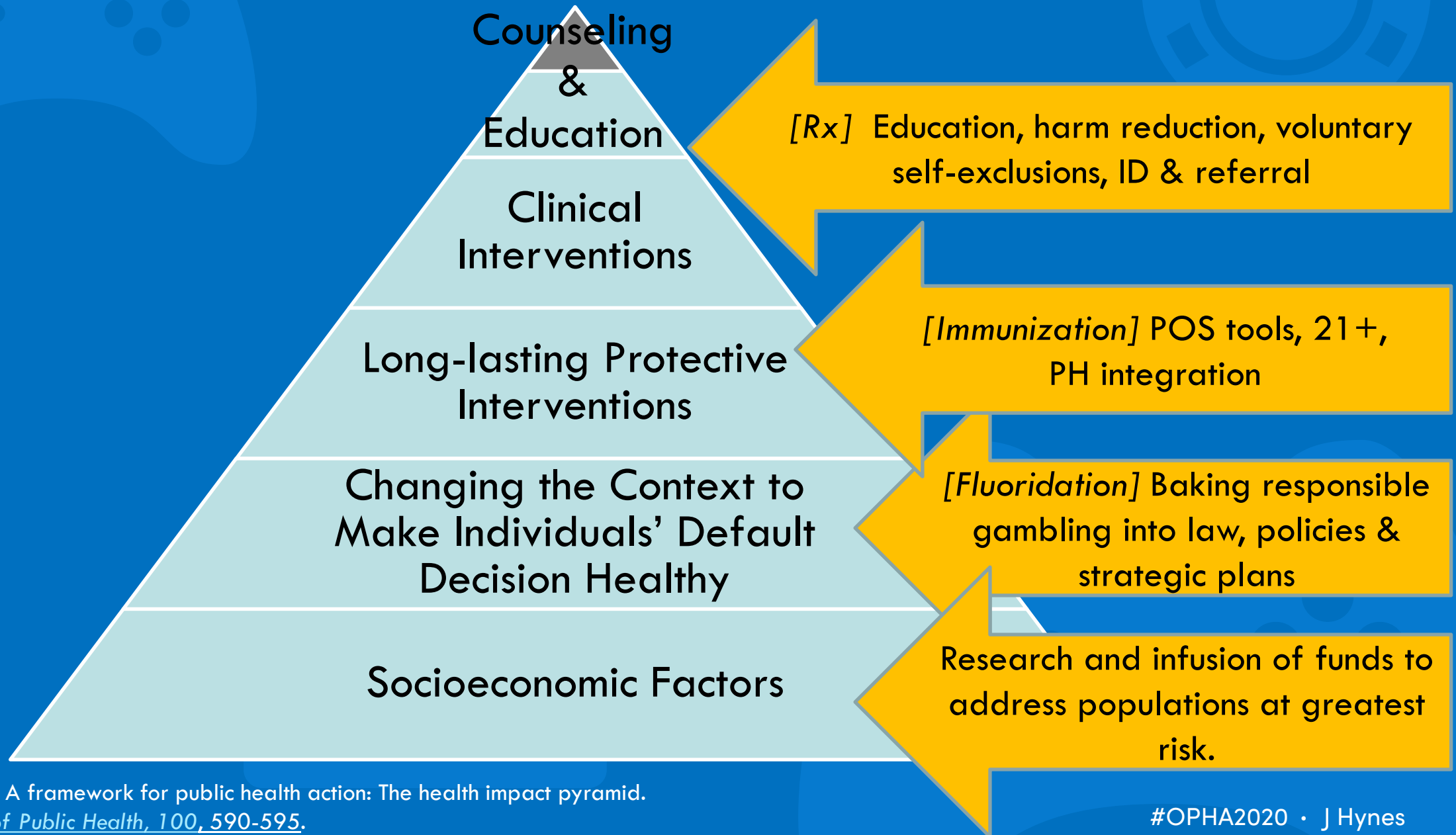
3

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

Spending on Problem Gambling Prevention



POLICY & PROGRAM EXAMPLES



MY 2 “ASKS”:

Include gambling in conversations & policies with other SUD prevention and ALL PH & MH efforts.

Connect with OHA Problem Gambling Services providers, who are all across the state!

www.oregonpgs.org/about/contact-us/



**“We are hardwired to connect with others;
it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.”
– Brené Brown**

THANK YOU! CONTACT:

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Note: Additional references are listed throughout the slide deck.

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