



Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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March 17, 2026

The Honorable Lindsay Gilchrist
Chair
House Committee on Health & Human Services
Colorado General Assembly
200 E Colfax Avenue, Room 357
Denver, CO 80203

Re: COSAM's Support for HB26-1271, Alcohol Impact & Recovery Enterprises

Dear Chair Gilchrist,

On behalf of the Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Colorado specializing in the treatment of addiction, we write today in support of HB26-1271.

This legislation would allow the creation of enterprises to address the impacts of alcohol use to protect the health and welfare of Coloradans. Alcohol kills 2,200 Coloradans every year. Alcohol can cause cirrhosis, impair driving and is associated with at least seven types of cancer. Protecting Coloradans from the dangerous of alcohol is a public health imperative.

Raising alcohol prices is a proven public health method to reduce excessive alcohol use, underage drinking, and alcohol-related mortality. Additionally, creating new, dedicated funding streams for early intervention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction is essential with a budget shortfall.

In sum, HB26-1271 is sensible legislation that would improve health outcomes. **We are proud to support HB26-1271 and commend the sponsors for tackling this issue. Additionally, we urge members of the committee to vote to advance this legislation.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you

for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stewart, MD, MPHS, MRO, FASAM
Past-President, Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM)
stephaniebrennan@gmail.com

CC: The Honorable Sheila Lieder
The Honorable Carlos Barron
The Honorable Mary Bradfield
The Honorable Brandi Bradley
The Honorable Regina English
The Honorable Lisa Feret
The Honorable Eliza Hamrick
The Honorable Dusty Johnson
The Honorable Karen McCormick
The Honorable Gretchen Rydin
The Honorable Katie Stewart
The Honorable Dan Woog



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March 17, 2026

The Honorable Cathy Kipp
Chair
Senate Committee on Finance
Colorado General Assembly
200 E Colfax Avenue, Room 357
Denver, CO 80203

Re: COSAM's Support for SB26-131, Sports Betting Protections

Dear Chair Kipp,

On behalf of the Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Colorado specializing in the treatment of addiction, we write today in support of SB26-131.

This legislation would regulate online sports betting to protect the health and welfare of Coloradans. Specifically, SB26-131 seeks to restrict the most predatory practices of online sports betting. For example, the bill would prohibit vendors from accepting more than 5 payments in 24-hour period and sending direct push notifications or texts to account holders. It would also ban harmful proposition bets in our state. These baseline regulations would be an improvement over the current regulations.

Online sports betting is becoming more entrenched with each passing year. In 2024 alone, over \$6 billion were spent on betting wagers in Colorado.¹ This upward trend comes as problematic gambling and gambling addiction is on the rise nationwide.^{2 3} Gambling addiction is a recognized psychiatric disorder under the American Psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM).⁴ The increase in problematic gaming and gambling addiction is especially pronounced among younger men who are major consumers for online sports books.⁵ Many online sports books even target their advertising and promotions at young men specifically.⁶

Problematic gambling and gambling addiction are associated with several negative societal impacts. For example, research has shown that legalized sports betting is linked

to increased credit card debt, reduced available credit, and higher overdraft frequency among vulnerable households.⁷ Further, greater availability of online gaming options is predictably associated with a sharp increase in problematic gambling behavior.⁸ Research even shows that more problematic gambling is linked to higher rates of intimate partner violence.⁹ Our charge is clear: we must act quickly to stem the negative impacts of gambling addiction in our state as the sports betting industry grows.

In sum, SB26-131 is sensible, bipartisan legislation that would reign in some of the most abusive aspects of online sports betting. **We are proud to support SB26-131 and commend the sponsors for tackling this issue. Additionally, we urge members of the committee to vote to advance this legislation.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stewart, MD, MPHS, MRO, FASAM
Past-President, Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM)
stephanie.stewart@ucdenver.edu

CC: The Honorable Janice Marchman
The Honorable Scott Bright
The Honorable Lisa Frizell
The Honorable Julie Gonzales
The Honorable Chris Kolker
The Honorable Kyle Mullica
The Honorable Cleave Simpson
The Honorable Marc Snyder

¹ Patla, R. (2025). A look at Sport Betting in Colorado: Economic impact, benefits, and addictive side effects. <https://www.kjct8.com>. <https://www.kjct8.com/2025/09/04/look-sport-betting-colorado-economic-impact-benefits-addictive-side-effects/>

² Rose-Berman, I. (2025). The rise of sports betting is a growing public health crisis. STAT. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/11/11/sports-betting-apps-public-health-crisis/>

³ Schmitt, K. (2025). As Online Betting Surges, So Does Risk of Addiction | Hopkins Bloomberg Public Health Magazine. <https://magazine.publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/online-betting-surges-so-does-risk-addiction>

⁴ American Psychiatric Association. (2024). What is Gambling Disorder? <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gambling-disorder/what-is-gambling-disorder>

⁵ Sohn, E. (2023). How gambling affects the brain and who is most vulnerable to addiction. Monitor on Psychology. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/07/how-gambling-affects-the-brain>

⁶ Rose-Berman, I. (2025). The rise of sports betting is a growing public health crisis. STAT. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/11/11/sports-betting-apps-public-health-crisis/>

⁷ Baker, S., Balthrop, J., Johnson, M., Kotter, J., & Pisciotta, K. (2024). Gambling Away Stability: Sports Betting's Impact on Vulnerable Households. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w33108>

⁸ Abbott, M. W. (2020). The changing epidemiology of gambling disorder and gambling-related harm: Public health implications. *Public health*. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32402593/>

⁹ Dowling, N., Suomi, A., Jackson, A., Lavis, T., Patford, J., Cockman, S., Thomas, S., Bellringer, M., Koziol, Mclain, J., Battersby, M., Harvey, P., & Abbott, M. (2014). Problem Gambling and Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Trauma Violence Abuse*, 17(1), 43–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014561269>