

# Commissioners Award Gambling Addiction Funds to Newspaper Instead of Toward Gambling Addiction Treatment and Education

By Assistant Publisher/Editor  
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With the Weston County Commissioners really wringing their hands over how to spend the County's approximately \$7,000 gambling addiction funds they accepted from the Wyoming Department of Health, the County's Prevention Specialist and head of the 21 Wellness Prevention Coalition comprised of community members throughout the county, Kristi Lipp, once again came before the Commissioners to explain why the Commissioners should allocate those funds to 21 Wellness. These funds have been in a tug-of-war between 21 Wellness and the *News Letter Journal*, who submitted a proposal to use all the gambling addiction funds on a series of advertisements created by their media partners in Buffalo. Lipp's proposal with 21 Wellness, however, would use the funds across both the *Weston County Gazette* and the *News Letter Journal* as well as the radio station, with the rest of the funds going toward community educational events, treatment for those addicted to gambling addiction, and training for staff to better facilitate that treatment.

In prior meetings and

discussions, the *News Letter Journal* stated there was an impending deadline to spend these gambling addiction funds, but this such a deadline has since been disproved by the Wyoming Department of Health.

Commissioner Ed Wagoner asked Lipp if she thought her proposal would give Weston County the most bang for its buck.

Lipp agreed with that, also explaining, "I really feel like treatment needs included, after reading the statute [Wyoming Statute 9-24-104]." She added, "Treatment is a huge issue for Weston County because of lack of access."

Lipp explained that the funds could be used for vouchers for treatment, which could be given to those suffering from gambling addiction who don't necessarily have the funds for treatment. "The funds should be for prevention and treatment, in my opinion," Lipp recommended.

Commissioner Wagoner asked if Weston County had an issue with gambling addiction, and Lipp answered she'd spoken with law enforcement and prevention folks in Weston County. "It's being seen in Weston County. It's definitely

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