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Horizon promotes importance of responsible gifting this holiday season

Lynchburg, VA – According to the National Center for Responsible Gaming, adolescents experience serious problems related to gambling at a higher rate than adults. Studies show that children and teenagers are more likely to develop a gambling addiction later in life if they gamble at a young age. To help prevent problem gambling behaviors before they start, Horizon Behavioral Health is sharing messages with the community, reminding adults of the importance of ‘responsible gifting’ especially during the holiday season. The goal of this messaging campaign is to remind the community that lottery tickets are not toys, and while lottery tickets may seem like a good gift idea for loved ones, it’s a crime to give lottery tickets as gifts to children under the age of 18.

Horizon encourages adults to “Spread cheer by looking for creative alternatives like giving books or puzzles to foster creativity and knowledge; board games that encourage family bonding; or gift cards to places like movie theaters, amusement parks, or local restaurants where they can enjoy a safe outing with you. There are plenty of ways you can show your love while keeping everyone safe and happy!”

Adults and parents can take proactive steps to prevent young people in their life from developing a gambling problem, such as

- not allowing children to “pick out” a ticket that you then buy or letting them select numbers for a draw game,
- not encouraging a child to help you scratch a ticket,
- talking to children about the gambling and how odds work, and the risk of addiction,
- knowing the warning signs of gambling addiction, and
- teaching your children about budgeting and money management.

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Horizon Behavioral Health has been the primary public behavioral healthcare provider in the Region 2000 area for more than 53 years. In the last year, Horizon provided services to approximately 12,000 adults and children, addressing problems with mental health, substance use and intellectual disabilities. Horizon is accredited by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to a behavioral health organization.