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Horizon promotes importance of responsible gifting this holiday season

Lynchburg, VA – The latest research shows that children and adolescents who are exposed to gambling at a young age are four times more likely to develop a gambling addiction later in life (National Institutes of Health, 2019). Due to the risks associated with gambling, a ban on electronic skill games in Virginia went back into effect in October of this year. In line with the latest research, Horizon is committed to preventing problem gambling in youth and adults in Central Virginia by bringing awareness and connecting our community with helpful resources and information regarding problem gambling and gaming, reminding adults of the importance of ‘responsible gifting’ especially during the holiday season.

Januwaa Davis, Horizon Prevention Program Manager, shares “Our goal is to remind our community that lottery tickets are not toys, and exposure to gambling at a young age has real effects on the developing brain of children.” She adds, “For the majority of adults, gambling can be an entertaining experience, but there are risks involved. It is critical to know the risks and have a plan before you begin gambling.”

Horizon encourages adults to spread cheer through gift giving this holiday season by finding creative alternatives to lottery tickets, such as 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.

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.

For more information, please visit www.horizonbh.org/education/problem-gambling/