

## **New study ordered on B.C.'s problem gamblers**

CBC

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VANCOUVER – The B.C. government is commissioning a new study on problem gambling, a week after CBC News reported that casino employees often encounter distressed gamblers, and some who are aggressive or threatening.

A proposal call has been issued for a contractor to survey the prevalence of problem gambling, to compare it to other jurisdictions and recommend ways to address the problems.

The last survey of its kind - carried out several years ago - showed 4.6 per cent of the B.C. population could be considered problem gamblers.

Since then, legal gambling opportunities in the province have grown, with more places to play slot machines and more lotteries available online. Solicitor General John Les said the timing of the new survey is not connected to last week's news reports.

"I think, frankly, if we hadn't done it in four years, I would say it's high time. You know, we need to monitor the trends. We need to be sure that we're on top of the latest issues, and you can't be responding appropriately if you're kind of shooting in the dark."

In this proposal call, the government defines problem gambling as behaviour that may compromise, disrupt, or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.

In the casino employee survey that CBC News reported on last week, one worker even said some gamblers wear diapers so they don't have to take breaks from playing.