

# Gambling problem has early warning signs

*An estimated 24,700 people in Halton, Hamilton have moderate to severe gambling problem, according to RGC*

Have you ever suspected your gambling might be getting out of hand? If so, you're not alone. According to the Responsible Gambling Council (RGC), an estimated 24,700 people in Halton and Hamilton have a moderate to severe gambling problem.

With this being Problem Gambling Prevention Week in Milton, the RGC wants to spread awareness of six early warning signs.

"A gambling problem isn't something that suddenly appears," said Jon Kelly, CEO of RGC.

"There are usually early warning signs that can tip you off to a potential problem. We want people to check their blind spots now — to avoid a problem in the future."

Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m., the organization will be at Slots at Mohawk to chat with members of the public and see if they can spot the warning signs.

It will also be at Mohawk Racetrack Friday from 6 to 9 p.m.

New findings by the RGC shows Ontarians are very knowledgeable at recognizing risky gambling behaviour in others, but fall short when it comes to identifying their own potentially risky behaviours.

These "blind spots" could — if left unchecked and ignored — lead to a potential problem.

According to an Ipsos-Reid survey, the three most common blind spots reported were: spending much more money on gambling than intended, losing track of time while gambling and trying to win back gambling losses.

Gamblers were less likely to identify these signals as risky behaviours than the overall population.

Experiencing any of the blind spots at one time doesn't necessarily mean you have a problem, Kelly said.

"The important thing is, if you see a number of these blind spots in your life, or in the life of someone you care about, give yourself a reality check," he said.

Other early warning signs include gambling with money needed for essentials like groceries or rent, having few interests outside of gambling, and hiding your gambling from family or friends.

Milton residents can access local help at ADAPT (The Halton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Assessment, Prevention and Treatment Program) by calling (905) 693-4250 or by calling the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-230-3505.

For more information, visit [www.checkyourblindspot.ca](http://www.checkyourblindspot.ca).

# Do you know signs of heart attack, stroke?

Knowing the signs of a heart attack or stroke could mean the difference between life and death. But many people don't.

Halton Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is using this week, National EMS Week, to urge residents to learn what a heart attack and stroke look like and to call 911 immediately when a person experiences any of the symptoms.

Warning signs of a heart attack include chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating and pale, cool or clammy skin.

Signs of a stroke often include slurred speech, blurred vision, loss of strength — particularly on one side of the body — and a sudden, severe headache.

"Calling 911 when the first symptoms of heart attack or stroke arise allows paramedics to initiate treatment options that may only be available within two hours of symptom onset," said Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton's Medical Officer of Health.

EMS week started Sunday and continues until Saturday.

Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr said local EMS workers respond to more than 50,000 calls each year, dispatching both primary and advanced care paramedics.

"We always hope we never have to use their services, but it is comforting to know that we are in good hands when needed," he said.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION  
**MAKE IT A TRIPLE:** The 22nd annual M&M Meat Shops charity barbecue, in support of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada, was held May 8. Here, local franchise owner Scott Schlotzhauer (right) readies a bun for retired fire chief Harold Penson to load a triple burger onto at the Main and Ontario streets location.

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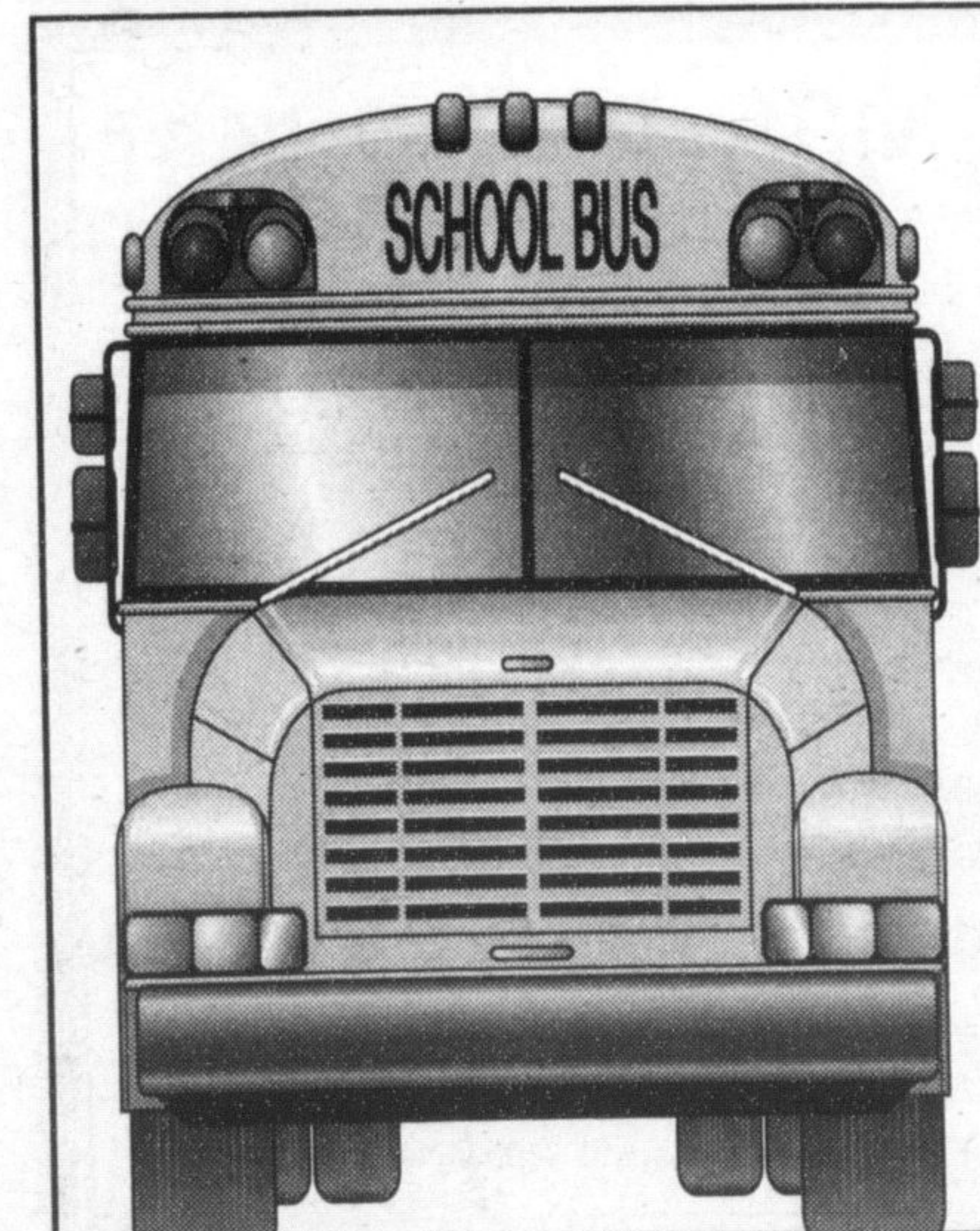
May 29, 30, June 5, 6 Sat & Sun (2 Weekends) 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

June 7th, Monday & Wednesday (8 Evenings) 6:00 pm - 8:45 pm

June 26, 27, 28, 29 Sat., Sun., Mon., Tues., (4 Days) 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

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