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## **The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Adopts First-of-its-Kind Pilot Program to Offer Limit-Setting Tool to Casino Patrons**

*Initiative developed to enhance state's responsible gaming strategy*

As part of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's ongoing dedication to promote responsible gaming, commissioners recently voted unanimously (5-0) to test a Play Management System that will provide patrons with a voluntary limit-setting option. This budgeting tool is designed to allow customers the ability to monitor the amount they spend on electronic gaming machines, and to support their decision to continue or stop play. A first-of-its-kind initiative, this pilot program is part of a comprehensive and innovative approach to responsible gaming strategies, with a particular focus on problem gambling prevention and customer protection practices.

On September 25, 2014, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) adopted the [Responsible Gaming Framework](#), an outline designed to create a sustainable, measurable, socially responsible, and accountable approach to gaming. The framework, developed by MGC staff, is designed to guide the Commission's promulgation of regulations and commit MGC licensees to implement responsible gaming strategies. A key element of the framework is the strategy to support informed player choice, which sets out measures to support players' efforts to responsibly manage their gambling. It also describes specific tools to implement this strategy, including the ability for players to set limits on the money and time spent gambling (also referred to as play management tool and limit-setting).

"Massachusetts has broken new ground in many aspects of its expanded gaming law and the implementation of a limit-setting option is yet another example of that innovation," said MGC Chairman Steve Crosby. "I am confident that the implementation of our thoughtful statute combined with the careful exploration of pioneering practices such as this, will bring maximum benefit to the Commonwealth by assuring the strongest operators, the most robust economic development impact, the broadest array of non-gaming amenities, and the greatest degree of operational integrity."

The pilot program will first be tested by MGC licensee, Penn National. Penn National was awarded the state's single slots license and is expected to open Plainridge Park Casino in Plainville, MA in June 2015.

To promote the greatest benefit in reducing gambling related harm, the play management system and its limit-setting options will include the following features:

- 1) Play management tools allow patrons to pre-commit to a dollar amount spent per gaming session/day, and/or per month.
- 2) Play management tools are mandatory for licensees to offer on all electronic gaming machines.
- 3) Play management tools are voluntary for players to use.
- 4) The use of play management tools are incentivized at enrollment.



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- 5) Play management tools provide pop-up reminders on the screen of the electronic gaming machine at 60%, 90% and 100% of the limit.
- 6) Play management tools are integrated as a feature of the licensees' player reward or loyalty card system.
- 7) Licensees work closely with the MGC to develop marketing strategies to maximize uptake and use of play management tools.
- 8) Patrons can **enroll** their limits from multiple locations including:
  - a. All electronic gaming machines;
  - b. On-site Responsible Gaming Information Centers;
  - c. Self-service kiosks, and;
  - d. Player reward portal of the company website.
- 9) Patrons can **change** their limits from multiple locations including:
  - a. Customer service stations;
  - b. On-site Responsible Gaming Information Centers;
  - c. Self-service kiosks, and;
  - d. Player reward portal of the company website.
- 10) The system will provide a periodic invitation to patrons who decline to use the play management tool to set limits.
- 11) Limit-setting tools are coordinated with other tools of the play management system such as:
  - a. Cost of play messaging;
  - b. Monthly statements of gaming activity as required in Chapter 23K Section 29;
  - c. Brief problem gambling self-assessment tool;
  - d. Tips on responsible gaming;
  - e. Educational quizzes, and;
  - f. Information on how to access assistance.
- 12) Play management tools are flexibly designed to allow changes to limits.
- 13) When a player reaches the pre-set limits, the following steps reinforce the limit:
  - a. The session is interrupted and the player informed that he or she has reached limits. The player must actively acknowledge a message to continue gambling.
  - b. If the player continues to play in excess of the limit, the session is interrupted with an informative message at limit intervals of 150%, 200%, 250%, etc. The player would have to actively acknowledge the message to continue gambling.
- 14) Play management tools are operator-based for each licensee.
- 15) The play management tools are designed on a platform that allows for evaluation and continuous improvement.

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