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MEDIA ADVISORY

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Supports Responsible Gaming Education Week from August 1st – August 5th

*Commission partners with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling and Plainridge Park Casino
to raise awareness through a series of initiatives*

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) is pleased to announce its support and recognition of Responsible Gaming Education Week (RGEW) from **August 1st- August 5th, 2016**. RGEW was developed by the American Gaming Association in 1998 to increase awareness of problem gambling among gaming industry employees and customers, and to promote responsible gaming nationwide.

In an effort to raise awareness for RGEW, MGC has partnered with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling and Plainridge Park Casino (PPC) to promote a week-long series of “PlayMyWay” – themed initiatives. These activities are intended to educate the public about responsible gaming and to highlight the resources available. The “PlayMyWay Everyday” theme was inspired by the recent launch of the [PlayMyWay program](#), a responsible gaming initiative that provides casino patrons with a voluntary option to budget and track their play at Plainridge Park Casino. The new PlayMyWay program is the latest tool added to MGC’s wide-ranging and unique responsible gaming framework known as [GameSense](#).

Examples of RGEW activities include:

DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION
Monday, August 1 st	Plainridge Park Casino employees will promote RGEW by wearing “PlayMyWay” pins. PPC staff and GameSense Advisors will also distribute various “PlayMyWay” promotional items to educate patrons about responsible gaming and to increase awareness about available programs such as PlayMyWay. PPC will host an event designed to <u>highlight responsible gaming tips</u> .
Tuesday, August 2 nd	Plainridge Park Casino will distribute information to patrons that <u>includes responsible gaming tips and educational information</u> .
Wednesday, August 3 rd	The GameSense Info Center will host an event for Plainridge Park Casino employees to further educate staff about responsible gaming and available resources. In addition, GameSense Advisors will have a presence at the James Taylor concert at Fenway Park to increase awareness of the state’s responsible gaming efforts and to distribute educational materials to concert-goers.
Thursday, August 4 th	GameSense advisors will have increased presence at Plainridge Park Casino to support the casino’s ongoing responsible gaming awareness activities.
Friday, August 5 th	The GameSense Info Center will host an event in the parking lot at Plainridge Park Casino to engage customers and encourage patrons to learn more about responsible gaming. In addition, GameSense Advisors will have a presence at the Florida



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	Georgia Line concert at the Xfinity Center to increase awareness of the state’s responsible gaming efforts and to distribute educational materials.
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MGC’s Director of Research and Responsible Gaming Mark Vander Linden said, “Massachusetts is fortunate to have collaborative partnerships focused on a shared goal of furthering responsible gaming advocacy and preventing unintended negative consequences of gambling. I’d like to commend the Mass Council of Compulsive Gambling and Plainridge Park Casino for their coordination and enthusiastic support of Responsible Gaming Education Week and for their commitment to the spirit of this week throughout the year.”

“We’re pleased to join MGC and Plainridge Park Casino to raise awareness that, while gambling is not a risk free activity, we have innovative strategies here in Massachusetts like PlayMyWay and GameSense that help inform players about their budget and play behavior to assist them in making informed decisions about their entertainment. The GameSense staff is an invaluable resource for information, self-excluding, or signing up for PlayMyWay today and every day,” said Marlene Warner, Executive Director, Mass. Council on Compulsive Gambling.

“As the Commonwealth’s first casino, we want everyone to know that we take this issue very seriously and are pleased to support the work of the MGC and Mass Council on Compulsive Gaming in promoting awareness of responsible gaming,” said Lance George, General Manager of Plainridge Park Casino.

Background Information

As part of MGC’s comprehensive efforts to address responsible gaming and problem gambling, MGC engaged a research team at UMass Amherst to oversee evaluate and perform a multi-year, comprehensive research project on the economic and social impacts of the introduction of casino gambling in Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on at-risk and problem gambling. In June 2015, MGC in conjunction with the UMass research team released a population survey of nearly 10,000 Massachusetts adult residents and found a past-year prevalence of problem gambling is 1.7%. The study also found that an additional 7.5% of the population are at-risk gamblers. These percentages indicate that an estimated 67,500 to 109,100 people are suffering right now with a gambling problem and an additional 353,400 and 426,200 residents are considered at-risk gamblers.

MGC and partnering agencies, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, will be able to use the information collected as part of the research agenda to make strategic, data-driven policy decisions based on a level of detail that has never previously been available in a gaming jurisdiction in the United States. As part of that continuous effort, MGC continues to work closely with its strategic partners to strengthen and increase problem gambling prevention and treatment options that are available.

The Expanded Gaming Act directs significant resources from gaming revenue to a Public Health Trust Fund specifically intended to fund programs to prevent and mitigate problem gambling. The statute provides for a \$15- to \$20-million fund. When fully endowed, this will be one-third of all the money spent on problem gambling in the entire country.

About GameSense

GameSense is an innovative and comprehensive Responsible Gaming strategy adopted by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission as part of its mission to encourage responsible play and mitigate problem gambling. GameSense combines recommendations on responsible gaming techniques with interactive tools and exhibits meant to engage patrons at Massachusetts casino gaming facilities and online at GameSenseMA.com.

Each gaming establishment is required by statute to provide on-site space (the GameSense Info Center) for player education. There, patrons can learn about myths associated with gambling, the odds of the games they are playing, take a break, and seek support from a GameSense Advisor. The Commission is working with casino operators to ensure that responsible gaming signage and information is available to direct patrons to the GameSense Info Center.



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