



For Immediate Release
March 3, 2017

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Press release: 17-008

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Observes March 2017 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) announces its support and recognition of March 2017 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM). PGAM is a national public awareness and outreach campaign established to bring awareness to issues associated with problem gambling and to also highlight the national and local resources available to provide individuals and families with support.

In recognition of PGAM, MGC will implement the following initiatives:

- **EDUCATE:** On March 12, 2017, MGC will launch a new advertising campaign to promote its GameSense program, an innovative and comprehensive responsible gaming strategy to encourage responsible play and mitigate program gambling.
- **COMMUNICATE:** Throughout the month, MGC will execute a social media campaign to increase awareness about problem gambling prevention and the resources available.
- **COLLABORATE:** Working closely with MGC, GameSense Advisors will conduct a series of training and awareness-building activities for Plainridge Park Casino employees.
- **RESEARCH:** Later in the month, MGC will announce new details about efforts to expand its research agenda and introduce new data that will further inform intervention, prevention and treatment strategies for problem gambling.
- **SUPPORT:** MGC supports the Cambridge Health Alliance's 'Gambling Disorder Screening Day'. On March 14, 2017, the Cambridge Health Alliance's Division on Addiction and Outpatient Addiction Services are sponsoring a Gambling Disorder Screening Day as part of the Cambridge Health Alliance Readiness for Gambling Expansion ([CHARGE](#)) Initiative.

"In an extraordinary effort to mitigate any negative consequences of the casinos, the Casino Law established a Public Health Trust Fund that—when all of the casinos open—will operate with \$15-20 million a year to fund a comprehensive research agenda and an extremely robust deployment of public health strategies to promote responsible gaming and combat problem gaming. The Fund is administered by a unique partnership between the Department of Public Health and the MGC," said MGC Chairman Stephen Crosby. "PGAM provides an important opportunity to highlight the innovation and forward-thinking approach demonstrated by the Massachusetts Legislature when developing the gaming statute."



Massachusetts Gaming Commission

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MGC's Director of Research and Responsible Gaming Mark Vander Linden said, "Massachusetts enjoys uniquely collaborative and supportive partnerships working toward a shared goal of preventing unintended negative consequences of gambling. I'd like to commend our partners for their focus and dedication as we implement innovative strategies and new resources to support prevention efforts."

More information on MGC's problem gambling prevention efforts is available at MassGaming.com. If you or someone you know needs immediate help with a potential gambling problem, please visit Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling or call the helpline at 1.800.426.1234.

For more information on PGAM, visit the National Council on Problem Gambling.

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 MassGaming

The mission of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in November, 2011. In creating that process, the Commission will strive to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory systems engender the confidence of the public and participants, and that they provide the greatest possible economic development benefits and revenues to the people of the Commonwealth, reduce to the maximum extent possible the potentially negative or unintended consequences of the new legislation, and allow an appropriate return on investment for gaming providers that assures the operation of casino-resorts of the highest quality. For more information on MGC, please visit MassGaming.com or connect and share on Twitter (@MassGamingComm) or Facebook www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm.



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