



Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: January 12, 2016 – 3:00 p.m.

Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
101 Federal Street, 12th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts

Present: **Executive Committee**

Stephen P. Crosby, Chairman, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Enrique Zuniga, Commissioner, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Lindsey Tucker, Co-Chair, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Michael Sweeney, Executive Director, Massachusetts State Lottery Commission
Brian Domoretsky, on behalf of Jennifer Queally, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Rebekah Gewirtz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Public Health Association

Attendees

Mark Vander Linden, Director, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Edward Bedrosian, Jr., Executive Director, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Terrance Lanier, Legal Fellow, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Cecelia Porché, Paralegal, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Victor Ortiz, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Emily Bhargava, Education Development Center
Rachel Volberg, University of Massachusetts/Amherst
Amanda Houpt, University of Massachusetts/Amherst
Steve Keel, Consultant, Department of Public Health
Marlene Warner, Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling
Bruce Cohen, Retired Massachusetts Department of Public Health (participated via telephone)

Call to Order

3:02 p.m. Chairman Crosby called to order the Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee (“PHTFEC”) Meeting. Chairman Crosby introduced Edward Bedrosian, Jr., the new Executive Director for the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, and provided a summary of his professional background.

Approval of Minutes

3:07 p.m. *Michael Sweeney moved for the approval of the October 13, 2015, PHTFEC minutes. Motion seconded by Rebekah Gewirtz. Motion passed unanimously.*

Introduction of new Department of Public Health (“DPH”) Director of Problem Gambling Services

3:08 p.m. Lindsey Tucker introduced Victor Ortiz, the new DPH Director of Problem Gambling.

Massachusetts Gaming Commission (“MGC”) General Update

3:09 p.m. Chairman Crosby provided an MGC general update which included the following: the Commission hired a new Executive Director, Edward Bedrosian, Jr.; there has been a lot of activity with Daily Fantasy Sports and a White Paper was given to the legislature with recommendations; the Region C application for a commercial casino license is being reviewed and a decision should be made in March; and there is a probability of a Tribal casino in Taunton.

3:17 p.m. Director Mark Vander Linden reported that the Play Management System is moving forward and a launch date is expected in March. He also noted that the PHTFEC has two purposes: one is to use money for research and the other is for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

3:18 p.m. Rebekah Gewirtz stated that more information is needed in the strategic plan on issues associated with problem gambling such as: sexual violence, foreclosure, domestic violence (“DV”), and human trafficking.

3:22 p.m. Chairman Crosby stated that the efforts to date have been focused on baseline research.

SEIGMA (“Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts”) White Paper on Problem Gambling Services Evaluation

3:23 p.m. Rachel Volberg provided an overview of the research mandate which included a baseline survey and evaluation of existing services.

3:25 p.m. Amanda Houpt provided a summary of the SEIGMA White Paper which included the following: research questions used for evaluation of problem gambling services; analysis of data from SEIGMA survey, MA Council on Compulsive Gambling (“MGCC”) Helpline, medical claims from the Center for Health Information and Analysis, and focus group with treatment providers; strategic plan for problem gambling prevention and treatment; and key findings.

Ms. Houpt reported that the baseline population survey included a sample size of 10,000 Massachusetts adults measuring attitudes about gambling, gambling participation, and awareness of gambling prevention and treatment services. She also reported on high rates of gambling participation and low rates of prevention awareness and treatment seeking for problem gambling.

Ms. Houpt reported that the MCCG Helpline offers information and referrals and collects data on each caller. She reported that SEIGMA analyzed five years (2009-2013) of data and she provided a summary of the key findings which included the

following: during the five years helpline calls decreased while hits to the website increased, the majority of the calls were about gambling behavior, the majority of gambler callers were middle-aged men, most common reasons for seeking help were financial problems, emotional health and relationship issues; and the MCCG made 900 referrals to treatment centers and 2600 referrals to other sources.

Ms. Houpt reported that 32 providers (licensed to provide mental health or substance abuse treatment services) participated in a focus group in June 2015. She provided a summary of the key findings which included the following: providers use a variety of screening tools, providers set treatment goals and evaluate treatment outcomes in different ways, providers differ in their opinions regarding treatment goals and outcomes, and providers had a number of unmet needs including desire for skills-based clinical training and supervision, ability to track/evaluate/improve client outcomes, and more outreach to raise awareness about services.

Ms. Houpt noted that common themes identified included the following: information about gambling behavior can be used to tailor prevention messages and target outreach efforts, data estimates can be used to estimate treatment volume and plan for treatment-seekers, improved data collection regarding help and treatment seekers is needed, and improved problem gambling service administration is needed for clinical supervision, best practices, standardized practices and evaluation.

Ms. Houpt reported on suggested priority activities and cited examples for the following: utilize data to tailor prevention messages and target outreach efforts; improve data collection about individuals who seek help or treatment for a gambling problem, and collect evidence-based and promising practices in problem gambling prevention, intervention and treatment and adapt for use in Massachusetts.

Ms. Houpt noted that areas for future research can include obtaining a better understanding of individuals with gambling problems, obtaining a better understanding of screening practices, and obtaining additional information about problem gambling support groups in Massachusetts.

Ms. Houpt noted that next steps for SEIGMA include deeper analysis of the baseline population survey, online panel survey, and payer claims data. She stated that the White Paper is online and noted their contact information.

3:52 p.m. Ms. Gewirtz suggested looking at associated community problems as a priority activity because she wants the focus to be not just on individuals, but communities as well. She stated that this is a public health issue. Ms. Tucker stated that the challenge in public health is that the data isn't there yet - this is a start to look at individuals who may have co-occurring problems such as DV and excessive drinking. She stated that we can incorporate those concerns. Chairman Crosby stated that we shouldn't let lack of data get in the way and we should take action on things we can anticipate. Director Vander Linden stated that he is interested in the impact of DV from expanded gaming in Massachusetts and we need to do more research in this area. Ms. Volberg stated that the challenge they face in the problem gambling field is that it is difficult to get direct attribution from individuals.

- 4:03 p.m. Michael Sullivan stated that what struck him about the White Paper was that there was no true reliable source to gather the number of individuals who sought treatment for gambling, acknowledgement of lack of resources, the need for an agreed upon screening tool for providers, and the potential connection to mental health. He also cautioned about data security and data being subjected to FOIA.
- 4:07 p.m. Steve Keel stated that he appreciated Ms. Gewirtz's concerns and noted that the public comment period is going on until January 22nd. He stated that the document is a draft, it is not final, and they are getting good feedback. He provided a summary of the strategic planning process which included the approval process, interviews from key informants, presentations to provide updates, and the timeline. He stated that it has been a difficult process but the document is a useful and living document designed for the development of a work plan for the PHTFEC.

Problem Gambling Services Strategic Plan Presentation and Timeline

- 4:13 p.m. Emily Bhargava provided an overview of the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Services Strategic Plan which included the following: purpose, use of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework as a guide, continuum of services, assessment methodology (administration of surveys, stakeholder interviews, literature review, and SEIGMA findings review), priority areas and key areas of concern. She also provided a summary of the six goals that are specific to problem gambling. She noted that significant draft changes have been made and that the intention of the plan is to be a two year plan for capacity building. She stated that there is a need for capacity building before the casino openings.
- Ms. Bhargava provided an overview of the strategies which included the following: prevention, screening, referral, treatment, recovery support, and data collection. She allowed the group a few minutes to look over the different strategies in the report. She also provided an overview of the evaluation plan and framework graph. She noted that next steps include review and incorporation of public comments and recommendations, report back to the group, development of a work plan, and implementation.
- 4:33 p.m. Ms. Gewirtz inquired as to the strategies being used to inform the public about opportunity for public comments. Ms. Bhargava stated that a notice was sent to approximately 70 key stakeholders across the state. Ms. Warner and Mr. Keel sent out notice to their list serve and it was posted on the DPH website. Ms. Gewirtz stated that she wants to include this notice in her newsletter. The group discussed other sources for publication such as: international exposure, colleagues of members of the PHTFEC, departments under EOHHS, prevention coalitions, Jane Doe, and the Governor's sexual violence and child trafficking advisory group.
- 4:41 p.m. Ms. Tucker stated that the Committee will meet in April and maybe there should be a meeting before April to review comments and draft before the plan is accepted. The Committee discussed the need for another meeting. Ms. Bhargava stated that she would find it helpful to have a pre meeting with Director Vander Linden to clean up the report before a full rewrite, so that there are no surprises in the final document.

2016 Gaming Research Agenda

- 4:45 p.m. Director Vander Linden stated that there had been some difficulty forming the Gaming Policy Advisory Committee (“GPAC”) which sets the annual gaming research agenda. He recommended that the gaming research agenda be changed to a fiscal year format rather than a calendar year format. He stated that they can move the gaming research agenda item to April because the GPAC meeting is expected to take place in March. Ms. Tucker asked what will happen in the next six months. Director Vander Linden stated that they will continue with the existing research agenda, nothing will slow down or stop, and SEIGMA/MAGIC projects will continue their path.
- 4:51 p.m. Bruce Cohen stated that without formal adoption he can continue to work on technical issues with SEIGMA and MAGIC.
- 4:54 p.m. *Michael Sweeney moved that the Committee adopt the recommendation of Mark Vander Linden to move the gaming research agenda item to the April meeting. Motion seconded by Ms. Tucker. Motion passed unanimously.*

Planning for Meeting at Plainridge Park Casino

- 4:55 p.m. The Committee discussed having a two hour meeting in April with a 1:00 p.m. start time to get folks back into Boston. Mr. Sweeney stated that he was not in agreement for a meeting in Plainville.

Other Business

- 4:58 p.m. *Having no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Michael Sweeney. Motion seconded by Rebekah Gewirtz. Motion passed unanimously.*

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee, Notice of Meeting and Agenda dated January 12, 2016
2. Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee, Meeting Minutes dated October 13, 2016
3. SEIGMA White Paper dated December 18, 2015
4. SEIGMA, Key SEIGMA Findings & Potential Implications for Strategic Planners in Massachusetts, dated January 12, 2016
5. Massachusetts Problem Gambling Services Strategic Plan Overview dated January 12, 2016
6. Problem Gambling Services Strategic Plan for Massachusetts, Draft dated January 5, 2016
7. Massachusetts Gaming Commission, Memorandum dated January 12, 2016 regarding Recommendations for the Annual Gaming research Agenda

/s/ Cecelia Porché
Cecelia Porché, Legal Division