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GameSense

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The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Launches GameSense Awareness Campaign in Eastern Massachusetts

Comprehensive Responsible Gaming Outreach Effort Unveiled in Advance of Encore Boston Harbor Opening

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) is excited to announce the expansion of its groundbreaking responsible gaming program, GameSense, by implementing a comprehensive public outreach strategy to encourage and promote positive play as the state prepares for the opening of Encore Boston Harbor.

GameSense is an internationally recognized, player-focused responsible gaming program that encourages players to adopt behaviors and attitudes that reduce their risk of developing a gambling problem. Four years ago the MGC adopted GameSense from the British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC) and partnered with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (MCCG) to staff and operate the GameSense Info Centers located in each Massachusetts casino.

“The GameSense brand masterfully captures four essential pillars of engagement: it’s educational, the tips and tools help players play smarter; it’s supportive, it is not there to judge, but to inform; it’s approachable, the messaging is welcoming and lighthearted; and it’s relatable, adopting a fun and occasionally humorous style,” said Mark Vander Linden, MGC’s director of research and responsible gaming. “We are thrilled to expand this program to Eastern Massachusetts.”

Massachusetts is the only gaming jurisdiction in the United States that requires an on-site responsible gaming program. As Encore Boston Harbor prepares to open, the GameSense Info Center is near completion and 13 GameSense advisors, who collectively speak eight languages and have a combined 63 years of gaming experience, are prepared to welcome the diverse patrons expected to visit the resort-casino.



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As part of a sustained awareness effort, the MGC is launching an aggressive public outreach initiative utilizing marketing, advertising and digital strategies to educate casino patrons about the importance of healthy play and the availability of the GameSense program.

The marketing strategy includes extensive in-casino signage at Encore Boston Harbor, promoting the on-site availability of the GameSense Info Center and GameSense advisors. Paid advertising will launch on June 17, 2019, and include a blend of mobile, display, social (Facebook and Instagram) and search engine marketing. Advertising outreach will focus on web-browsing behavior to maximize the campaign's impact and target persons who are recreational, at-risk and problem gamblers. The MGC, with the support of the MCCG, will implement a digital campaign, promoting program elements and generating awareness across multiple social channels.

The advertising and digital initiatives will encourage individuals to visit the program's mobile-friendly website GameSenseMA.com, featuring the theme "Pearls of GameSense by Chip." A fictional GameSense Advisor and positive play ambassador, "Chip," introduces the notion of GameSense as "a higher state of gambling wisdom that any player can achieve" by following the program's valuable tips and advice. The website is populated with entertaining videos of "Chip" dispelling popular gambling myths and offering "pearls" or practical tips about responsible play. The website also offers extensive recommendations for responsible gaming techniques, interactive tools, myth-busting games, and valuable information about how to access support resources and services such as the [Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program](#).

"The new campaign cleverly communicates important information about how players can use gambling education to better understand such things as casino game odds and rules to reduce their risk of experiencing gambling related harm. Our GameSense advisors are knowledgeable, friendly and approachable. They are resources for information and gambling advice at Encore Boston Harbor," said Marlene Warner, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. "As gambling expands across the state, it is now more important than ever to educate residents that gambling is based on chance and meant to simply be entertainment, but not a risk-free activity. There are ways to keep it fun and healthy, but others will be negatively impacted; for those people support services are available. We would like to thank all of the participants for their strong commitment to minimizing any potential harm."

"As a gaming licensee in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Encore Boston Harbor has a responsibility to our employees, our guests, and communities to promote healthy and informed gambling as a form of entertainment," said Bob DeSalvio, president of Encore Boston Harbor. "The GameSense Info Center will be located in a central location and serve as the patrons' primary point of contact for information about programs to support positive play."

As part of the gaming commission's ongoing effort to fully understand the impact of its programs and to identify areas of improvement, the MGC sought an early evaluation of the GameSense program. Preliminary findings determined that casino patrons had a high degree of program awareness about GameSense. Within a year of the program's launch, 54% of Plainridge Park Casino patrons had an awareness of GameSense. Even more encouraging, nine in 10 patrons who interacted with a GameSense advisor believed the program could benefit anyone who gambles. Nearly three in five patrons surveyed reported learning something new about gambling from a



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GameSense advisor. As a result of this interaction, 22% reported having changed how they gamble. Additionally, one in three (33%) patrons who had an in-depth conversation with a GameSense advisor said this conversation caused them to think about their own gambling. “These findings are encouraging and we look forward to improving and enhancing the program in the years to come” added Mark Vander Linden.

About GameSense

Introduced by BCLC in 2009, GameSense is an innovative, player-focused responsible gambling program that encourages players to adopt behaviors and attitudes that can reduce the risk of developing gambling disorders. This includes setting and sticking to personally-allocated time and monetary limits for gambling, as well as being open and honest with family, friends and oneself when it comes to personal gambling habits. GameSense has earned international recognition such as the World Lottery Association’s Best Overall Responsible Gambling Program (2010), and the U.S. - based National Council on Problem Gambling’s Social Responsibility Award (2015). In addition to being licensed and piloted at MGM Resort International casino properties, the program has been implemented by Connecticut Lottery, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and Canadian provinces Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In Massachusetts, each gaming establishment is required by statute to provide on-site space (the GameSense Info Center) for player education. Massachusetts is the only jurisdiction in the country required by law to offer responsible gaming resources onsite. 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 GameSense program 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.

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](https://twitter.com/MassGamingComm)) or Facebook www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm.



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