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Massachusetts Gaming Commission Recognizes March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) is pleased to recognize March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM). Established 19 years ago by the National Council on Problem Gambling, PGAM is a national outreach campaign designed to educate the public about problem gambling and the resources available.

This year's PGAM theme of "Awareness + Action" aims to generate awareness about the risks of gambling and urges action toward hope and recovery for those in need.

In recognition of a statewide commitment to increasing awareness, Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito have officially declared March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month across the Commonwealth, "urging citizens to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance," according to [the proclamation](#).

"Promoting safe levels of play and reducing gambling-related harm are pivotal pieces of the Commission's work, especially as the Commonwealth continues to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic," Chair **Cathy Judd-Stein said**. "We applaud the commitment from Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and our countless partners and stakeholders who continue to come together to raise awareness about problem gambling."

To cap off PGAM on March 31, the University of Massachusetts School of Public Health and Health Sciences will offer a preview of findings from seminal work exploring gambling and problem gambling. As part of the MGC's research agenda, the Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort Study (MAGIC) will provide information on gambling and problem gambling, and factors important in developing effective prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

"The Commission's ongoing research agenda has put a spotlight on factors that contribute to gambling related harm. With increased attention during PGAM, we aim to create meaningful dialogue about an addiction which often goes hidden," said **Mark Vander Linden**, Director of Research and Responsible Gaming.

A 2015 study of gambling behaviors and attitudes in Massachusetts found that approximately 2%, or 110,000 adult Massachusetts residents, are considered "problem gamblers," meaning they experience significant impaired control over their gambling and negative consequences. Another 8.4% or 440,000 people, experience harm to a lesser degree.

The MGC encourages all casino employees and patrons to engage with its on-site responsible gaming program, [GameSense](#), to promote this month of advocacy by educating casino employees and patrons on tips for how to keep play safe and by sharing support resources.



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The MGC also supports the Department of Public Health's Office of Problem Gambling Services in launching a new statewide problem gambling helpline. If you or a loved one is experiencing problems with gambling and needs support, please call **1.800.327.5050** or visit www.mahelpline.org/problemgambling to speak with a trained Specialist. Specialists are available 24/7 and services are free, confidential, and available in multiple languages.

More information on MGC's problem gambling prevention efforts is available at MassGaming.com, or by visiting 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) or Facebook www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm.



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