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The MGC Office of Research and Responsible Gaming Issues Key Principles for Sports Wagering Policy and Practice

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission's Office of Research and Responsible Gaming recently issued a [white paper](#) outlining responsible gaming principles for sports wagering policy and practice. The paper provides an overview of guiding principles, strategies and measures of MGC's [Responsible Gaming Framework](#) and how it relates to policy considerations for sports betting legislation. During a [virtual public meeting on June 14, 2021](#), the Commission reviewed and authorized the public release of this report at the request of staff.

As mandated by the Massachusetts Legislature, the MGC has established one of the country's most innovative responsible gaming frameworks and robust research agendas. MGC's framework outlines three responsible gaming objectives including regulation, research, and education. Guided by international best practices, the MGC has implemented programming, such as [GameSense](#) and [Voluntary Self-Exclusion](#), designed to achieve these objectives and evaluate overall program effectiveness.

"While research findings indicate that there has not been a significant change in the levels of sports wagering participation in Massachusetts in recent years, we must be prepared to see increased participation once legalized. Because sports wagering is predictive of concurrent and future problem gambling behavior, it is crucial for there to be measures to support safer levels of play and mitigate gambling-related harm," said **Mark Vander Linden, MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gaming**.

Based on the MGC's identified principles for creating an effective, sustainable, measurable, socially responsible, and accountable approach to gambling, as well as key research findings conducted with Massachusetts players, **the MGC's Office of Research and Responsible Gaming recommends four strategies to ensure sports wagering in the Commonwealth is conducted in a manner that minimizes harm.**

- **Support Positive Play** by offering play management systems, automated budget alerts, cool-off periods and clear information about the games and payouts.
- **Promote Public Health and Safety** by prohibiting the use of credit cards, supporting Voluntary Self Exclusion programs, enforcing age restrictions, and promoting helplines and resources.



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- **Ensure Responsible Marketing** by advertising helplines and resources, offering marketing exclusion programs, and ensuring responsible advertising practices.
- **Commit to Improvement and Reporting** by recording and evaluating responsible gambling practices and collaborating with the academic community about gambling impacts and access to related data.

“The expanded gaming act provided the foundation from which the MGC had developed several nationally and internationally recognized responsible gaming programs to prevent and mitigate gambling-related harm,” added **Director Vander Linden**. “As the gaming landscape continues to expand and evolve, the MGC, in partnership with our many stakeholders, looks forward to continuing our role as a leader in creating research-driven innovation while effectuating the principles of the Gaming Act to meet the needs of Massachusetts’ gamblers. We hope this white paper provides a helpful overview to support interested legislators and other stakeholders as the consideration of sports wagering legalization continues.”

To review related sports wagering updates from the MGC, [click here](#).



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