

# MGC Research Snapshot

## Current Trends in Gambling, Sports Betting and Problem Gambling in Massachusetts, 2022-2024

June 2025

### What you need to know

This report assesses changes in gambling attitudes, gambling participation, and problem gambling prevalence among monthly gamblers in the four most recent online panels in Massachusetts, carried out between 2022 and 2024. There was a rise in participation in most gambling activities from 2022 to 2023 followed by declines in Spring 2024 with no significant changes in Fall 2024. There were rises in problem gambling prevalence among monthly gamblers, as well as a rise in family and relationship harms. Given rising rates of sports betting frequency, education and harm reduction strategies targeting sports bettors are warranted. There is a need for an expansion of responsible gambling tools to support individuals reporting financial harms and/or family or relationship harms.

### What is this research about?

Population surveys of gambling participation and gambling problems have become increasingly expensive and complex over time. An emerging option to improve surveillance is the use of annual online panel surveys to supplement less frequent population surveys. Online panels consist of groups of people recruited to participate in online surveys in return for compensation. While online panels are not representative of the population, individuals who participate in such surveys tend to be heavy gamblers which provides a much greater 'yield' of individuals with characteristics of the greatest concern to policymakers, regulators, and others seeking to minimize and mitigate gambling harm.

This report assesses changes in gambling attitudes, gambling participation and problem gambling prevalence among monthly gamblers in the four most recent online panels in Massachusetts, carried out between 2022 and 2024. While online panels cannot be used to estimate population prevalence rates, it is reasonable to assume that changes in the behavior of monthly gamblers in the online panels do reflect changes in how heavy gamblers in the population are behaving. This report is the second in a series of reports tracking gambling attitudes, participation and problem gambling prevalence in Massachusetts at regular intervals.

### What did the researchers do?

Five online panel surveys have been carried out in Massachusetts as part of the SEIGMA study. The Baseline Online Panel Survey (BOPS) was fielded in 2013 and 2014; the Follow-up Online Panel Survey (FOPS) was fielded in March 2022; the 2023 Online Panel Survey (OPS23) was fielded one year later in March 2023; and two online panel surveys were fielded in the Spring and Fall of 2024. The goal of the online surveys was not to

generate estimates of behaviors in the population but instead to track changes in behavior over time among monthly or more frequent gamblers. It is important to emphasize that the researchers did not conduct a longitudinal study of the same people over time; instead, surveys were completed by different groups of people at each point in time.

### What did the researchers find?

This report includes results for monthly gamblers in the online panel surveys. Researchers use the terms "among monthly gamblers in the online panels" and "among monthly gamblers" but this always refers only to panel members and not to the population of Massachusetts.

#### Attitudes Toward Gambling

- Rise in proportion of monthly gamblers in the online panels who believe that the harm of gambling outweighs the benefits from 2022 to 2024;
- Decline in proportion of monthly gamblers who believe that all types of gambling should be legal between 2022 and 2023;
- Rise in proportion of monthly gamblers who believe that gambling in Massachusetts is too widely available between 2022 and 2023.

#### Gambling Behavior

- Rising participation in most gambling activities from 2022 to 2023 followed by declines in Spring 2024 with no significant changes in Fall 2024;
- No significant change in participation in traditional large jackpot lottery games between 2022 and 2024;
- Decline in participation in instant lottery games between 2023 and Spring 2024;



- Rising gambling intensity (number of types of gambling, number of days gambled) among monthly gamblers between 2022 and 2023;
- Rising rates of monthly and weekly betting on sports among monthly gamblers from 2022 to 2023 with rates maintained in 2024;
- Declines in the rate of social sports betting among monthly gamblers and rising sports betting with legal land-based sportsbooks in Massachusetts and with online sportsbooks in Massachusetts between 2022 and 2023 with rates maintained in 2024;
- Some recapture of illegal sports betting expenditures in Massachusetts among monthly gamblers between 2022 and 2024.

#### Gambling Problems and Harms

- Rise in problem gambling prevalence among monthly gamblers in the online panels between 2022 and 2023 with the rate maintained in 2024;
- Rise in family and relationship harms between 2022 and 2023 with another rise in Spring 2024 that was maintained in Fall 2024.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Given rising rates of sports betting frequency, education and harm reduction strategies targeting sports bettors are warranted.
- There is a need to expand responsible gambling tools to support individuals reporting financial harms and/or family or relationship harms.

## About the researchers

Rachel A. Volberg, Valerie Evans, and Parastoo Dezyani are part of the SEIGMA team at the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Robert J. Williams is the Co-Principal Investigator on the SEIGMA project and is with the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada. For more information about this study, please contact Rachel Volberg at [rvolberg@schoolph.umass.edu](mailto:rvolberg@schoolph.umass.edu).

## Citation

Volberg, R.A., Evans, V., Dezyani, P. & Williams, R.J. (2025). *Current Trends in Gambling, Sports Betting and Problem Gambling in Massachusetts, 2022-2024*. Amherst, MA: School of Public Health and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

<https://massgaming.com/about/research-agenda-search/?cat=social-impact>

## Key Words

Social Impact; Problem Gambling; Online Panel Surveys

## Acknowledgments

Financial support for this study comes from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission through the Public Health Trust Fund.

## About this Snapshot

MGC Snapshots are intended to translate lengthy and sometimes technical reports into an easily understandable overview of the research. The findings and recommendations in the Snapshot are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the position of the MGC.

