



Region B - Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, notice is hereby given of a meeting of the ***Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee*** established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 23K § 68.

PLEASE NOTE: Given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles Baker issued an order to provide limited relief from certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law to protect the health and safety of individuals interested in attending public meetings. In keeping with the guidance provided, the Commission will conduct a public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology. If there is any technical problem with our remote connection, an alternative conference line will be noticed immediately on our website: MassGaming.com.

The meeting will take place: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 @ 1:30 p.m.

**VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5292
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 081 9414**

Public Meeting:

1. Welcome/Opening Comments
2. Minutes from the October 13, 2020 meeting – **Vote**
3. Discussion of 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines
4. Discussion of the MGC Research Agenda and Responsible Gaming
5. Next steps
6. Other Business – reserved for matters not reasonably anticipated at the time of posting.

I certify that on this date, this Notice was posted as “Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee” at www.massgaming.com and emailed to: regs@sec.state.ma.us, and melissa.andrade@state.ma.us.

11/6/2020

(date)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Delaney".

Joseph E. Delaney, Chief of Community
Affairs

Date Posted to Website: Friday, November 13, 2020



Section 68: Gaming Policy Advisory Committee Region B Meeting

Date/Time: October 13, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.

Place: VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1 646 741 5292

PARTICIPANT CODE: 112 751 3450

Present: Jennifer Bonfiglio- Agawam
Samuel Darkwa-West Springfield
Alison Ebner- Chamber of Commerce
Carmina Fernandes-Ludlow
Mary McNally- East Longmeadow
Ellen Patashnick- Human Service Provider
Bellamy Schmidt- Holyoke
Richard Sullivan- Regional Economic Development Organization
Lori Tanner- Regional Planning Agency

Joseph Delaney, MGC Community Affairs Division Chief
José Delgado, MGM Director of Governmental Affairs
Bruce Stebbins, MGC Commissioner
Tania Perez, MGC Administrative/Project Assistant
Mary Thurlow, MGC Program Manager

Call to Order

Mr. Delaney called the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee ("Committee") meeting to order. He then asked the new members Mr. Darkwa and Mr. Sullivan to introduce themselves.

Given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles Baker issued an order to provide limited relief from certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law to protect the health and safety of individuals interested in attending public meetings. In keeping with the guidance provided, the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee will conduct a public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology.

Approval of Minutes

[0:37](#)

Ms. Bonfiglio moved to approve the minutes from the Committee meeting of November 19, 2019, subject to correction for typographical errors and other

nonmaterial matters. Ms. Fernandes seconded the motion. After making a small correction, a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

<i>Ms. Bonfiglio:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. McNally:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Schmidt:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Fernandes:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Theocles:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Darkwa:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Tanner:</i>	<i>Abstained.</i>
<i>Ms. Ebner:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Sullivan</i>	<i>Abstained.</i>
<i>Ms. Patashnick:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>

The motion passed 8:0:2.

Election of Chair and Representative to the Subcommittee

[6:50](#)

Mr. Delaney asked for volunteers to be the Chair for this Committee. Mr. Darkwa volunteered. Mr. Sullivan seconded the nomination.

Roll Call Vote:

<i>Ms. Bonfiglio:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. McNally:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Schmidt:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Fernandes:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Theocles:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Darkwa:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Tanner:</i>	<i>Abstained.</i>
<i>Ms. Ebner:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Sullivan:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Patashnick:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>

The motion passed 9:0:1.

Mr. Delaney asked for volunteers to represent the Committee to the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation ("Subcommittee"). Ms. Bonfiglio stated that she did not mind continuing to serve in this role. Ms. Fernandes moved to nominate Ms. Bonfiglio. Mr. Sullivan seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

<i>Ms. Bonfiglio:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. McNally:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Schmidt:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Fernandes:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Theocles:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Darwka:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Ms. Tanner:</i>	<i>Abstained.</i>
<i>Ms. Ebner:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Mr. Sullivan:</i>	<i>Aye.</i>

*Ms. Patashnick: Aye.
The motion passed 9:0:1.*

Discussion of Policy Questions

[10:59](#)

“Should the 2021 CMF continue to be used to support and leverage resources to help residents of the Springfield or Everett areas obtain their high school or work readiness credentials to be eligible for employment?”

Mr. Delaney moved on to the 2021 policy questions for the Committee’s consideration. He gave background information on the Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) for the benefit of the new members. Mr. Delaney went through the over 20 policy questions up for review, providing context for each. Regarding the question of workforce training funding, Ms. Fernandes stated that it made sense to have large amounts granted for this purpose at the beginning of a casino opening, but that over time perhaps the amount should be reduced because of the presumed lower need. Mr. Delaney pointed out that with restaurants and casinos closed due to the pandemic, these hospitality workforce training programs may prove to be less necessary. Ms. Patashnick asked to clarify whether the amount of money decided for workforce training was a flexible amount. Mr. Delaney answered that everything is waivable by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (“Commission”). Ms. Bonfiglio agreed it was a good idea to redirect funds from the hospitality workforce training program but keep some. Mr. Sullivan suggested that with the high turnover rate in the hospitality industry, it was a good idea to keep some funding for these programs. Ms. Ebner inquired about information MGM might have regarding their current workforce and what areas they are anticipating will grow. Mr. Delaney talked about how many employees are currently working at MGM compared to how many they had before the pandemic, and which restaurants in the casino are currently open. Mr. Delgado informed the Committee about MGM staff numbers, where staff is needed, and what functions of the casino are not currently operating.

“Should the Commission continue to allow funding to pay for a portion of the construction costs of transportation projects? Should the Commission cap the percentage of construction costs that the CMF will fund?”

Mr. Delaney moved onto the next item regarding whether the fund should pay for a portion of construction costs for transportation projects and whether the CMF Committee should impose a cap on the percentage of construction costs an award goes towards. Ms. Theocles commented that there should be no cap. Ms. Bonfiglio suggested that there should be a local match for these projects, but no cap. Ms. Fernandes agreed with Ms. Bonfiglio. Mr. Sullivan suggested, if necessary, a possible cap of up to 50%, but also agreed that there should be a local match. Mr. Darkwa pointed out that there are funds available outside the CMF for these types of projects, so there should be a local match. Ms. Theocles agreed with Mr. Sullivan’s earlier suggestion of a cap, and that it should be left to the applying community to decide how much of a local match they secure. Mr.

Delaney reminded everyone that these guidelines are waivable by the Commission, and not strict rules. He added that most of the transportation-related impacts from casinos require reworking intersections and other traffic adjustments. Mr. Darkwa commented that there are more pressing issues to mitigate in these communities than traffic, especially since there are other sources of funding for these types of projects.

“Should the Commission consider the creation of an emergency reserve within the Community Mitigation Fund for unknown impacts that arise after February 1, 2021?”

Mr. Delaney moved on to the question of an emergency reserve for emergency situations. If unused, the fixed emergency money amount would roll over to the next year. Ms. Patashnick supported establishing an emergency fund. Mr. Sullivan agreed but added that the amount should be allowed to grow each year. Ms. Theocles and Ms. Ebner agreed with Mr. Sullivan. The following items were the question of reimbursing public safety costs, continuing to set aside funds for a possible tribal casino, and whether there should be a dollar-for-dollar match required for every project.

“Should the Commission place a time limit for the use of previously authorized reserves for the 2021 Community Mitigation Fund program?”

On the issue of whether there should be a time limit for using or committing unused initial casino opening reserves, Ms. Bonfiglio stated that there should be a limit, and that some communities may not be aware that they have unused reserves. Ms. Patashnick reminded the Committee that they had previously discussed setting that time limit to one year. Mr. Sullivan remarked that if communities had not immediately used the reserve funds, they probably did not need them, therefore unspent reserves should be given back to the CMF. Ms. Theocles and Mr. Darkwa agreed.

Next were the issues of authorizing funding for non-transportation planning in communities that have spent their reserves and whether the CMF should fund administrative costs for workforce development projects, whether CMF money should go to private parties, whether to continue allowing joint applications between communities, and limiting communities to only one specific impact grant.

“Should the Commission consider additional funding for the Hampden County Sheriff’s Office for lease assistance?”

On the question of whether to continue assisting the Hampden County sheriff’s office with their lease for the Western Massachusetts Alcohol Corrections Center, Mr. Sullivan commented that they could have found an alternative office space by now, so he disfavors assisting them further. Ms. Theocles added that they should re-apply for another grant but that the CMF should not assist with their lease. Ms. McNally agreed that they should have found another space to lease and that the CMF should not assist them further. Mr. Darkwa pointed out that if the center

cannot demonstrate an increased enrollment as a result of the casino, their request for continued funding is inappropriate. Ms. Bonfiglio agreed with Mr. Darkwa. Mr. Delaney presented the possibility of weaning the office off CMF money. Ms. Patashnick supported that idea, citing the probable increased need for the center due to the currently difficult economy.

Next was the issue of rescinding previously awarded grants that had not been spent, and whether communities should be allowed to apply to more than one category of grant for the same project. Mr. Delaney also provided some criteria the CMF Committee uses to evaluate applications and thanked the Committee for their input.

Discussion of 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines

[1:00:47](#) Mr. Delaney asked the Committee to review the 2021 CMF draft guidelines for the next meeting, instead of discussing them at the current one. Ms. Thurlow reminded the Committee that the guidelines will be open to public comment after the Commission meeting next week.

Mr. Delaney brought up a question raised by Mr. Schmidt about impacts of the pandemic on casino reopening and operations. Mr. Delaney explained that the biggest impact of the pandemic on casinos has been their employment numbers. He added that some operations had ceased at casinos, such as Plainridge Park Casino's restaurants, MGM's reduced capacity gaming floor due to enforcing appropriate distances between patrons, reduced hotel hours at Encore, and reduced functions. Mr. Delaney also went over gaming revenue made in the month after reopening compared to revenue from the month before the pandemic and found that the casinos each made about 80% of the revenue they did during the month before they shut down. He reminded the Committee that the CMF relies on those gaming revenues. Commissioner Stebbins added that the Commission recently allowed MGM and Encore to reopen their roulette tables. Ms. Tanner wondered how many of those initial reopening patrons were frequent high revenue-generating patrons compared to casual players. Commissioner Stebbins stated that perhaps player card information could help answer that question. He also mentioned the Commission has an upcoming meeting to discuss MGM research and performance, and he offered to send an invite the Committee.

Discussion of Next Steps

[1:12:17](#) Ms. Thurlow reminded the Committee to review the guidelines for discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Delaney reminded the Committee that written comments can be sent to Ms. Thurlow, himself, or Ms. Perez.

[1:13:02](#) With no further business, Mr. Delaney moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Schmidt seconded.
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Bonfiglio: Aye.
Ms. McNally: (no response).
Mr. Schmidt: Aye.
Ms. Fernandes: (no response).
Ms. Theocles: Aye.
Mr. Darkwa: Aye.
Ms. Tanner: Aye.
Ms. Ebner: (no response).
Mr. Sullivan: Aye.
Ms. Patashnick: Aye.
The motion passed 7:0. Ms. McNally, Ms. Fernandes, and Ms. Ebner had already left the meeting.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Policy Questions
2. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines
3. 10/13/2020 Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee region B notice of meeting and agenda
4. 11/19/2019 Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee region B meeting minutes

/s/ Tania J. Perez
Secretary



Understanding the Impact of Casinos on Massachusetts Communities

Community mitigation subcommittee

October 27, 2020

Research goals and objectives

Sect. 71 Expanded Gaming Act, 2011

- Understand the social and economic effects of expanded gambling and use the findings to inform evidence-based policy and regulation.
- Obtain scientific information relative to the neuroscience, psychology, sociology, epidemiology and etiology of gambling.
- Inform best practice strategies and methods for responsible gaming and problem gambling
- Evaluate all responsible gaming initiatives developed by the MGC.

Responsible Gaming Framework

- Inform best practice in responsible gaming strategies and methods, problem gambling prevention and treatment, and responsible gaming messaging.
- Create and translate knowledge to support evidence-informed decision-making about gambling policy and regulation.



School of Public Health and Health Sciences

Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA)

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What is SEIGMA?

The University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health & Health Sciences (SPHHS) has been engaged by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) to carry out a comprehensive, multi-year research project, believed to be the first of its kind, on the economic and social impacts of introducing casino gambling in Massachusetts. The project fulfills Section 71 of the 2011 Expanded Gaming Act, which requires the MGC to establish “an annual research agenda” to assist in understanding the social and economic effects of the introduction of casino gambling in MA, and in making annual scientifically-based recommendations to the Legislature.

The study focuses particularly on problem gambling, but also examines a wide array of social and economic effects of expanded gambling in Massachusetts. In addition to SPHHS, other key members of the research team include the UMass Donahue Institute, which will lead the economic and fiscal impact research, and NORC at the University of Chicago, which will lead primary data collection efforts for the SEIGMA study. [Read more here.](#)

News and Events



SEIGMA Public Research Day Webinar – October 14, 2020



No Increase In Problem Gambling Seen After MGM Springfield Casino Opens

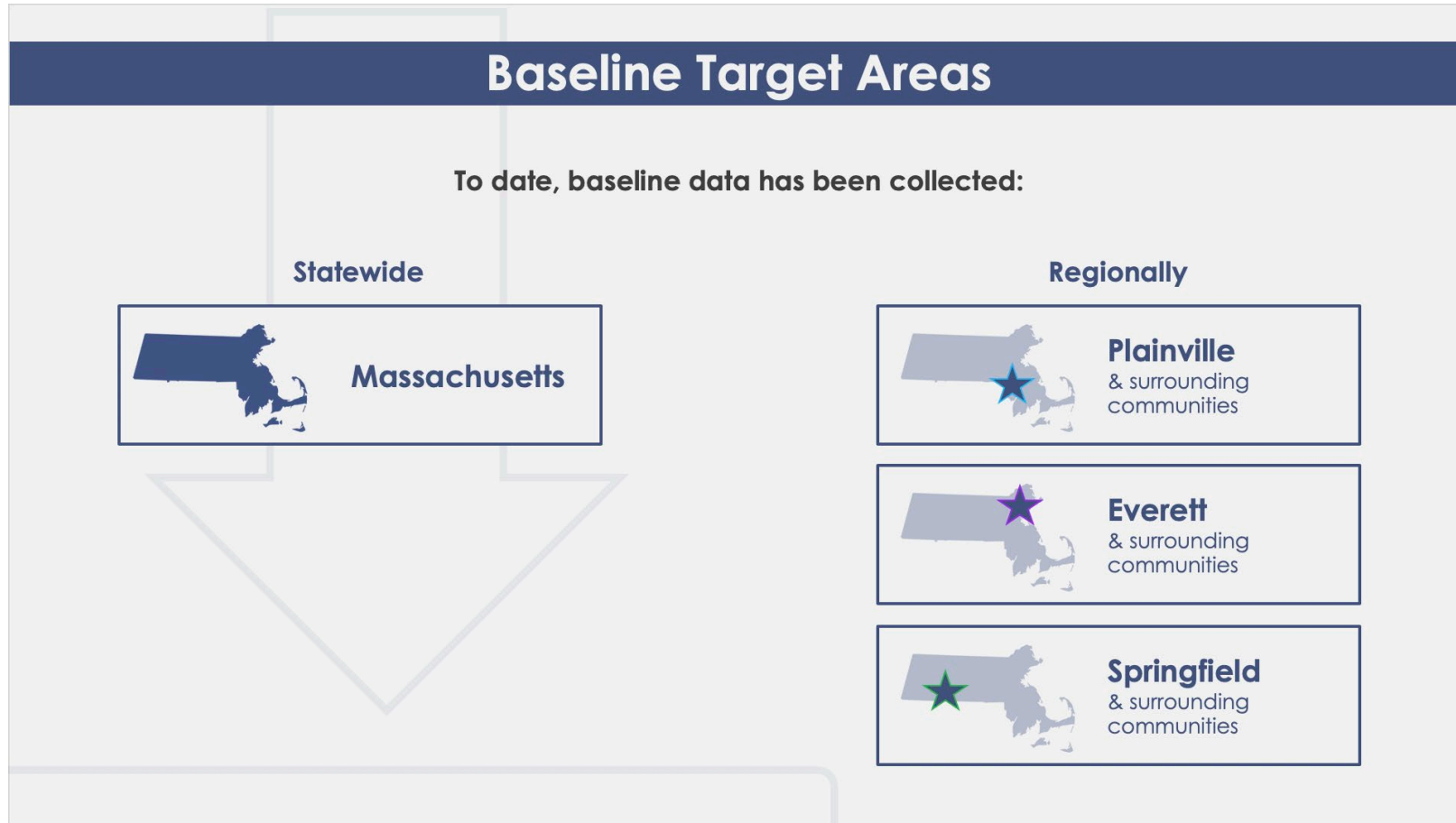


No boost found in problem gambling from MGM Springfield

Methodological Principles

- Identify how much money is involved, where it is coming from, and where it is going
- Assess impacts for years before and for years after the introduction of new gambling venues
- Comprehensively assess all potential economic and social impacts and utilize multiple sources of info for triangulation

Building a baseline



Baseline Indicators

Indicators are being tracked across two pillars of population health



Social & Health

5 dimensions

14 total indicators



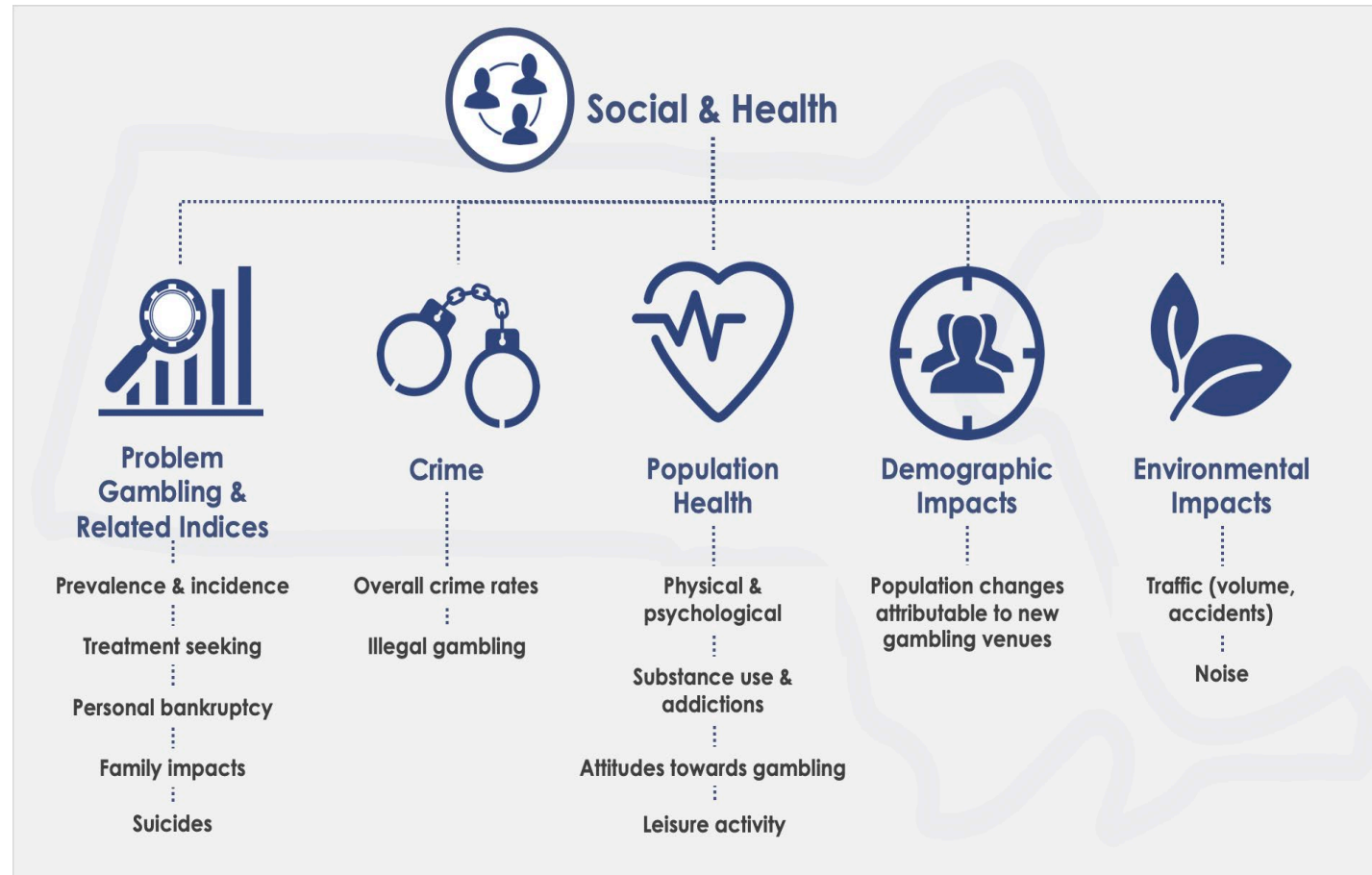
Economic & Fiscal

6 dimensions

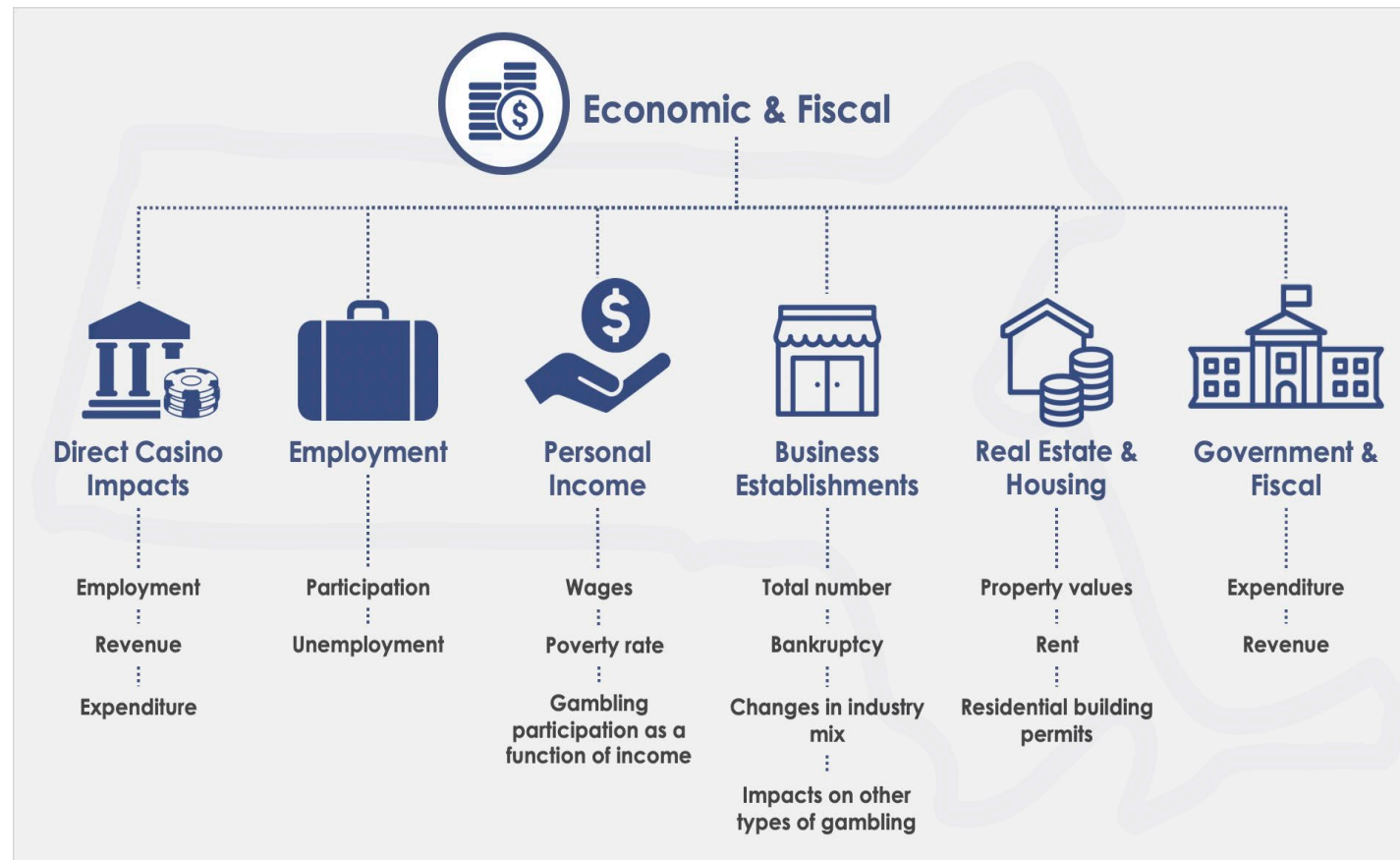
15 total indicators



Social and health indicators



Economic and fiscal indicators



SEIGMA Research Day, October 14, 2020

- **New Employees at MGM Springfield:** The data from this report highlight reasons for seeking employment at MGM, employment status prior to joining the MGM team, and the geographic residence of employees.
- **2019 MGM Springfield Patron Survey:** This data is important to ascertain the influx of new revenues to the venue and the Commonwealth, and to measure any monies diverted from other sectors of the economy.
- **MGM Springfield First Year of Operations:** The purpose of this report is to estimate the full economic impact of the casino on the Massachusetts economy during its first year of operation.
- **Impact of MGM Springfield on Gambling Attitudes, Participation & Problem Gambling:** Findings from this report examine key areas such as attitudes toward gambling, gambling participation, and problem gambling.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=MKpkMjYcgEM&feature=youtu.be>

Slides: https://www.umass.edu/seigma/sites/default/files/SEIGMA%20Public%20Research%20Day%20Webinar%202020_Final.pdf



Other Springfield related research

Real Estate Impacts of the MGM Springfield Casino (released 9/2019)

- Document commercial and residential property trends following the licensing of MGM Springfield in 2014

Assessing the Impact of Gambling on Public Safety in Massachusetts; Analysis of MGM Springfield's First Year (released 2/2020)

- Analysis of data about crime, calls for service and collisions from September 2018 to August in 2019 and compared to baseline.


The Construction of MGM Springfield: Spending, Employment and Economic Impacts (released 10/2019)

- Estimate of the total economic impacts to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts resulting from the casino construction.

Host Community Economic Profile: Springfield (released 10/2015)

- Covers trends and conditions within the city's industrial structure, business community, labor force and residential population prior to the construction of MGM Springfield.

Lottery Revenue and MGM Springfield: Statewide and local analysis (released 2/2020)



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Community-Engaged Research

This research is intended to advance knowledge regarding casino impacts on population subgroups not reached by the SEIGMA general population baseline. The focus of this work is on communities considered to be at a greater risk of experiencing gambling-related harms.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

Economic Impact

The Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) study, conducted by a team from UMass Amherst, analyzes the fiscal, economic, social and health effects of expanded gaming across the Commonwealth. The study is intended to provide 1) neutral information of decision-making, 2) early warning signs of changes connected with the casino gambling, and 3) help in reducing gambling-related harm.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort

The Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort (MAGIC), the first major longitudinal cohort study of gambling behavior in the United States, provides information on how gambling and problem gambling develop, progress and remit, and will identify demographic groups particularly at risk of experiencing gambling-related harm.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

Public Safety

This research examines Massachusetts casino impacts on public safety, including crime, calls-for-service and collision data. This element of the MGC research agenda has produced a baseline for each casino host and surrounding communities. Annual follow-up studies measure change in activity and highlight possible connections to the casino.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

Responsible Gaming Program Evaluations

The MGC is committed to offering effective, evidence-based responsible gaming programs and initiatives. Currently, these initiatives include statewide Voluntary Self Exclusion, PlayMyWay Play Management System and the GameSense program. On-going and independent evaluation informs the overall responsible gaming strategy and future direction of these programs.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

Social Impact

The Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) study, conducted by a team from UMass Amherst, analyzes the fiscal, economic, social and health effects of expanded gaming across the Commonwealth. The study is intended to provide 1) neutral information of decision-making, 2) early warning signs of changes connected with the casino gambling, and 3) help in reducing gambling-related harm.

EXPLORE RESEARCH »

MODE invites researchers of all disciplines to use available gaming-related data to advance the empirical evidence and knowledge base about the social and economic effects of casinos on individuals and communities.





- Thank you!!
- Additional questions/comments:
 - Mark Vander Linden
 - Massachusetts Gaming Commission
 - Director of Research and Responsible Gaming
 - Mark.vanderlinden@massgaming.gov
 - www.gamesensema.com
 - www.massgaming.com

GameSense

**THE
PROGRAM**

**& THE
IMPACT**



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Where Do We Go from Here?

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The Massachusetts Legislature legalized casino gaming in 2011 to produce broad-based economic development, including jobs and revenue—but not at any cost.

A key feature of the gaming law established a **first-of-its-kind research plan** to comprehensively assess the social and economic impacts of casino gambling in Massachusetts. A data-driven understanding of casino impacts provides the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) with the ability to design evidence-based programming, particularly in the area of responsible gaming and problem gambling.

A baseline study concluded that, in Massachusetts, approximately **2% (110,000) of the adult population meet the criteria for problem gambling**, and another **8.4% (440,000) experience harm to a lesser degree**. In response to these findings, the MGC launched GameSense, an innovative, player-focused responsible gaming program that encourages players to adopt positive play behaviors and attitudes that promote safe levels of play and reduce the risk of gambling-related harm.

It is also worth noting that Massachusetts is the only gaming jurisdiction in the country to require such responsible gaming resources (GameSense Info Centers and GameSense Advisors) at each casino property.

As the commonwealth's casino industry continues to grow and mature, the MGC, in partnership with our many stakeholders, looks forward to continued research-driven innovation to meet the needs of Massachusetts' diverse casino patrons.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Judd-Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cathy Judd-Stein
Massachusetts Gaming Chair

A photograph of two men in a professional setting. On the left, a man with grey hair is shown in profile, smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, a Black man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light pink shirt, is looking back at him with a slight smile. The background is softly blurred, showing indoor plants and a lamp.

WHAT IS GAMESENSE?

GameSense is an innovative responsible gaming program that encourages players to adopt and/or maintain positive behaviors and attitudes that reduce the risk of gambling-related harm.

In fulfillment of the legislation, which called for an on-site player protection program staffed by a third party, the MGC licensed GameSense from the British Columbia Lottery Corporation in 2015 and drew upon the experience and expertise of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (MCCG) to staff and operate the program at each Massachusetts casino—Encore Boston Harbor (EBH), MGM Springfield (MGM), and Plainridge Park Casino (PPC).

**The GameSense program captures
four essential pillars of engagement:**

1

Relevant

Tips and tools help players play smarter

2

Supportive

Informative instead of judgmental

3

Approachable

Messaging is welcoming and lighthearted

4

Relatable

Adopts a fun and occasionally humorous style

WHO DOES GAMESENSE SERVE?

CASINO PATRONS

GameSense encourages casino patrons to engage in positive play promoting informed player choice.

Most people who visit Massachusetts casinos engage in “positive play,” or gambling behavior that is nonproblematic. Research shows that players who engage in positive play focus on “playing for fun, being entertained, and/or winning a prize” (Wood & Griffiths, 2015).

GameSense Advisors engage patrons at the GameSense Info Center and on the casino floor through innovative games, quizzes, and other demonstrations, presenting information to:

- › Debunk common gambling myths and misconceptions
- › Educate on how games work, and educate on odds and probabilities of slots and table games
- › Discuss informed decision-making options





By using a stepped-care approach, GameSense provides casino patrons with information relevant to their specific needs.

According to the baseline general population survey of Social and Economic Impacts of Gaming in Massachusetts, approximately one in every five patrons may be at risk for, or has, a gambling problem (Volberg, Williams, Stanek, et al., 2017). Recognizing that all players are not the same.

POSITIVE PLAYERS

Majority of players

Promotes positive play and prevention so that individuals remain in this segment

Promotes the availability of GameSense for people who may eventually struggle with gambling

AT-RISK PLAYERS

Smaller portion of players

Emphasis on early intervention so that people in this segment do not develop a gambling problem

Promotes the use of tools to monitor play behavior

Promotes the availability of GameSense for people who may eventually struggle with gambling

PROBLEM PLAYERS

Smallest portion of players

Promotes the programs and services to prevent escalation and maximize recovery

Promotes GameSense as an on-site resource for problem players who are not ready for treatment



CASINO EMPLOYEES

GameSense builds the capacity of casino employees, including management, through education and interactions designed to promote responsible gaming and mitigate problem gambling.

In partnership with the three casino licensees, GameSense has provided both new-hire orientations and advanced responsible gaming trainings to well over 5,000 Massachusetts casino employees. Evaluations show that 88% of casino employees have rated the training as “very good” or “excellent” (Gray, Shaffer, LaPlante, 2018).

GameSense empowers and supports casino employees to take action to support patrons in need of assistance.

In fiscal year 2019, GameSense Advisors engaged 2,994 casino employees with conversations about responsible and problem gambling. Additionally, on 266 occasions, casino employees, gaming agents, and state police officers have referred patrons or requested assistance from an on-site advisor.



88%

OF CASINO
EMPLOYEES

**have rated the
responsible gaming
trainings as “very
good” or “excellent”**





THE COMMUNITY

GameSense provides responsible gaming and **problem gambling education** to service providers and community groups in casino host and surrounding communities. They specifically target and engage community partners that serve persons who may have a gambling problem or are at risk of developing one.



WHAT RESOURCES & TOOLS DOES GAMESENSE HAVE AVAILABLE?



Within the **GameSense toolkit** are programs, resources, and educational activities designed to engage patrons at Massachusetts casinos.



GAMESENSE INFO CENTERS

GameSense Info Centers are located on-site at all Massachusetts casinos and operate 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Strategically located in high-traffic areas, each GameSense Info Center has a welcoming, visitor-friendly space, as well as a private office for more sensitive conversations.

Visitors to the GameSense Info Center can learn about myths associated with gambling, find out the odds of the games, take a break, or seek support from a GameSense Advisor.



GAMESENSE ADVISORS

GameSense Advisors are the heart of the program. Nearly all GameSense Advisors possess a gaming background, but also bring to the position a diverse range of educational and other work experiences. One thing that they have in common is a passion for the work they do in order to make a difference in the lives of casino patrons and staff.

In addition to extensive training on responsible gaming and problem gambling, GameSense Advisors receive training in Mental Health First Aid, behavioral health, counseling skills, and community resources.

The GameSense team is made up of advisors who represent diverse cultural and ethnic groups and ages, and who possess various linguistic backgrounds. Diversity is an integral part of the GameSense team, as it aids in reaching players from different backgrounds, including those who have historically suffered from health disparities.



PlayMyWay

PlayMyWay

PlayMyWay (PMW) is a first-of-its-kind budgeting tool

designed to allow players the ability to monitor the amount of money they spend on electronic gaming machines. PMW is now available at Plainridge Park Casino, and a 2021 launch is planned at MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor. GameSense Advisors play a critical role in PMW, as they serve as the primary customer service representation when it comes to program-related questions.

- › Once enrolled, **a player receives automatic notifications** as he or she approach 50%, 75%, and 100% of their daily, weekly, or monthly budget.
- › A player can choose to **stop at any point or keep playing**.
- › Players can **enroll, adjust their budget, or un-enroll** in PlayMyWay at any time.

The program is completely voluntary and provides players with real-time data so that they stay in control of their gambling. Between the launch of PMW in June 2015 through December 2019, there were **24,587 players actively enrolled** in the program, with **an average un-enrollment rate of 14%**. An evaluation of the program found that typical PlayMyWay users wagered less money at PPC during the study period, made fewer visits to PPC, and tended to lose less money at PPC (Tom, Singh, Edson, et al., 2017).

VOLUNTARY SELF-EXCLUSION

The Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) program allows participants to voluntarily prohibit themselves from accessing the gaming floor at all Massachusetts casinos for a predetermined length of time of one year, three years, five years, or their lifetime.

Over 85% of all enrollments are conducted by a GameSense Advisor and most commonly take place at a GameSense Info Center.

The VSE program is designed to engage participants in order to support their decision and to offer to connect them with additional help. Between June 2015 and December 2019, **779 individuals** enrolled in the VSE program; **80% of enrollees** who completed a follow-up survey reported that they were gambling less at follow-up than prior to MA-VSEP enrollment (Nelson, Kleschinsky, LaPlante, et al., 2018).



**Between June 2015
and December 2019,**

779

INDIVIDUALS

**enrolled in the
VSE program**

“Research has shown that the Massachusetts VSE program is an effective intervention to help persons struggling to control their gambling. Participants reported reduced gambling-related problems, including improved mental health and relationship quality. Participants who had previously enrolled in other VSE programs reported a significantly more positive enrollment experience with a GameSense Advisor.”

- **Mark Vander Linden**
MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gambling



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GameSense community engagement initiatives are designed to **bring responsible gaming and problem gambling information and resources out into the community**. Engagement efforts focus on groups and communities identified by research as being at higher risk for experiencing gambling-related harm, including blacks, Asian populations, immigrants, veterans, seniors, and those with an annual household income of less than \$15,000.



GAMESENSEMA.COM

The mobile-friendly website GameSenseMA.com is accessible and user friendly. The website is populated with entertaining videos, featuring a fictional GameSense Advisor, created to dispel popular gambling myths and offer “pearls of wisdom” 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 VSE program.



GAMESENSE

METRICS & EVALUATION



Data collected by **GameSense Advisors** between June 2019 and April 2020, when all three Massachusetts casinos were operational, shows:

>275,000

GENERAL INTERACTIONS

with casino patrons and employees



>56,000

CONVERSATIONS

pertaining to responsible gaming and problem gambling

WITH

77,081

CASINO PATRONS
AND EMPLOYEES

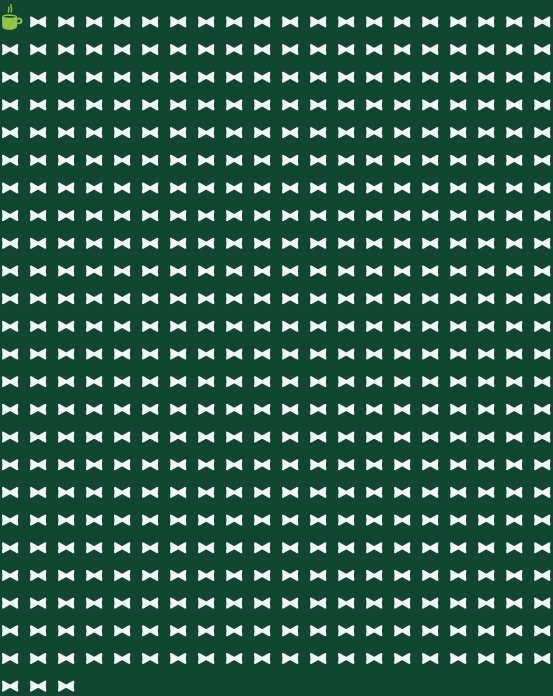


GameSense Advisors work to **create a casino culture that values responsible gaming** and is sensitive to problem gambling by providing tailored trainings based on job function to all newly hired casino staff.

These trainings are critical to furthering the mission of GameSense, as the number of casino staff at each Massachusetts casino far exceeds the number of GameSense Advisors at each property.

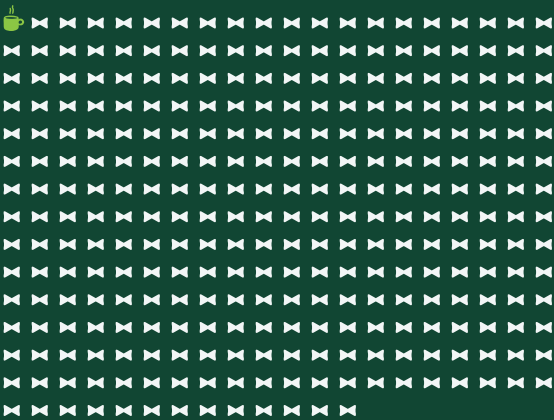
1:483

EBH GameSense Advisor
to EBH staff



1:293

MGM GameSense Advisor
to MGM staff



1:76

PPC GameSense Advisor
to PPC staff



= GameSense Advisor = Casino Staff

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

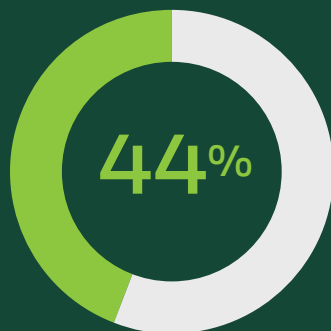
An early evaluation of the PPC GameSense program, which collected data between 2015 and 2017, offers an encouraging outlook on its impact and effectiveness. **Research findings indicate:**



of surveyed patrons had a **high degree of program awareness**



of patrons surveyed were **satisfied with the information** provided by GameSense Advisors



went on to say that the program **changed the way they think** about their gambling behavior

SPREADING THE WORD

The MGC, in conjunction with the MCCG, has developed and mobilized **a comprehensive communications strategy** to educate casino patrons, staff, and the general public about the importance of safe play and the availability of the program, in an effort to:



INCREASE

overall brand awareness



DRIVE

traffic to GameSenseMA.com



HIGHLIGHT

the resources and tools available



EDUCATE

the public with helpful responsible gambling tips and support resources



PROMOTE

informed player choice about their gambling



MAXIMIZE

community engagement efforts



REACH

special populations to educate about responsible gaming and resources that are available



REINFORCE

the commonwealth's commitment to a robust responsible gaming strategy

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

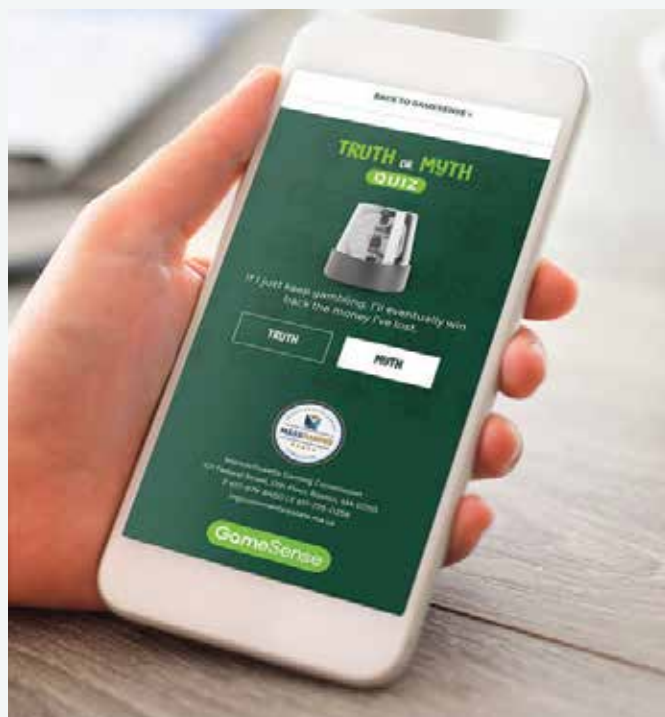


In-casino Signage

On-site casino marketing strategies are deployed in cooperation with casino operators and include in-casino signage, multilingual collateral, staff newsletters, and other specialized campaigns.

Paid Advertising

Paid advertising includes mobile, display, social (Facebook and Instagram), and search engine marketing. Online ads are distributed according to web-browsing behavior to maximize the campaign's impact and target people who are recreational, at-risk, and problem gamblers.

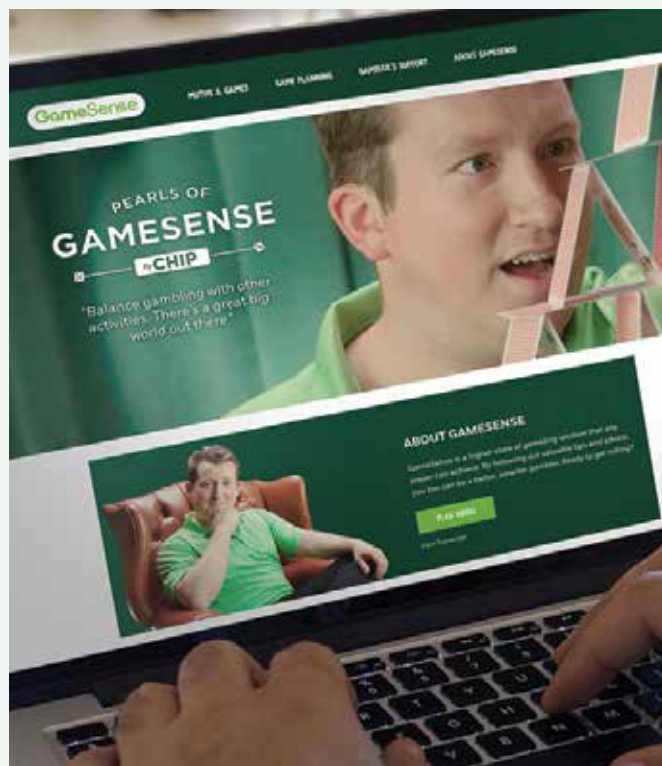


Digital Strategy

Social media platforms are used to communicate relevant, organic content. Social media platforms are powerful communication vehicles, as they allow for timely and relevant content based on current events or industry trends as well as collaboration with casino operators and other responsible gaming stakeholders.

Website

GameSenseMA.com offers practical responsible gaming tips, interactive tools, myth-busting games, and valuable information about how to access support resources and services such as the VSE program.





GAMESENSE IN THE NEWS

GameSense has been highlighted by both local and national news sources spanning **radio, TV, digital, and newsprint.**

MGM host referred ‘top-tier player’ for problem gaming help

State House News Service | March 28, 2019

As problem gambling awareness month draws to a close, a longtime responsible gaming advisor who works with the Gaming Commission said Massachusetts’s efforts to educate players are working and having an influence on the casino industry.

Amy Gabrila, a senior advisor with the commission’s GameSense program, told regulators Thursday that a recent interaction with an executive host from MGM Springfield—whose job is to cater to high rollers and to cultivate regular players—moved her to tears.

She said she recently led a “grueling” training session on responsible gaming and the resources GameSense makes available to all players with MGM Springfield officials, including this particular executive host. Shortly after the session, the executive host referred a client—a top-tier player—to Gabrila for assistance with potentially problematic gambling.

“Honestly, I cried,” Gabrila told the Gaming Commission. “Never in my 22 years in this business would I have ever believed that an executive host—a guy who lives off getting people to play, that’s his business—was willing to drop off one of his best accounts to me because he felt it was the right thing to do.”

“

THE FACT IS THAT WE ARE NOW IN THIS SPACE WHERE WE’RE CHANGING THE NARRATIVE OF RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING IN THE INDUSTRY FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

The commission adopted GameSense as its “comprehensive responsible gaming strategy,” and the program includes information centers in each of the state’s gaming facilities and advisors like Gabrila whose interventions range from casual conversations about things like betting odds to more in-depth assistance.

Gabrila said the state’s efforts to promote responsible gaming have rubbed off on staff at MGM Springfield, which opened in August. She said 10 of the last 15 people who have added themselves to the state’s voluntary gaming exclusion list did so after an MGM Springfield staff member referred them to GameSense.

“The fact is that we are now in this space where we’re changing the narrative of responsible gambling in the industry from the inside out,” Gabrila said. She added, “It blows my mind... It’s something I never thought would happen.”



Amy Gabrila
Senior Advisor,
GameSense

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Closing Message from Mark Vander Linden, MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gaming



The Massachusetts Legislature laid out **a vision for casino gaming** that would bring jobs and the greatest possible economic benefit to the commonwealth. They understood that in order to achieve this vision there must also be a plan to mitigate the negative consequences, because for every person who is harmed by gambling, the benefits begin to erode. As outlined in this report, GameSense has quickly become an effective frontline response, working both inside the casino and out in the community to meet this challenge and advance the MGC's objectives of providing accurate and balanced information to promote positive play; providing patrons experiencing gambling-related harm with timely and appropriate information; and creating a shared understanding of responsible gaming among individuals, communities, the gaming industry, and government.

I'm thrilled by the early success of this program, but we remain committed to finding new and innovative ways to meet the needs of the commonwealth. As gambling changes, **we will continue to adapt our strategies while remaining true to core objectives.**





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To learn more about our program,
visit us at GameSenseMA.com.