



Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee (PHTFEC) Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: January 23, 2019 – 2:00 p.m.

Place: Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

Present: Executive Committee

Lindsey Tucker, Co-Chair, Associate Commissioner, Massachusetts
Department of Public Health
Enrique Zuniga, Co-Chair, Commissioner, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Jennifer Queally, Undersecretary, Executive Office of Public Safety
Michael Sweeney, Executive Director, Massachusetts State Lottery
Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director, Massachusetts Public Health Association

Attendees

Victor Ortiz, Director of Problem Gambling Services, Massachusetts
Department of Public Health
Teresa Fiore, Program Manager of Research and Responsible Gaming,
Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Mark Vander Linden, Director of Research and Responsible Gaming,
Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Thomas Land, Associate Professor, UMass Medical School
Marlene Warner, Executive Director, Massachusetts Council on Compulsive
Gambling
Julie Hynes, Director of Responsible Gambling, Massachusetts Council on
Compulsive Gambling
Odessa Dwarika, Director of Programs and Services, Massachusetts Council on
Compulsive Gambling
Rachel Volberg, SEIGMA Principal Investigator, UMass Amherst School of
Public Health
Alissa Mazaar, SEIGMA-MAGIC Research Associate and Project Manager,
UMass Amherst School of Public Health
Judith Glynn, Principal, Strategic Sciences
Sarah Nelson, Associate Director of Research at the Division on Addiction,
Cambridge Health Alliance
Heather Gray, Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the Division on
Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance
Jim Cremer, Acting Director, Department of Public Health, Bureau of
Substance Addiction Services
Pralhad KC, Commissioner, Asian American Commission

Call to Order

2:09 p.m. Co-Chair Tucker called to order the Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee (PHTFEC) Meeting.

Approval of Minutes

2:10 p.m. *Michael Sweeney made a motion to approve the September 24, 2018 minutes. Co-Chair Zuniga seconded the motion for 5-0 approval.*

Mark Vander Linden requested an edit be made to the November 19, 2018 minutes on page 2 for the appropriate reflection of the operating hours of the GSIC, from 9AM-1AM not 9AM-1PM as currently recorded. Michael Sweeney made a motion to approve upon incorporation of the aforementioned edit. Co-Chair Zuniga seconded the motion for 5-0 approval.

Routine Updates: PHTFEC Budget

2:12 p.m. Co-Chair Zuniga provided a summary of the PHTF budget to date which included FY19 projections. He pointed out that the \$3 Million figure is trending down, but may level out depending on upcoming revenue. He will continue to report on the budget for Region B only.

Prevention Programs

2:18 p.m. Victor Ortiz provided a programmatic update on previously launched gambling prevention programs and thanked the stakeholders and vendors who had contributed to this work. Mr. Ortiz referenced a definition of prevention and stated that prevention is based on a balance of protective and risk factors. Current activities provide individuals the opportunity to engage in a healthy way.

The programs carefully considered social determinants of health, and built on community engagement with over 800 individuals and 40 community partners across all three regions. In response to a clarifying question by Co-Chair Zuniga, Co-Chair Tucker stated that engagement included focus groups, stakeholder listening sessions and key information interviews.

The first initiative was a communication campaign meant to target men of color with a history of substance misuse, resulting in 15 million impressions across digital and physical platforms. Mr. Ortiz stated that this campaign aimed to direct the audience to visit the OPGS website. Michael Sweeney asked whether metrics were available for mobile vs. web based as well as click

through rates. Mr. Ortiz stated that those figures were available and that he would follow up with the group.

The second initiative was the Photovoice Project which targeted youth ages 13-17 in Brockton and Bridgewater. Findings from a review of this project resulted in expanding the model from 8 to 16 weeks.

The third initiative was the Ambassador Project targeting men of color with a history of substance misuse in Brockton and Hyannis. In this program, ambassadors are designated to facilitate meetings to discuss the risks associated with gambling. Findings from this project resulted in hiring the ambassadors as part time employees as opposed to compensating them with a stipend.

Finally, Mr. Ortiz described a suicide prevention program and flyer which was created in conjunction with DPH's MassMen screening project. The flyer is currently available online and the screening project will launch in two weeks. In closing, Mr. Ortiz asked the committee members if they had any feedback on the programs presented to date and/or any insights on strategy moving forward. Co-Chair Zuniga asked for additional information regarding youth participation in gambling.

Treatment Gap Analysis

2:44 p.m. Sarah Nelson, who lead the Treatment Gap Analysis, stated that the objective of this work was to estimate the needs of problem gambling treatment in Massachusetts. To assess the current state of services, multiple data sources both primary and secondary were used.

The first phase of analysis mapped out the distribution of treatment providers within the three regions and identified areas in which services should be expanded. Co-Chair Zuniga asked how many people in Massachusetts were receiving services. Victor Ortiz responded that the available data to track this is unreliable. Ms. Nelson added that this would be addressed later in the presentation, but that stakeholder interviews estimated that facilities see an average of 1-2 clients per month with an 8% waitlist overall.

Ms. Nelson stated that 19% of referrals to treatment programs were from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (MCCG). When comparing the list of treatment providers available through MCCG and the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), there were identified inconsistencies. Recommendations include validating gambling assessments used at all BSAS affiliated programs, continuing to update and publicize the practice guidelines for treatment services, making full range of treatment services available on the helpline, adopting a warm handoff approach to referrals, implementing consistent data collection plan through BSAS.

Heather Gray presented the second phase of analysis and stated that it is likely that only a minority of those who need treatment actually receive it. This does not solely suggest a flaw in available services, rather when considering that less than 10% of gamblers with problems seek treatment worldwide (and 3% of Massachusetts gamblers according to SEIGMA) it points to an absent demand for services. Ms. Gray stated that *unmet* demand is more common amongst persons struggling with substance misuse. Further assessment of treatment seeking individuals is needed to provide a clearer understanding of need demand.

Co-Chair Zuniga asked for more information around the supply side relative to the unmet demand in terms of capacity. Ms. Nelson responded that there is capacity for more treatment services to be offered within existing treatment facilities. Co-Chair Zuniga wondered whether it was possible for there to be too many facilities which offer problem gambling treatment and whether a well-known, limited number of facilities would be a better strategy. Co-Chair Tucker responded that this question requires much more time and should be discussed during further meetings.

Gaming Research Update

3:45 p.m. Sarah Nelson introduced the MA Voluntary Self Exclusion (VSE) Program Evaluation conducted at Plainridge Park Casino. The objective of the study was to understand VSE enrollment trends across time and place, who signs up for VSE and why, enrollment satisfaction and experience, 6-12 month outcomes, and whether VSE enrollment is a gateway to treatment. She stated that enrollment trends continued at 1-2 per week throughout the study and were primarily from individuals based in eastern MA.

Michael Sweeney pointed out the large percentage who engaged in illegal gambling activities as opposed to regulated ones.

Ms. Nelson stated that people who voluntarily self exclude are usually the most severe problem gamblers. Those who wanted to quit all forms of gambling were less likely to do so than those who set smaller and more concrete goals for themselves. Respondents expressed a desire for more follow up after enrollment, regionalization and better advertising of the program.

Follow up data shows a decrease in problem gambling criteria and an increase in self-reported health metrics. Ms. Nelson stated that enrollment does not appear to serve as a gateway to treatment because a high proportion were already receiving treatment for problem gambling or substance abuse.

Mr. Sweeney asked whether it would be possible to integrate VSE enrollment into a mobile app. Carlene Pavlos agreed with this suggestion and added that

a livechat feature could be incorporated. Mark Vander Linden stated that there are significant legal implications which need to be considered. He added that himself and Mr. Ortiz have been collaborating on increasing accessibility to the program by expanding the network of designated agents.

Mr. Sweeney stated that he would like to see parties responsible for other forms of gambling (DFS, sports betting) held to the same level of information transparency and sharing as the lottery. Co-Chair Zuniga added that player card data was coming and would provide key insights into casino gamblers.

Strategic Plan

4:10 p.m. Judith Glynn introduced the draft strategic plan for the Massachusetts research agenda. The purpose of the plan is to evolve the interpretation of the research goals to extend the use of findings to all areas which are impacted by expanded gaming. She added that adding a guiding principle of openness and transparency and proposing an infrastructure to support these goals were also built into the strategy.

Carlene Pavlos asked whether “informing best practices and methods” as mentioned in the first table *Mapping Research Programs and Objectives* referred to problem gambling. Ms. Glynn responded that this callout was built into statute and already incorporated into the research agenda.

Michael Sweeney asked if Mr. Ortiz’s earlier point about hiring ambassadors versus stipend compensation is an example of what Ms. Glynn is proposing. Ms. Glynn responded affirmatively and stated that thinking about creative ways to enable participation is important.

Co-Chair Tucker thanked Ms. Glynn for her impressive body of work but was surprised that the output was not in line with what she believed was described during the summer research meeting when this work was first discussed. She added that while it feels like an exciting strategic plan for an expansion, she was looking to see what the next steps are for the current research agenda. She clarified that she would like to understand the prospective plan for the MAGIC/SEIGMA projects and how these strategic plan recommendations, such as community level needs, would be incorporated.

Co-Chair Zuniga stated that there is need for resources in order to support changes, as many of the needs which stakeholders expressed were already being researched. Mr. Sweeney requested that the minutes from the previous meetings as well as the kickoff meeting be shared with the group. He added that this work verifies some of the issues which were previously discussed. Jennifer Queally agreed with Mr. Sweeney and added that there is not a lot of contact between researchers and those employing the research. She attributed a part of this to the unique setup of the PHTFEC.

Mr. Vander Linden stated that the MGC has already begun to ask research teams to make their work digestible for a more general audience. Ms. Glynn responded that while this is okay, oftentimes research teams do not have the capacity to fulfill this need and it requires additional engagement.

Public Comment

4:52 p.m. No public comments.

FY20 Budget Timeline

4:52 p.m. Victor Ortiz stated that a preliminary budget from both MGC and DPH will be presented during the next meeting. Feedback will be welcome, and there will also be individual meetings which each of the committee members to discuss any concerns. The final draft will be introduced in April with a vote set to take place in May.

SEIGMA Fact Sheets

4:56 p.m. Rachel Volberg shared SEIGMA fact sheets for ten previous studies which were designed to make information collected easily digestible. The fact sheets are currently available on the SEIGMA website and will be posted to the MGC website as well. Moving forward, fact sheets will be delivered along with final reports.

Other

5:00 p.m. Co-Chair Tucker stated that the next meeting in March will need to be rescheduled and for members to await follow up. *Having no further business, Co-Chair Tucker made a motion to adjourn. Michael Sweeney seconded that motion for 5-0 approval.*