



Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee (PHTFEC) Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: May 19, 2017-1:00 p.m.

Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
101 Federal Street, 12th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts

Present: **Executive Committee**

Co-Chair Stephen P. Crosby, Chairman, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Co-Chair Lindsey Tucker, Associate Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Rebekah Gewirtz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Public Health Association
Brian Domoretsky, Manager, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Michael Sweeney, Executive Director, Massachusetts State Lottery Commission

Attendees

Edward Bedrosian, Jr., Executive Director, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Teresa Fiore, Program Manager, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Mark Vander Linden, Director of Research and Responsible Gaming, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Victor Ortiz, Director of Problem Gambling Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Enrique Zuniga, Commissioner, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
Jacqui Krum-Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Wynn Resorts Development
Jed Nosal-Counsel, Brown Rudnick's Government Law and Strategies Group

Call to Order

1:01 p.m. Co-Chair Stephen Crosby called the Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee ("PHTFEC") meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Crosby moved to approve the PHTFEC minutes dated April 11, 2017. Motion seconded by Michael Sweeney. Motion passed unanimously.

Mark Vander Linden stated that there were two small changes made to the FY18 budget which was overviewed at the last meeting. The first change was in regards to the Special Population Research Awards which were not formally presented as the research applications were not yet reviewed. The RFR received three proposals with a combined budget of \$104,880. Although this is \$4,880 over the estimated budget, Mr. Vander Linden confirmed that it could be rolled over from a \$25,000 “cushion” included within the Research and Responsible Gaming budget. The second change was in regards to the Data Transfer and Access Project. Mr. Vander Linden recommended that the \$50,000 leftover in FY17 be rolled into FY18, stating that the goal when the project initially launched was to have it completed in FY17. He went on to state that the purpose of the project is to find a method for the safe storage and maintenance of public and customizable data set.

Chairwoman Tucker asked what happened to the original \$100,000 which was set aside for this item. Mr. Vander Linden explained that half of it was moved into funding for the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

The Department of Public Health had recommended that a full-time epidemiologist be hired to store and maintain the data. Mr. Vander Linden stated that rolling \$50,000 into the FY18 budget would not allow for this full execution of the project as proposed by DPH. As an alternative, he stated that the (1) project could wait until the second half of FY18 in order to hire an epidemiologist as was suggested by the Department of Public Health, or (2) put the static public use data under the control of the Research Design and Analysis Subcommittee which would allow a faster launch. Under the latter suggestion, there would be still be an application process in place for public who request access to the data. Mr. Vander Linden confirmed that there are enough dollars within the Research Design and Analysis Subcommittee budget if they were to become the temporary custodians of the data. Chairman Crosby stated that the data in question is massive in size, particularly compared to the SEIGMA data.

Chairwoman Tucker stated that the Problem Gambling Services Initiatives budget prepared by Victor Ortiz was adjusted by \$80,000 in order to add prevention services targeting youth within the Region C/Plainville area.

Brian Domoretsky moved to accept the budget with changes as outlined by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and Department of Public Health. Motion seconded by Rebekah Gewirtz. Motion passed unanimously.

Special Population Research Awards-Vote

Mr. Vander Linden stated that a \$100,000 RFP was released in March for a Special Populations study as part of the Gaming Research Agenda. The RFP specified at risk populations as identified in the SEIGMA baseline (African American/Black, Veterans, Immigrants, Hispanics and Asian Americans). Three proposals were received in response to the RFP. He further explained that the intention of the study is not to augment the General Baseline Population Study, but rather, that it is meant to build upon limited existing knowledge. After careful review by the Research Design and Analysis Subcommittee as well as the Gaming Research Advisory Committee, Mr. Vander Linden recommended that all three proposals be awarded. Chairman Crosby added that there is

reliable baseline data lacking for these groups, and as a result, the solution became to take this relatively small sum of \$100,000 and learn what we can with the limitation of full funding for baseline augmentation.

Mr. Vander Linden stated that if this special population research remains a priority, it could be made a part of the research agenda in the future particularly for those groups which did not receive a proposal. Chairwoman Tucker responded by stating that moving forward she would like an oversample of these populations within the baseline. Mr. Zuniga stated that the three populations were identified as higher risk, however, the baseline study did not give statistically significant findings so the data found in the baseline could be considered directional. Chairman Crosby reminded the Committee that the Public Health Trust Fund will be working with a larger budget in the future, so these suggestions could definitely be taken into consideration.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the proposals did not have clearly defined objectives and methodology. He questioned whether there was going to be any attempt to engage participants about the types and forms of gambling which they participate in as he feels that particularly “illegal gambling” was a missed opportunity within the SEIGMA survey. He further stated the only survey question was lopsided compared to other questions relating forms and gambling and was reflected in the SEIGMA baseline report as he knows that illegal gambling in Massachusetts, like in many other places, makes up the vast majority of gambling.

Mr. Vander Linden explained that the proposal for the study of Chinese immigrants in Boston Chinatown would target an incredibly vulnerable group and would approach data collection from a different angle. He explained that one target group of this study would be recruited from bus departure sites leaving the Connecticut casinos, while the others would be recruited through the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center. Ms. Gewirtz asked whether the principal investigator on the study has experience with this type of data collection and methodology. Mr. Vander Linden believed that the principal investigator, Carolyn Wong, has both the experience and relationships to successfully carry out this research. He further stated that this work places an emphasis on qualitative methodology. Chairman Crosby added that Dr. Wong is an academic researcher at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and can be reasonably comfortable that the best practices will be applied to the study, however, acknowledged that these are legitimate questions and suggested that the principal investigators sit down with the Public Health Trust Fund members to answer specific questions. Chairwoman Tucker stated that she was unsure what the objectives of the proposed studies were, and that the proposal as shared with the group provided a middle-level explanation which raised more questions than it answered. She suggested that moving forward that the right level of detail for these types of proposals needs to be determined in order for intelligent voting.

Mr. Sweeney expressed concern regarding the application proposing to study veterans, specifically how the engagement is going to occur, how questions will be asked and how it will be interpreted and presented back. He stated that given his professional background, he would only be comfortable in receiving something in writing which states that the personal information collected for this study will never be used against veterans in seeking VA benefits in the future. Ms. Gewirtz agreed that she is not comfortable with results from this study being included in personal medical records. Mr. Vander Linden stated that he would be glad to forward the actual proposals and amendments to those members who are interested, as well as returning to applicants with specific questions for clarification.

Chairwoman Tucker in addition to the aforementioned process, that she would work with veteran experts at the Department of Public Health in order to see their opinion on the topic.

Chairwoman Tucker stated that a vote was not necessary, however enough questions were raised that Mr. Vander Linden will be going back to researchers for question and will provide an update before accepting the applications. Chairman Crosby clarified that the direction is for Mr. Vander Linden to answer some questions relating to the specificity on the scope of work so that he is confident that the end result will be as useful as possible.

Process Follow-Up Items

Chairwoman Tucker stated that this was a prime time to perfect PHTFEC meeting processes and operations given that it is not fully operational. She stated that anyone should feel free to raise suggestions and provide feedback inside of outside of actual meetings. She offered six suggestions which were to (1) send all materials no later than one week in advance of the meeting, and provide more time for extensive materials (2) include executive summary for extensive materials to give attendees an overview should they not have time to go through the materials (3) add a public comment period at the end of every agenda (4) make meetings 3 hours instead of 2 (5) more complex topics may necessitate a member briefing to take place before the meeting (6) preferably switch days of the week of meeting. The group concurred with the suggestion, and Ms. Gewirtz suggested providing name placards for Executive Committee Members.

Public Health Trust Fund Update

Chairman Crosby stated that there are two policy ideas regarding the Public Health Trust Fund which have been shared internally with the Executive Committee. The first policy idea would mean that all monies dedicated to problem gambling and its totality of related issues may be put under the control of the Public Health Trust fund, including monies collected through lottery and racing. The second policy idea would mean that the Public Health Trust Fund would be formalized and codified into a statutorily driven Executive Committee.

Public Comment

2:00 p.m. No comments were made by representatives of the public. Marlene Warner suggested that next meetings where there are votes to plan for public comment before a vote is made. Chairman Crosby noted that a public comment period before every vote may take up too much time, however he suggested a general public comment period before any vote was cast. Chairwoman Tucker suggested that it would be most effective to split proposal presentations and formal votes across two meetings, allowing for public comments during the interim. Mr. Bedrosian suggested that licensees be considered during this public comment period as they are the funders.

Other Business-reserved for matter the Chair did not reasonably anticipate at the time of posting

2:03 p.m. *Having no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Crosby. Motion seconded by Rebekah Gewirtz. Motion passed unanimously.*

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee, Notice of Meeting and Agenda dated May 19, 2017
2. Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee, Meeting Minutes dated April 17, 2017
3. Massachusetts Gaming Commission, Memorandum dated May 19, 2017, regarding Proposed FY2018 Budget
4. Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services, Memorandum dated May 19, 2017, Revision to the FY18 DPH Budget
5. Massachusetts Gaming Commission, Memorandum dated May 19, 2017, regarding proposed Special Population Research Awards

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