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## Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee (PHTFEC) Meeting Minutes

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**Date/Time:** September 24, 2018 – 12:30 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**

Rebekah Gewirtz, Executive Director of the National Association of Social  
Workers, MA Chapter  
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  
Debi LaPlante, Director of Research & Academic Affairs at the Division on  
Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance  
Heather Gray, Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the Division on  
Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance

### **Call to Order**

12:38 p.m. Co-Chair Tucker called to order the Public Health Trust Fund Executive  
Committee (PHTFEC) Meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

12:12 p.m. *Co-Chair Tucker asked if there were any proposed changes for the July 11th  
meeting minutes.*

*Ms. Pavlos noted changes on page 3 and 5. Co-Chair Tucker inquired as to whether they voted on the May 29<sup>th</sup> minutes at the previous meeting. Co-Chair Zuniga believes that they did. With no further changes, Co-Chair Tucker asked for a motion to approve the July 11<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended. Ms. Pavlos made the motion and Co-Chair Tucker seconded. All present members approved.*

### **Research Strategic Plan Presentation**

Co-Chair Zuniga invited Mark Vander Linden and Judith Glynn to give an update on the research strategic plan.

Mr. Vander Linden noted beginning in 2020 they will have a research strategic plan that will inform the committee, moving forward.

Ms. Glynn stated that the research strategic plan aims to be a helpful tool for individuals without background in this research.

Co-Chair Tucker asked who the intended audience is.

Ms. Glynn replied that they want to give a presentation to select service providers, policy makers, and program staff in the communities. Eventually, the goal is to provide user friendly information to the community at large.

Ms. Queally arrives at 12:55pm.

Ms. Glynn proceeds with the presentation.

Ms. Pavlos asked what the data source is for the physical and psychological data under population health.

Rachel Volberg, UMass, replied that the information comes from various subject sources from towns and cities. Secondary data is also from BRFSS.

Ms. Pavlos requested use of the word crash instead of accident under the section that discusses traffic.

Ms. Glynn also noted that they are looking at the economic and fiscal impacts, specifically looking at things like employment.

Ms. Pavlos noted her concerns with how benefits may accrue to one group but harm another. Ms. Pavlos also suggested not using the word vulnerable and instead marginalized/oppressed communities.

Ms. Gewirtz suggested that they look at employment and the cannibalization of jobs and how other outside jobs have collapsed.

Ms. Volberg informed her that they are looking at employment conditions, net employment, as well as business starts and failures.

Mr. Crosby noted that Plainville has already started research on employment.

Co-Chair Tucker raised a concern regarding tracking home care employees and other business that may not necessarily leave an obvious gap in business services.

Ms. Queally also noted that they should look at the change in salary.

Mr. Vander Linden informed the group that the new employee survey discusses many of these things. Employees can check off whether they've left previous employment for an increase in benefits, more pay etc.

Ms. Fiore also informed them that tips were an option as well on the survey.

Ms. Glynn went on to discuss the research and strategic planning process along with the purpose of research strategy.

Ms. Pavlos stated that she was concerned about accessibility and usefulness. She feels like there are two sub-research agendas and it is not articulated that way. One sub-research agenda is problem gambling and what are the risk factors and how it is being addressed. The second would be how casino gaming is impacting the Commonwealth and what are the larger trends in population health. She suggested that this be explicitly stated.

Ms. Glynn agreed.

Ms. Pavlos also suggested that it is helpful to have differential language that everyone is aware of, e.g., gaming defined as industry and gambling defined as the individual.

Ms. Volberg stated that gaming is the term that the industry prefers to use.

Ms. Pavlos replied that to know what framework they're discussing it is important that they are distinguished.

Ms. Queally agreed and stated that problem gambling (individual) can be looked at as one of the effects of casino gaming where economic impacts are analyzed.

Co-Chair Tucker also stated that they are distinct and both could impact a community in different ways.

Co-Chair Zuniga asked what the next steps are for this research.

Mr. Vander Linden replied that they believe they will have a draft in November.

Ms. Queally asked if they are engaging any public safety stakeholders.

Mr. Vander Linden informed her that they are on the list of those they plan to speak with.

Co-Chair Tucker asked if they can circulate a stakeholder list to the group.

With no further questions or comments they proceeded with the GameSense Evaluation Presentation.

### **GameSense Evaluation Presentation**

Following Mr. Land's presentation the group was invited to ask questions or comment.

Ms. Pavlos stated that it was helpful and thinks it re-contextualizes the summary that was provided, rather a synthesis of the compendium than a summary.

Mr. Land replied that he knows things should be explicitly laid out.

Ms. Pavlos stated that she would like to see a logic model of how they will be a theory of change.

Ms. Sweeney asked would they characterize it as an independent evaluation of GameSense.

Mr. Land said that he would, although it is not an attempt to conduct a narrative but a conversation in an attempt to capture underlying truths to the extent that they exist.

Mr. Sweeney asked if he was asserting that the Cambridge Health Alliance study was flawed.

Mr. Vander Linden stated that any evaluation that we do has limitations.

Co-Chair Zuniga stated that he wouldn't call it flawed.

Mr. Sweeney noted that the presentation seems more like a criticism of CHA rather than a transfer of knowledge or dissemination of knowledge.

Mr. Land stated that the comment that was received from all reviewers was that evaluation was too difficult for this body to digest in this timeframe.

Mr. Sweeney asked are the memo and the presentation companion documents.

Mr. Land replied that they are and he would view them as companion documents framing GameSense.

Mr. Sweeney asked what the scope of the project was.

Mr. Land replied that it was to write a 3 page summary of compendium and prepare slides that could be presented to this group on this day. Mr. Land also stated that there is more positive information collectively rather than negative and that he would have appreciated a broader view of the program itself.

Mr. Sweeney stated that he would like to have more information on staffing and whether it should be expanded.

Mr. Land replied that more information is needed.

Mr. Sweeney asked why they did not receive a full breakdown from CHA prior to this presentation.

Mr. Crosby stated they he could see from the timing and the process how committee members might interpret the knowledge translation work as whitewashing the results, but that was not the intent. He thinks it's important that the conversation of knowledge transfer, the process that they've gone through with CHA reports, is extensive. He noted that it is the same process that is undertaken with UMASS and SEIGMA. They try to synthesize and put their narrative on it; it is not an attempt to whitewash the material but an attempt to synthesize the information.

Mr. Sweeney stated that he is seeking clarification on the knowledge transfer because it sounds like a reanalysis. He commended CHA for the integrity in their work.

Ms. Queally asked when GameSense advisors are engaging people within the casino what information are they providing with respect to treatment.

Mr. Vander Linden stated that they have information on treatment resources and it can take on many different directions. The advisors have training to assist with providing information.

Ms. Queally stated that most people who think they have a problem with gambling, typically do. She asked if individuals seeking help are being given something in hand that they can bring home to review when they are vulnerable.

Mr. Vander Linden replied that there is a package of information with provider information that they receive.

Ms. Queally asked if there was thought to putting treatment personnel in the casino rather than just referrals.

Mr. Vander Linden informed her that there was not.

Co-Chair Tucker stated that it was included in the statutory language.

Mr. Vander Linden stated that on that topic he believes there is more work to be done regarding handoffs and how to warm transfer and connect people to resources. He also discussed doing more voluntary self-exclusions outside of casinos.

Ms. Queally asked if they are doing anything to measure follow up treatment.

Mr. Vander Linden replied that the closest would be the VSE and if they received any follow-up services.

Co-Chair Zuniga stated they are trying to reach all gamblers. He discussed the quality of the interactions and how it takes a number of “hellos” to get into a more meaningful discussion about gambling habits. He noted that a lot of work needs to be done such as training for employees.

Ms. Pavlos stated that she thinks there are some process missteps that are making it difficult to evaluate what information is being given. She requested that when GameSense comes before the group again, she’d like to see a logic model for the program.

With no further questions or comments from the group from the committee, the Co-Chairs opened the floor to public comment.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. LaPlante stated that she believes this was a missed opportunity to align thinking and that information was received late for DoA’s input of knowledge transfer. She also suggested that work that is supposed to an independent evaluation has a different peer review given that MGC is acting as a supporter and reviewer. She also suggested that independent evaluation is different from research.

Ms. Gray stated that she personally would suggest a cost/benefit analysis of the program. Additionally, she would like the work to be represented accurately and noted that they were not at the table for this process and if they were it would be have been more true to the findings.

Mr. Sweeney agreed and stated that GameSense needs to be evaluated in a non-emotional way. He urged for it be reassessed without placing blame and to determine the best way to spend public dollars. He continued by saying that a significant change needs to occur and issues should be discussed frankly and openly.

Co-Chair Zuniga asked if he thinks that as a binary choice or as in a way the program can be changed. He stated that this is a unique opportunity to have a resource in the casinos.

Mr. Sweeney stated that he believes it is an opportunity to analyze both and discuss the cost effectiveness and ongoing impact of the program. He noted that this program is costly given the limited group of people reached. He is willing to discuss if this body should fund the cost or if the casinos should.

Co-Chair Zuniga stated that it is an effort worth pursuing.

Co-Chair Tucker noted the time and that they will send what they can via email for items that were not discussed. The needs assessment will also be sent and she requested that members send items they would like to address in future meetings.

With no further comments Co-Chair Tucker asked for a motion to adjourn. Michael Sweeney made the motion and Jennifer Queally seconded it. All present members approved and the meeting adjourned at 3:34pm.