



## MILESTONES 2016 – 2019

The Office of Problem Gambling Services was created to ensure a comprehensive and integrated public health response to problem gambling using data to inform initiatives, engage communities, and ensure cultural intelligence and humility. This timeline includes the milestones reached by this Office in working to mitigate the harms of problem gambling.

### 2016

- Co-led, in partnership with the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, the development of the **Strategic Plan for Services to Mitigate the Harms Associated with Gambling in Massachusetts**.

### 2018

#### PREVENTION FOR YOUTH, PARENTS, AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS

- Provided **trainings on suicide and gambling prevention** resulting in 50 providers trained.
- Launched **Photovoice**, an innovative prevention program prioritizing youth and caregivers.
- Implemented the **Ambassador Project**, a peer to peer program prioritizing men of color with a history of substance misuse.

#### COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Coordinated the **Intimate Partner Violence and Gambling Assessment** to inform Intimate Partner Violence Education Programs.
- Developed the **MassMen and Gambling Project**, a self-assessment screening and resource tool for men on MassMen.org.

#### COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Provided **training webinars** to treatment providers on DPH's *Practice Guidelines for Treating Gambling Related Problems*, resulting in over 600 providers trained.
- Launched the **Treatment Gap Analysis**, a comprehensive analysis of gambling treatment in the Commonwealth.

### 2017

#### PREVENTION FOR YOUTH, PARENTS, AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS

- Implemented the **regional planning process** to engage community stakeholders and inform prevention programs.

#### COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Initiated a **community health worker (CHW)** and gambling needs assessment community engagement strategy to inform CHW training and programs.
- Launched the **Problem Gambling and CHW training**.
- Revised "**Your First Step to Change**" 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, an evidence-based self-assessment and intervention tool.

#### COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Published practice guidelines for **Treating Gambling Related Harms**, a web-based platform and an evidence-based treatment resource.
- Conducted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual **Stakeholder Listening Sessions**, an annual community engagement initiative to inform and ensure cultural and community perspective to inform public health initiatives.

### 2019

#### PREVENTION FOR YOUTH, PARENTS, AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS

- Introduced the **Gambling Awareness and Suicide Coalitions Initiative**, a community-based effort to raise awareness of gambling and suicide.
- Launched the statewide communications campaign: **Men of Color with History of Substance Misuse**.
- Published a website with information about community resources for friends and family who are concerned about a person's gambling.

#### COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Initiated the **Community-Level Health Project**, a community level initiative that will identify and address specific gambling-related health concerns and outline improvement initiatives to be carried out at the community level in Springfield and Boston.

#### COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Implemented **Project Build Up**, a grant program aimed at strengthening the capacity of the workforce in outpatient substance use and gambling treatment agencies to provide or promote gambling treatment services.
- Launched the **Helpline Evaluation**, a comprehensive evaluation of the gambling and substance misuse helplines.

# WHY A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH?

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services is committed to the optimal health and well-being for all residents of the Commonwealth and to ensuring they are provided with healthy and equitable communities to work and live in. Research indicates that gambling has comorbidity with other health issues and disproportionately impacts individuals with mental health disorders, substance misuse disorders<sup>1</sup>, and communities of color<sup>2</sup>. In many cases, the drivers of these issues and impact to gambling related problems are the social determinants of health.

A public health perspective promotes the examination of health-related phenomena through a population-based lens, and explores the relationship between individuals, their environments, and gambling behavior. In order to mitigate the harmful effects of gambling and casinos, it is essential to have a public health approach that is centered on data, the engagement of communities, promotion of racial equity, and a focus on eradicating health disparities. Everyone should have the opportunity to be healthy. Everyone has the right to good health. To make this a reality, we must work together to remove barriers so everyone has the same opportunity to improve their lives and their health.

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH TRUST FUND Strategic Plan's Key Priorities and Areas



Prevention for youth



Prevention for high-risk populations



Focus on community-level interventions



Coordination of problem gambling services



Integration of addiction services, mental health services, and primary care



Decrease in stigma and unsupportive social norms



Increase in availability of support services



Increase in availability of culturally appropriate services



Contribution to the evidence base for problem gambling services



Establishment of an evaluation infrastructure



Expansion of institutional capacity to address problem gambling and related issues

### THE PUBLIC HEALTH TRUST FUND

The Expanded Gaming Act of 2011 (Chapter 194) provides for the establishment of up to three destination resort casinos and one slot parlor in Massachusetts. It also allocates significant resources to mitigate the harms associated with gambling through a Public Health Trust Fund (PHTF), focusing on research, prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services to help mitigate the effects of problem gambling and related issues. The Public Trust Fund Executive Committee provides oversight for the Fund.

### PUBLIC HEALTH TRUST FUND STRATEGIC PLAN

In April 2016 the PHTF Executive Committee adopted a Strategic Plan for Services to Mitigate the Harms Associated with Gambling in Massachusetts. The plan provides detailed strategies to address problem gambling and explores the relationships between problem gambling and other health concerns — laying the groundwork for the development of a strong public health response to those issues most affected by the expansion of gambling in Massachusetts.

The plan is implemented primarily by the Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. Implementation is overseen by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, assisted by members of other state agencies and community-based organizations.

1. Kessler, R. C., Hwang, I., LaBrie, R., Petukhova, M., Sampson, N. A., Winters, K. C., & Shaffer, H. J. (2008). DSM-IV pathological gambling in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Psychological medicine*, 38(9), 1351–1360. doi:10.1017/S0033291708002900

2. Alegria, A. A., Petry, N. M., Hasin, D. S., Liu, S. M., Grant, B. F., & Blanco, C. (2009). Disordered gambling among racial and ethnic groups in the US: results from the national epidemiologic survey on alcohol and related conditions. *CNS spectrums*, 14(3), 132–142. doi:10.1017/s1092852900020113