

Online Lottery: New Pathways for Responsible Gambling

By: Marlene D. Warner

In the past 20 years, the responsible and problem gambling field has progressed tremendously in the science and interventions regarding online gambling. Initially, it was known as an unregulated market where people could fall prey to games and promises on servers sitting in a warehouse in the Caribbean, without a hint of responsible gambling. Then, in 2011, it quickly became a race to build the legal U.S. online gambling space, but with minimum standards based off nascent research. Responsible gambling advocates and service providers worried that players would be reclusive, uninhibited, and anonymous in their play behavior and gaming approach.

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College Students at High Risk of Gaming Disorder



Every Fall, there is a great exodus of 18-year-olds who leave their home for the first time to live in college dorms. It can be an exciting time full of growth, but the lack of parental oversight combined with the added social and academic pressure of college may leave some at risk for developing addiction issues of all kinds-including problematic video game use. Prevalence in the US can be hard to pin down since there is no cohesive agreement on what constitutes the disorder. The WHO defines it differently from the American Psychiatric Association, and gaming disorder was not included in the DSM-5. Without a uniform definition, studies have shown prevalence ranging between 1-9 percent in the US population.

The Stanford Sleep Epidemiology Research Center at Stanford University decided to look at the issue of disordered gaming in their own students. Researchers conducted interviews with students lasting more than an hour. If a student reported using the internet and/or an electronic device for at least 15 hours per week and indicated at least five ongoing behavioral issues, internet gaming disorder was diagnosed. 5.3 percent of the students met the criteria set for internet gaming disorder, with the young men scoring only slightly higher than young women. For these students, the most problematic issues included: missing or being late for class; feeling guilty about internet habits; loss of ambition or efficiency; behaving carelessly; having trouble sleeping; going online to escape feeling argumentative, disappointed, frustrated, or worried and lying to others about their online habits. Effective help for gaming disorder remains elusive as many clinicians have no formal training in gaming disorder and struggle to address problematic screen use and video gaming issues with their clients.

MA SHINES AT NCPG AWARDS CEREMONY

The [National Council on Problem Gambling \(NCPG\)](#) held their 2021 Conference virtually this year during the end of the summer. NCPG routinely takes time at their annual conference to honor and reflect on the work of dedicated individuals and organizations who work to propel forward advancements in the fields of problem gambling and responsible gambling.

This year, five, that's right five, individuals and organizations tied to our small but mighty state of Massachusetts (MA) were recognized!

In the Lifetime Awards recipients category, **Dr. Rachel Volberg** from UMass received the monumental Lifetime Research Award. To receive this award, you need to have conducted at least twenty years of treatment on behalf of problem gamblers.

Plainridge Park Casino (PPC), received the Corporate Newsletter Award for their GameSense newsletter which is distributed to all their staff and highlights their ongoing responsible gaming efforts. PPC continues to weave responsible gambling into their business plans and culture, not just during Responsible Gambling Education Week and Problem Gambling Awareness Month but also throughout the year.

CT Mirror journalist **Mark Pazniokiss** received the Media Award for his work on a story titled "Bay State Confronts Problem Gambling in Ways Connecticut Does Not." To write this story, Mr. Pazniokiss visited the GameSense Information Center at MGM in Springfield and learned first-hand about the MGC's pioneering efforts to mitigate against gambling harm. This was the centerpiece of his article.

In the individual achievement category, both MGC Commissioner **Enrique Zuniga** and Senior GameSense Advisor (GSA) Linh Ho received awards for their distinguished efforts. Commissioner Zuniga was celebrated with the Service Award for his exceptional work helping NCPG's Finance Committee.

Senior GSA **Linh Ho** was bestowed with the Johanna Franklin Annual Award for Direct Service for his tremendous outreach efforts with the Asian community, but particularly in the Greater Boston area of MA.

Out of twenty-four possible awards, again five were tied to Massachusetts. This speaks volumes about the course set by the MA legislature and Governor when the MA Gaming Expansion bill was authorized, and it speaks volumes about the tremendous leadership of the MA Gaming Commission, who is at the helm of this ship, steering the way forward.

Next year, the NCPG is poised to hold their annual conference in Boston. So stay tuned, and we can't wait to help to continue to make Massachusetts shine!



RACHEL VOLBERG RECOGNIZED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

It's not every day that one receives a lifetime achievement. Dr. Rachel Volberg received this prestigious award, having been nominated by Marlene Warner for her long history of cutting-edge research since 1985. Dr. Volberg has been conducting problem gambling research before most people saw it as a psychiatric disorder rather than a moral issue. In 1988, her research was the first to receive a National Institute of Health (NIH) grant to study the prevalence of problem gambling in the general population. She has also conducted problem gambling prevalence studies across various demographic populations, including adolescents, Native Americans, and older adults.



KOPEL'S CORNER

Over the years, she evaluated treatment programs and built an international reputation in the problem gambling field, conducting prevalence and longitudinal studies in Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Britain, and Canada. She has conducted mental health research at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand and was a senior scientist at NORC at the University of Chicago. Dr. Volberg is well published and has also sat on the Editorial Boards of the Journal of Gambling Studies, International Gambling Studies, and the electronic Journal of Gambling Issues.

Dr. Volberg lived in the Northampton area, but her work took her around the world. Until the expanded gambling act in November 2011, Massachusetts was not a hotbed of gambling activity. Therefore, Dr. Volberg had not conducted problem gambling research in MA until the MA Gaming Commission awarded her and the UMass Amherst team a contract to conduct a 12 year series of studies known as SEIGMA (Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in MA). As research professor in the University of Massachusetts School of Public Health and lead investigator, the SEIGMA research team is conducting and tracking a variety of studies from before the first casino opened in MA to the present. Among all of the work that Dr. Volberg has been involved in around the globe, the scope and breadth of this comprehensive research effort in MA makes it unprecedented. Although Dr. Volberg has won an award for her lifetime achievement and has worked in this field for 35+ years, much of her most significant work might still be yet to come here in MA.

Some Roads Come to an End

The entire MACGH and GameSense family would like to say farewell Corenna! You will be missed.

Thank you for your contribution. We wish you all the best and continued success!



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Present:

FOUNDATIONS IN GAMING DISORDER

FEATURED PRESENTERS:



Dr. Sussman Dr. Spector Dr. Cash Dr. Potenza Karen Hlady

and MORE... Join us!

September 21st, 22nd, October 5th & 6th
11:45am – 5:00pm EST each day
(last day ends early)