



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Fiscal Year 2019 July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019



PREVENTION

EDUCATION & TRAINING

INFORMATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS

REFERRAL

ADVOCACY



Massachusetts Council on  
**Compulsive Gambling**  
*We understand the problem. We can help.*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friend,

This year marks the 36<sup>th</sup> for the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. During this time, the Council staff has worked to provide gambling focused health services in the Commonwealth. From providing information and public awareness outreach, community education and professional training, advocacy, Helpline referral services and resources, the Council's work has

been far reaching in the impact it has had on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

As I look back at the previous year of work, I'm in awe of the number of people we directly engaged from all backgrounds across the Commonwealth. Between GameSense, our responsible gambling program, and our services and programs, we had direct face-to-face engagements with over 200,000 individuals throughout the state. Collectively, our staff speaks seven languages and brings a high level of experience from the gambling industry, social services, and direct public health programing.

We're extremely grateful for our partnerships with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Mass. Gaming Commission (MGC). Without their support and guidance, we would be unable to train clinicians, educate patrons at casinos, and assist players who desire to participate in the Voluntary Self Exclusion Program (VSE). Most recently, the MGC awarded the Mass. Council with a 3-year, \$9 million contract, to operate the GameSense program – and we're excited for this opportunity.

When Tom Cummings founded the Council 36 years ago, the issue of problem gambling was, at best, ignored or dismissed as personal choice. Fortunately,

due to years of research, education and advocacy, gambling addiction is now better understood and less stigmatized than ever, but more needs to be done.

While we're collectively proud of what we've accomplished we are preparing for significant challenges ahead. From illegal online gambling, sports betting on smart phones, to video games marketed to children that contain elements of wagering and betting, the landscape of gambling has expanded and evolved – and as an organization we're evolving too.

With both the past and the future in mind, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report to you in what has been a special year for the Council. The report details the projects and accomplishments. We are grateful to you, our supporters, for your continued interest and commitment to the work of the Council.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Marlene D. Warner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marlene D. Warner,  
Executive Director



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING OFFICERS AND MEMBERS:

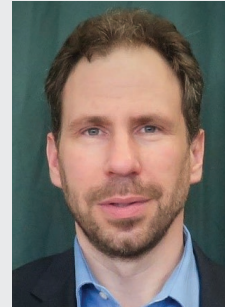
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VICE PRESIDENT  
Paul Sternburg



TREASURER  
Bryant Richards



SECRETARY  
Dr. William Dávila

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## DIRECTORS

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Stephen P. Crosby



Dawn DiStefano



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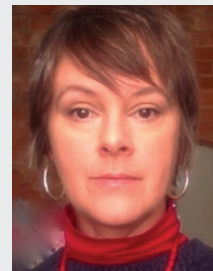
Mark Hichar, Esq.



Steven Janssen



David Monahan, Esq.



Dr. Vera Parham



Joe Rocco



# GameSense

## GameSense ACTIVITIES & GAMES

The Mass. Gaming Commission voted to reward the Mass. Council the contract to operate the GameSense program – and to train and hire the 25 GameSense Advisors (GSAs). The GSAs are at the heart of our player health programming and run the GameSense Info Centers (GSIC) located at Encore Boston Harbor, MGM Springfield and Plainridge Park Casino. GameSense is a “Point of Sale” program in which GSAs interact with patrons and staff to



promote positive play and reduce gambling-related harms.

*Ray Fluette, a Senior GameSense Advisor, spoke to Channel 5 TV as an expert on Responsible Gambling and GameSense.*

Over the previous year, GSAs had over 200,000 conversations with patrons. These conversations range in variety but involve engaging with players to inform their choices, connecting players to self-assessment tools, providing information to help them recognize the signs of problem gambling and referring them to community-based resources if they wish to seek professional help. Specific objectives of the GameSense program include:

- Educate players about how gambling and individual games work
- Support/encourage responsible gaming and positive play
- Promote targeted informed-player choice
- Connect players to additional available resources and tools
- Coordinate with Massachusetts Department of Public Health to ensure that information on community-based resources for persons seeking professional help is current and adequate for the population in need.

**Our GSAs are on hand at all three state casino properties from 9AM – 1AM every day.**

## GameSense TRAINING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

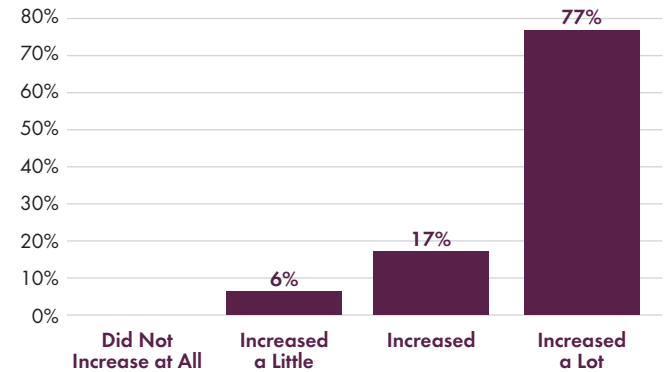
GameSense Advisors did more than engage with patrons on site. During this past fiscal year, the Mass. Council developed an outreach strategy for the Encore Boston Harbor Host and Surrounding Communities, and efforts were carried out by a lead GameSense Advisor. GameSense Advisors designed and delivered presentations to high-risk groups in the community. The intent is to reach persons before they visit the casino to promote positive play, reduce gambling-related harm, and make them aware of GameSense as a resource.

**Our GameSense Advisors are experts in their fields and over the previous year have received extensive training in the areas including:** *Recovery Support, Problem Gambling, Myths & Misconceptions, Military Culture, Research, GameSense Presentations, Suicide Prevention, Financial Literacy, Emerging Trends in Gambling, Cultural Humility, Gambling & the Brain, Risk and Protective Factors, Harm Reduction and Responsible Gambling, Motivational Interviewing, Mental Health First Aid, Spokesperson Training and Voluntary Self-Exclusion Options for Patrons.*

GameSense Advisers trained over 2,900 casino staff and new hires about problem gambling and how to utilize GameSense as a tool for themselves and patrons.

*Presentation evaluations in FY19 revealed increases in knowledge about GameSense and responsible gambling. Presentation and training evaluations have been collected since May 2019.*

### **Presentation Evaluations (over 2,000): After seeing this presentation, would you say that your knowledge:**



*New GameSense Advisors, June 2019*

## PROGRAM SERVICES



### EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Mass. Council Programs and Services Team is here to assist when a person needs help for their gambling or for a loved one.

#### 473 People Utilize Gambling Helpline

Our 24-hour Helpline provides referrals to local treatment and self-help groups. Helpline staff send information to callers customized to meet their needs. We had more than 17,000 unique visitors to the Helpline portion of our website and 473 callers completing a Helpline intake.

#### More than 1700 Providers Received 180 Hours of Live Trainings

The Council worked to strengthen the capacity of Massachusetts behavioral health system so that clinical staff can effectively serve people with problem gambling and their distressed loved ones. We do this by offering specialized training and by providing technical assistance to treatment agencies.

#### Over 2,000 People Participated in Awareness Activities Led by Our Outreach and Recovery Support Coordinator

Finally, we work to influence the Culture of Recovery by raising awareness within MDPH, Recovery Centers and other peer-led organizations. Problem gambling issues often appear when people are in recovery from substance use or other mental health disorders. We promote problem gambling awareness so that the community can identify problematic behavior among their peers and actively support those who identify as being in recovery from a gambling addiction.

## RECOVERY: GAMBLING-FREE WEEKEND RETREAT

In May we welcomed 24 participants at “Your First Step to Change: A Gambling-Free Weekend.” This is a retreat for people struggling with gambling, and their support person, who would like to explore recovery. In the beautiful woods of Bolton, MA participants and their support persons attend workshops, and discuss finances, decision-making and self-care. Therapists are on hand to provide group and individual support. Loved ones enjoy workshops tailored especially for them. This has been an annual activity since 2011 and it has been truly life changing for many participants.

Attendees described the 2019 Retreat as “empowering,” “positive,” and “supportive.” They shared that it gave them “the desire to continue in their recovery” and that it inspired them “to use the knowledge to help others”. One participant wrote “I have gained so much knowledge. I believe I am leaving with the tools to cope with my spouse’s addiction.”

The Weekend Retreat is designed to be a place of support and healing. For many attendees, this is the first experience they have in an environment that openly addresses the issue of problem gambling without shame or blame.



*This past summer, Jodie Nealley, Recovery & Outreach Coordinator with the Mass. Council, received the Jeffrey M. Beck Recovery Ambassador Award from the National Council on Problem Gambling.*



## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



*The Council annually advocates with the executive and legislative branches, as well as other public officials, to ensure that services are in place across the Commonwealth to meet the needs of people experiencing problems with gambling.*

### ADVOCACY

The last time we expanded gambling in the Commonwealth, the legislature put its best effort forward to make sure protective factors were built into the statute that legalized casinos. Doing so positioned the state as a national leader. The Commonwealth is again considering a cadre of bills that would legalize sports betting and online gambling. The Mass. Council is committed to remaining in the forefront of these discussions to ensure responsible gambling provisions, rigorous research, safety measures and resources are in place and codified in law.

Advocacy is at the core of our mission. It allows us to:

- Provide a voice for those affected by gambling disorder
- Attain funding for gambling disorder services
- Ensure gambling disorder is included in public policy debates on gambling expansion and compliance
- Negotiate successful gambling regulations during this era of expanded gambling by working with the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Convene the Massachusetts Partnership for Responsible Gambling – a landmark alliance of gambling industry leaders who work together to increase public awareness of gambling disorder, encouraging programs for education and prevention, and promoting responsible gambling policies and practices in their establishments

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Mass. Council had a successful year raising public awareness through our digital social media platforms, website, print media and broadcast TV. Using media is an important tactic to advance public policy initiatives, advocate for communities, promote services and raise public awareness. Over the previous fiscal year, the Mass. Council quintupled our social media reach and generated more than two dozen positive news articles and broadcast TV segments.



**BH** Boston Herald

Gaming experts talk responsible gambling ahead of Encore opening

**M** MassLive.com

How MGM Springfield is handling problem gambling

... Gaming Commission said Massachusetts's efforts to educate players are ... Amy Gabrilla, a senior advisor with the commission's GameSense ...  
Mar 29, 2019

**BH** Boston Herald

Experts: Sports gambling carries costs

Experts: Sports gambling carries costs ... Marlene Warner, the executive director of the nonprofit Massachusetts Council on Compulsive ...  
Jan 17, 2019



## GENERAL RESOURCES

### Are you looking to talk to someone who can help?

Since 1987, the Council Helpline has been ready to take your call 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. We're here to listen, to offer information, and to provide referrals for self-help, treatment providers and other community resources to people experiencing problems with gambling.

Council Helpline services are free and confidential. Helpline Specialists provide emotional support and referrals for people affected by problems with gambling.

The helpline is answered in English, but translators are available in EVERY language.

**Call our confidential Helpline 24-hours a day 7 days a week at 1-800-426-1234 or visit our website at: [www.maccg.org](http://www.maccg.org)**

### Are you wondering if you should attend a self-help meeting located near you?

To find a self-help meeting near you or to check out our other resources, visit [maccg.org/get-help/call-for-help/](http://maccg.org/get-help/call-for-help/)

## MASSACHUSETTS PROBLEM GAMBLING SPECIALIST (MA PGS) CERTIFICATE

### The Mass. Council provided live trainings for 1,700 clinicians in Fiscal Year 2019!

The Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MA PGS) Certificate was created through a partnership between the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (Mass. Council) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (DPH/BSAS). This certificate is a result of an ongoing integration project to help substance use disorder clinicians to understand and recognize the importance of screening, assessing, and treating gambling disorder within their current clinical populations and in clients that present with gambling disorder as their primary diagnosis.

#### We offer:

- Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling Training Institute
- Statewide Trainings
- Regional Trainings
- Annual Conference
- Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MA-PGS) certificate
- Technical Assistance
- Resources for Professionals

To learn more about upcoming trainings, visit: [www.maccg.org](http://www.maccg.org)

## TRAINING INSTITUTE

Our 4-day Fall Training Institute was held at the Center for Human Development in Springfield, MA. Twenty-eight clinicians are returning to their therapeutic settings better able to identify and care for people whose lives are affected by a gambling disorder. Beyond just serving clients, MA Problem Gambling Certificate holders raise awareness among their colleagues about the importance of integrating problem gambling treatment into the addiction clinical setting.

*“I really want to see a lot more people get trained. Don't be scared off by the whole idea, because gambling is here now and there's more to come, and there's a lot of work to be done. It can be extremely rewarding to work with problem gamblers. I really encourage everybody to get certified.”*

*- Dot Duda -LMHC, MA PGS*

# FINANCIALS

## SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

June 30, 2019

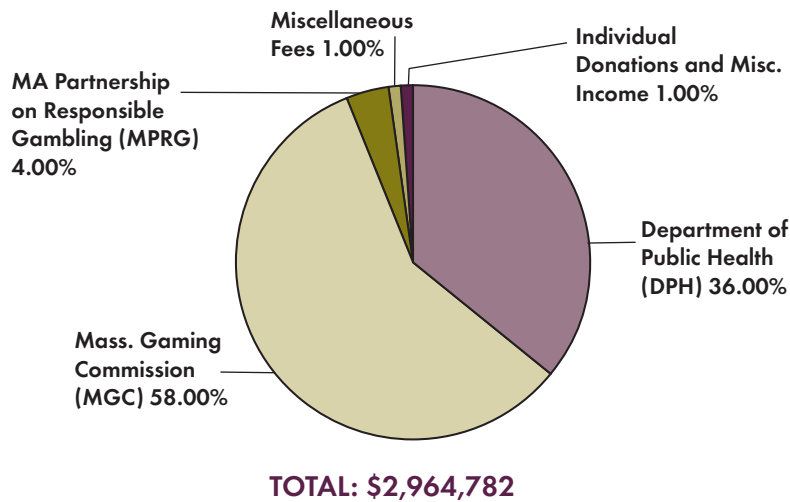
### ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS:	Cash	\$ 185,102
	Contract and Other Receivables	\$ 123,216
	Prepaid Expenses	\$ 23,281
	Total Current Assets	\$ 331,599
	<u>Property and Equipment Net</u>	<u>\$ 18,090</u>
		<b>\$349,689</b>

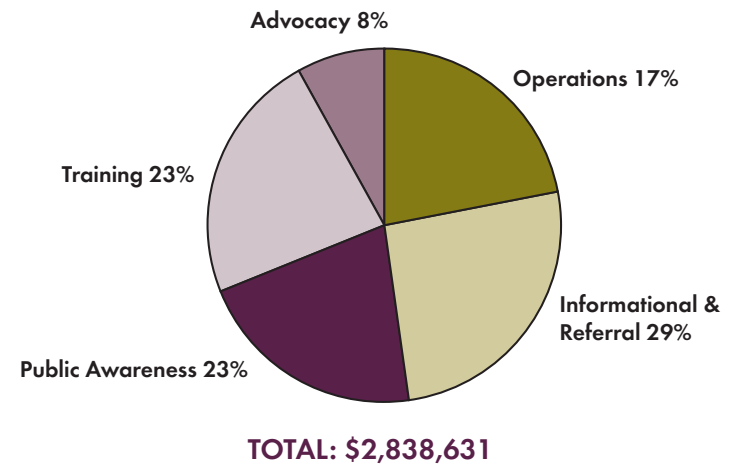
### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

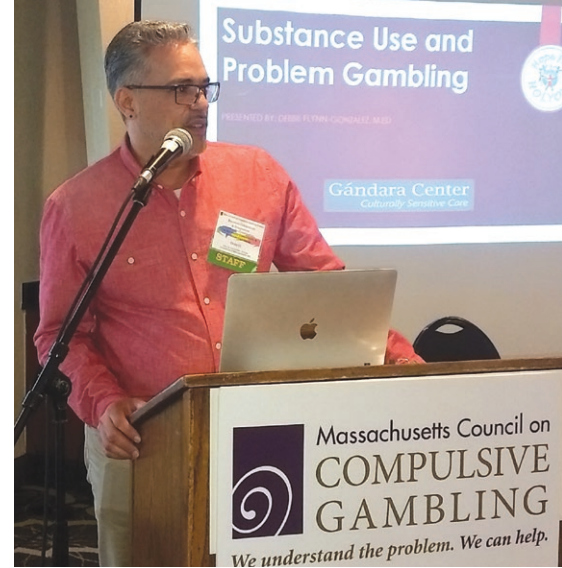
CURRENT	Current Maturities of Long-term Debt	\$ 68,705
LIABILITIES:	Accounts Payable	\$ 95,459
	Accrued Expenses	\$ 199,488
	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 363,652
	<u>Long-term Debt, Less Current Maturities</u>	<u>\$ 239,231</u>
	Total Liabilities	\$ 602,883
	<u>Net Assets (deficit) Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>\$(253,194)</u>
		<b>\$349,689</b>

### SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR FY19



### SOURCES OF EXPENSES BY PROGRAM FOR FY19







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Email: [info@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:info@masscompulsivegambling.org)  
Web: [maccg.org](http://maccg.org)  
Twitter: @MassCouncil  
Facebook: MACouncil  
Instagram: MassCouncilcg

*We understand the problem. We can help.*

Founded in 1983, the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit public health agency. We advocate for responsible gaming and gambling practices and services for those affected by gambling. We aim to reduce the impacts of gambling disorder and strive to make gambling healthy and safe for the people of Massachusetts. We are neither for nor against legalized gambling. We accomplish our mission through education, advocacy, and by providing resources. We serve people who gamble, their families, caregivers, and the community at large.