



# The Massachusetts Council ON GAMING AND HEALTH

*We Understand the Problem. We Can Help.*



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR MARLENE WARNER

OUR TEAM

GAMESENSE

EDUCATION & TRAINING  
PROGRAMS

GAMBLING & GAMING  
RESOURCES

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL  
PARTNERSHIP WORK



## Financial Reality Check

INCOME	EXPENSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Salary (ies)</li> <li>○ Government subsidy (social security, unemployment, etc.)</li> <li>○ Trust</li> <li>○ Rent from tenant</li> <li>○ Retirement account</li> <li>○ Pension</li> <li>○ Return from investments</li> <li>○ Other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing</li> <li>○ Utilities—Phone, Internet, Electric, Gas/Oil</li> <li>○ Transportation—Loan, Service, Gas, Passes</li> <li>○ Clothing</li> <li>○ Food</li> <li>○ Healthcare</li> <li>○ Education</li> <li>○ Entertainment</li> <li>○ Credit cards, loans</li> <li>○ Child support</li> </ul>



# ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2021 • July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

# A Message from Executive Director Marlene D. Warner



Dear Friend,

This year marks my twentieth year with the Massachusetts Council and my tenth serving as Executive Director. Upon reflection, I am filled with gratitude for our dedicated staff and engaged Board of Directors in what has arguably been among the most challenging times since our organization's inception in 1983. In our first full year with our new organization name, the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health (MACGH), our programs and services have transcended beyond the borders of Massachusetts, reaching new global audiences.

This year, MACGH recently formed a partnership with Spectrum Gaming Group, also known as Spectrum Safer Gaming Advisors (SSGA). In collaboration, we develop and execute best practices in responsible gambling with gambling and gaming vendors worldwide. This team is also at the forefront of developing, operating, regulating, researching, and reviewing responsible and problem gambling initiatives worldwide.

MACGH's work has also expanded to address problematic gaming and gaming disorder. With the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling in Washington, we successfully designed and implemented "Foundations in Gaming Disorder," a 15.5-hour course for clinicians and prevention specialists. The cutting-edge curriculum focuses on at-risk video gaming and gaming disorder, including the stages of prevention, treatment, and recovery. We hope this toolkit serves as an industry resource in screening, identifying, and treating gaming disorder.

Amidst the shifts to a remote work environment, MACGH's talented staff excelled. Gambling and gaming increasingly move to online digital platforms. Our staff has done a tremendous job staying abreast and adjusting our programs and services accordingly. Our GameSense Advisors and Designated Agents now conduct remote enrollment sessions for our Voluntary Self-Exclusion program for those looking to remove themselves from the gaming

floor of state casinos. By all accounts, we're the first organization in North America to offer this vital service remotely. GameSense Advisors and other Council staff have fielded messages on our 24/7 LiveChat platform from all over the world. Whether an individual has a question about gambling or is seeking help for themselves or a loved one, our team continues to serve as a reliable, evidence-based resource.

As deeply proud as I am for the work we've done, our organization understands the rise of legalized sports gambling is taking hold – bringing with it new challenges. Although research and services for problem gambling and gaming have grown in recent years, it has by no means kept pace with the public health needs and trends. Therefore, MACGH will continue to advocate for greater industry transparency and public health services for those that need them.

We are incredibly thankful for our partnership with the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) and a variety of local and national advocacy and public health organizations. We also owe a debt of gratitude to policymakers and legislators who wisely prioritize funding gambling-related services that help mitigate the harms of gambling and gaming. As a result, Massachusetts leads the nation in responsible and problem gambling programs, and the Council is proud to have played a leading role in this effort.

With a bright future and lots of work ahead of us, I am pleased to present this MACGH Annual Report to you in what has been a memorable and impactful year for the Council. We are grateful to you, our supporters, for your continued interest in advancing the critical work of the Council and helping those people most in need.

Yours, in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marlene D. Warner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Marlene D. Warner,  
Executive Director

*"The Board of Directors of MACGH is proud of what we've accomplished over the previous year. We successfully pivoted our trainings and seminars to virtual environments when presented with the challenges from COVID-19. Financially, we've strengthened our footing, better ensuring that our organization will be able to run programs and services to meet the needs of the public and continue to lead in the field of gaming and gambling. With the Commonwealth on the cusp of legalized sports betting and the continued proliferation of video gaming, MACGH took significant steps anticipating the evolving landscape.*

*We also recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to worsen mental health problems, including increasing engagement in addictive behaviors. As a result, the importance of MACGH being accessible to the general public has never been greater – and we've taken steps to meet those needs. For example, in March, we launched LiveChat, a 24/7 online service that allows individuals from anywhere in the world to chat live with MACGH trained employees through their smartphones and computer and access resources or find help in their community in six languages. We are committed to ongoing efforts to meet the needs of the community.*

*With decades of excellence behind us and a bright future ahead, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report to you in what has been a transformational year for the Council. We are grateful to you, our supporters, for your continued interest and commitment to public health."*

– President, Martha T. Kane, Ph.D.

## Board Of Directors

### The Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health Officers & Members:



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Martha T. Kane, Ph.D.



**Vice President**  
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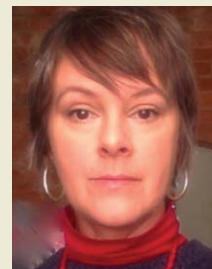
Dawn DiStefano



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David Monahan, Esq.



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John Perry



Joe Rocco



## GameSense Advisors: Making a First-Hand Impact

# Here to help.



GameSense Advisors (GSAs) are highly-trained specialists that can help players keep their gambling fun. GSAs staff information centers at the three Massachusetts casinos and manage the 24/7 LiveChat and GamLine. Armed with a diverse range of industry experiences and multilingual skills, this team serves as the first point of contact for players with gambling-related questions. GSAs draw on their expertise to help educate players about the game rules, the odds and probability of winning, the importance of taking breaks, and setting time and budget limits for gambling. Demos, brochures, videos, public speaking events, and educational games are just some of the ways that GSAs connect with communities locally and nationally.

In addition to their ambassador role guiding and promoting responsible gambling, GSAs are trained to identify and assist individuals seeking problem gambling resources. Our GameSense Advisors collectively bring decades of gaming, hospitality, and mental health experience – providing robust, around-the-clock player support. Whether it's helping a player find a self-help group or enrolling someone in a Voluntary Self-Exclusion program, GSAs are there to help players find the support they need.

### In the Press



## Bay State confronts problem gambling in ways CT does not

by Mark Paziokas May 18, 2021



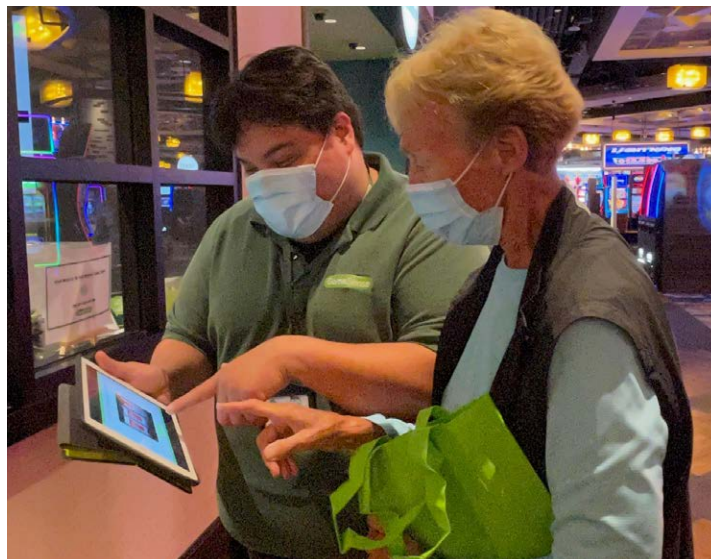
# GameSense: Public Outreach Highlights



In January, GameSense Advisor Amy Gabriela presented a one-hour seminar on MassAccess. Geared to Bay State seniors, Gabriela's presentation outlined what gambling looks like in older adults, explored the positive benefits vs. risk factors, and shared GameSense and MACGH resources. *The episode, The Guide to Gambling in the Golden Years, can be viewed here* ►



MACGH and GameSense had the opportunity to partner with RG24seven, a world-renowned leader in responsible gambling. GameSense Advisors Joshua Molyneaux and David Tang traveled to Las Vegas to participate as experts in a state-of-the-art compliance-grade responsible gaming training for online platforms. Molyneaux and Tang shared best practices for communication with patrons, directing players to resources, and Voluntary Self-Exclusion.



The GSAs and the GameSense program help inform patrons through one-on-one and small group conversations. Because of COVID safety precautions, many traditional strategies had to be adapted and moved to interactive digital presentations and displays (to avoid handouts). One of the most significant accomplishments is implementing Remote Voluntary-Self Exclusion – allowing individuals to enroll instead of meeting an authorized agent one-on-one remotely. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first program to institute Remote VSEs anywhere in the world!

# Problem Gambling & Gaming Trainings and Programs

## Problem Gambling Trainings

The Mass. Council provided live trainings to 246 clinicians throughout the region in 2021!

The pandemic shifted all training to virtual platforms this year. In this, more clinicians, psychotherapists, and educators could access our curriculum. MACGH offered a wide selection of professional development opportunities and training surrounding gambling disorder.

**"I highly recommend the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health to clinicians and everyone impacted by gambling and gaming addiction. They mean it when they say, 'We understand the problem. We can help.'"**

- Tom Wright, D.Min., LICSW



## Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE)

In addition, MACGH staff trained 89 Designated Agents in a community-based effort to increase access to the Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) program. The VSE program is a vital first step for many in the process of recovery. However, MACGH provides more than just VSEs. We also offer telephone recovery support (TRS) in the form

of phone follow-ups by our recovery specialist, who offers customized goal setting and recovery coaching. TRS is open to anyone but is generally provided to VSE participants, individuals who have connected via the GamLine or LiveChat, or those who have previously expressed interest in additional resources.

To remain responsive during COVID-19, we developed remote VSE enrollment, the first of its kind in the nation. Patrons can continue to self-exclude in person, but can now also enroll via confidential, accessible online platforms. Just like in-person enrollment, trained Designated Agents staff remote initial VSE enrollment meetings and facilitate regular check-ins. Over 1,000 individuals have enrolled in Massachusetts' VSE and over 20 percent have enrolled remotely.

*"Massachusetts not only offers world-class casinos, but world-class services like Voluntary Self-Exclusion that provide support to those who need it most. Secure remote enrollment options are the best way to reach folks. I hope to see this model replicated across the country." - Mark Vanderlinden, Director of Research, Massachusetts Gaming Commission*

*"Banning myself was the best thing for me. I'm so relieved. I understand I need 12-step programs to get to the root of my addiction, but at least I*

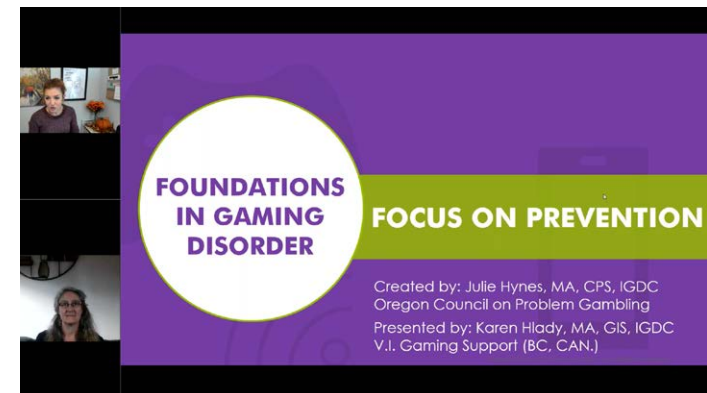
*stopped the bleeding for now. I'm so grateful." - Fred\**

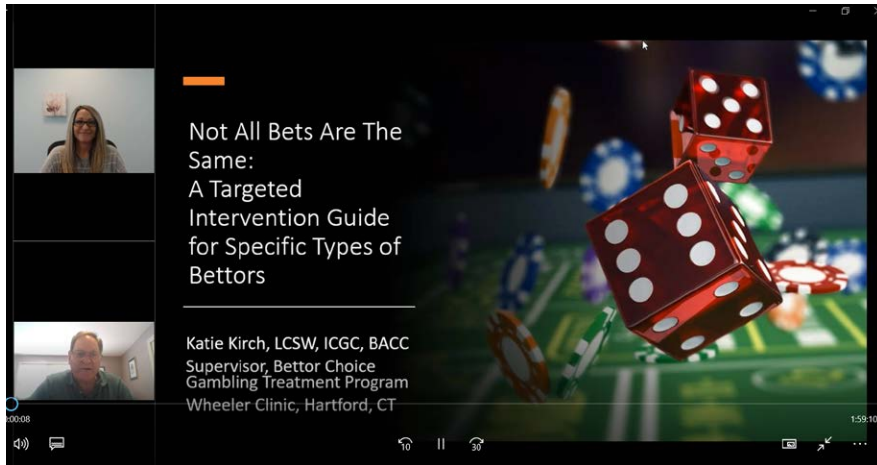
*"Thank you for offering TRS. This was something I truly needed to do. I lost my husband unexpectedly two months ago and I was going to the casino more and more out of depression. I had to stop." - Michele\**

*"I really appreciated that I didn't have to enroll for a Massachusetts VSE in person. I want to do it with all other out-of-state casinos now. The Council gave me clear suggestions and coping strategies on how to tackle that. They were tremendously helpful." - Josh\**

## Gaming Disorder Trainings

We also expanded our repertoire to develop and conduct trainings focused on gaming disorder. With the Evergreen Council, we launched a





successful and accredited “Foundations in Gaming Disorder” (FIGD), a 15.5-hour course for clinicians and prevention specialists. Led by national experts, the FIGD curriculum addresses at-risk video gaming and gaming disorder from prevention through treatment and recovery. MACGH only added problematic gaming to our mission last fiscal year. However, MACGH has stepped up to establish one of the most comprehensive trainings in the nation for problem video gaming.

## Community Outreach

### Customized Presentations

During the fiscal year 2021, MACGH delivered 22 outreach presentations to over 500 individuals. The presentations raised awareness of problem gambling, responsible gambling, GameSense, and Voluntary Self-Exclusion. The one-hour presentations were tailored to various audiences, including public health and community concerns within older adult, veteran and Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations.

## Local TV

MACGH staff filmed a series of Public Service Announcements and a roundtable conversation raising awareness around gambling and public health. Mass Access Community Television syndicated these conversations, which are estimated to have reached more than 700,000 viewers throughout the Commonwealth.



# Gambling & Gaming Resources



*"I knew for sure that if I went to Gamblers Anonymous and the Mass Council, they would understand. They did." - David*

At the Council, we know that recovery from gambling and gaming disorder is possible. We seek to reduce stigma and offer meaningful, compassionate support to those impacted. Our 24/7 GamLine (1-800-GAM-1234) was one of the first formal efforts to support recovery and encourage positive play in the Commonwealth. Today, it serves as an entry point for Voluntary Self-Exclusion enrollment, provides individuals information on local resources, and offers a listening ear, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Meeting the needs of individuals requires us to both be consistent in our quality and pliable enough to shift our programs to the quickly evolving landscape of gaming and gambling. As gambling and gaming increasingly move online,

it was vital to offer virtual services. As part of that effort, MACGH launched our LiveChat last March. The platform is staffed 24/7 and allows individuals from anywhere in the world to speak with a trained MACGH employee about the rules of the game, information on local resources, and tips on safe play. In its relatively short lifespan, the LiveChat average monthly number of calls already matches the number of our longer-established 1-800-GAM-1234 GamLine.

At MACGH, we work to shift the culture of recovery to be inclusive of gambling disorder. The goal is for peers in recovery to identify a gambling issue and offer support at the first signs of a problem, much as they might around a relapse for drugs or alcohol. Our Recovery and Outreach Liaison offers trainings,

educational groups, speaks at recovery-oriented events and conferences. She also coordinates our Recovery Advisory Board, a group of peers who have been impacted by gambling addiction. The heart of our work will always be to walk with people on their journey to a healthier life free of gambling problems.

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impacted by gambling addiction. The heart of our work will always be to walk with people on their journey to a healthier life free of problem gambling problems.

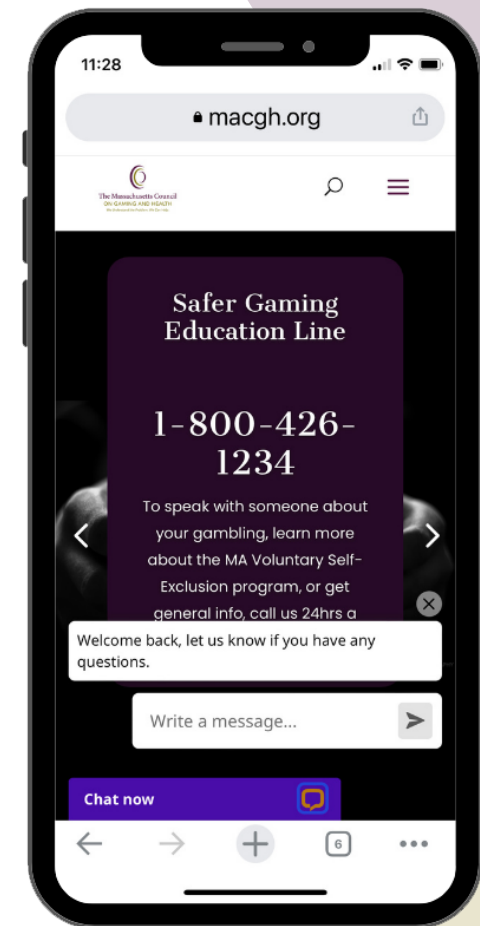
Problematic gaming is a newer area of research for MACGH, but we stand ready to assist. Our research and programming focus on helping

communities recognize the signs and symptoms of gaming disorder, especially among children and youth. We also proudly maintain strong partnerships with local counselors, outpatient facilities, and national leaders in the field to ensure innovative research and high-quality referrals.

**If you or someone you care about is struggling with gambling or gaming...**

**Call the GamLine at 1-800-GAM-1234 or reach out to our GameSense Advisors via LiveChat at MACGH.org.**

**For information about problem gambling meetings or other resources, visit our Need Help? page. For information on problem video gaming or treatment resources, visit our resource page.**



***"When you're dealing with someone else's addiction, it's important for you to get help yourself."***

*- Pamela on utilizing MACGH's resources for loved ones impacted by addiction*

# National and International Partnership Work

## Spectrum Gaming Group

In March of 2021, Spectrum Gaming Group and the Mass. Council launched a responsible gaming partnership designed to execute planning and best practices in responsible gambling with gambling and gaming vendors. Collectively, staff from Spectrum and MACGH have developed, operated, regulated, researched, and reviewed responsible and problem gambling initiatives worldwide.

Spectrum Gaming Group (SGG) is a non-partisan consultancy specializing in the economics, regulation, and policy of legalized gambling worldwide. SGG has worked in 41 U.S. states, along with territories in 48 countries and six continents. Spectrum also serves as the Executive Director of the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS). The Mass. Council is proud of this new partnership and how it will help bring our efforts to minimize gambling harm to the international community.



## National Council on Problem Gambling Annual Conference

The Mass. Council is proud to host the National Council on Problem Gambling's (NCPG) Annual Conference, the largest and oldest yearly conference on gambling addiction and responsible gambling in the world. MACGH will host with support from the Northeast Consortium on Problem Gambling (NECPG). The conference will utilize a dual format, with an online Digital Symposium June 8-9 and in-person sessions July 20-23, 2022, at the Westin Seaport in downtown Boston, Massachusetts.

The conference convenes individuals and organizations working on prevention, education, treatment, responsible gambling, research, and recovery. MACGH staff are also slated to led educational sessions during the conference. More details will be updated as it becomes available on MACGH.org.



## National Conference on Gambling Addiction & Responsible Gambling 2022

*Better Together: Advocacy, Awareness & Assistance*

June 8-9 ★ Digital Symposium

July 20-23 ★ Main Conference & Workshops



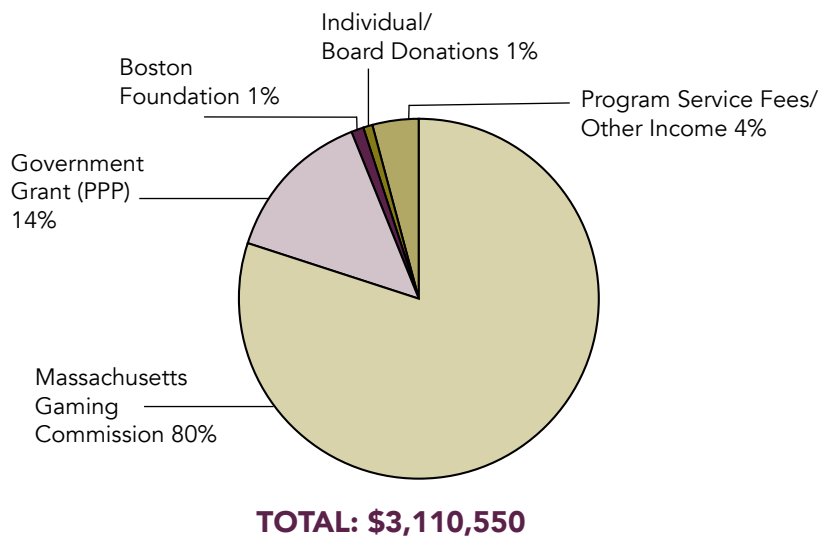
**ASSETS**

CURRENT ASSETS:	Cash	\$ 762,397
	Contract and Other Receivables	\$ 166,982
	Prepaid Expenses	\$ 29,998
	<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 959,377</b>
	Property and Equipment Net	\$ 12,326
	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$971,703</b>

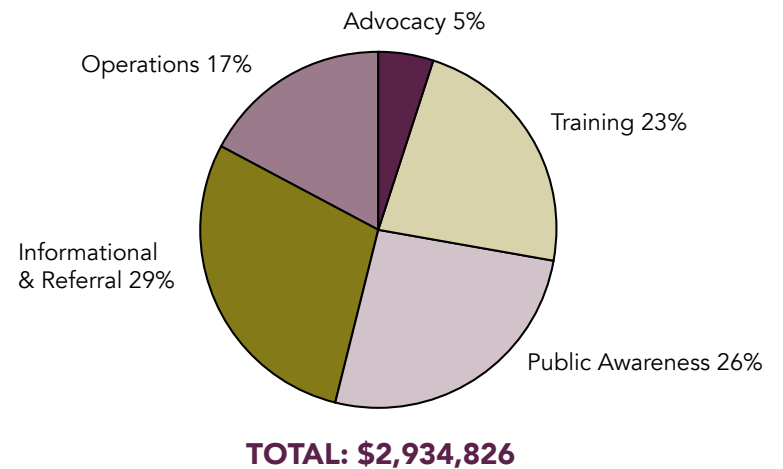
**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

CURRENT LIABILITIES:	Current Maturities of Long-term Debt	\$ 85,197
	Accounts Payable	\$ 31,390
	Accrued Expenses	\$ 146,085
	<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 262,672</b>
	Note Payable, Other	\$ 491,057
	Long-term Debt, Less Current Maturities	\$ 230,108
	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 983,837</b>
	Net Assets (deficit) Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 12,134
	<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 971,703</b>

**Sources of Revenue for FY21**



**Sources of Expenses by Program for FY21**



## Contributors

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The Council is grateful to the following individuals and organizations who have contributed to the Council's mission through their generous contributions.

Beth Bresnahan	Pierre Gabriel	Yves Montima	Jess Stewart
Candice Burnett	Amy Gabriela	Cheryl B Moss	Corey Welford
Stephen Crosby	Linda Garvey-Dickey	Vera Parham	Katina Williams
William Davila	Mark Hichar	John Perry	Comma Williams
Sasha Davila	Steven Janssen	Marc Potenza	Roy Woodman
David Delgallo	Martha Kane	Bryant Richards	Rasky
Jeffrey Derevensky	Donna Levesque	Joseph Rocco	Network for Good
Dawn DiStefano	Geoffrey Locke	Barbara Rollins	The Boston Foundation
Don Feeney	Vincent Lorenti	Maria Santana	
Deanna Foster	Margaret Malt	Mary Sojourner	
Joan Friese	David Monahan	Paul Sternburg	



# The Massachusetts Council ON GAMING AND HEALTH

*We Understand the Problem. We Can Help.*

83 Morse Street, Building 6, Suite 8F, Norwood, MA 02062  
Office: 617-426-4554

Email: [info@macgh.org](mailto:info@macgh.org) | Web: [macgh.org](http://macgh.org) | Twitter: [@MassCouncilGH](https://twitter.com/MassCouncilGH)  
Facebook: [@MACouncil](https://www.facebook.com/MACouncil) | Instagram: [@masscouncilgh](https://www.instagram.com/masscouncilgh)

The Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health (MACGH) is a statewide non-profit agency that promotes public health by mitigating the negative personal and community impacts of gambling and gaming.

We accomplish our mission through training and education, federal and state advocacy, research and gaming play information, and prevention and recovery programs. We serve individuals who game and gamble and their loved ones. Since its inception in 1983, the Mass. The Council has taken a neutral stance on legal gambling and gaming and worked with key stakeholders such as gaming operators, vendors, regulators, clinicians, people in recovery, and other community-based agencies.