

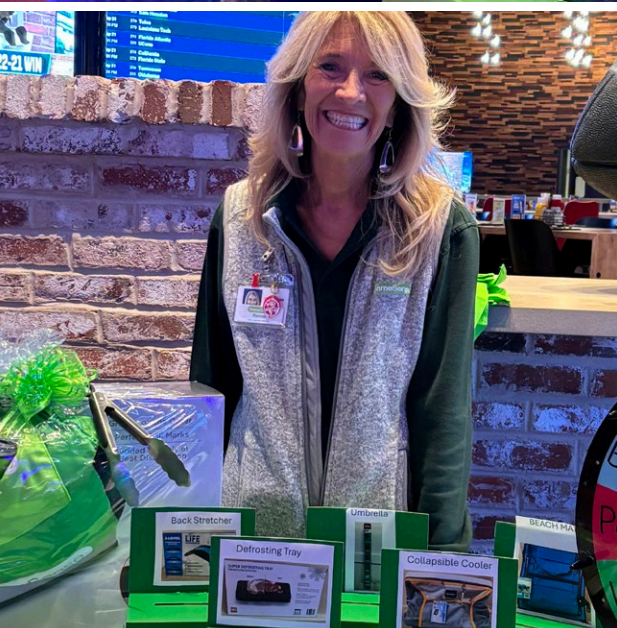


The Massachusetts Council on
GAMING AND HEALTH



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024:
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



A Message from Chief Executive Officer, Marlene D. Warner



Dear Friends,

It has been a tremendous year for the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health. We continue to build capacity, provide services to those in need, and advocate for a strong safety net as

states expand legalized gambling.

To support the growing number of people in Massachusetts casinos and mobile sports betting, our GameSense team offers various touchpoints via chat. Dr. Michael Wohl's third-party evaluation of GameSense will further strengthen our efforts.

We also assist individuals with issues related to lottery games and daily fantasy sports. These

conversations drive us to provide culturally appropriate information, beneficial treatment, universal limits, and self-exclusion options.

Our research and advocacy efforts include working on responsible gambling elements of a Model I-Gaming Act, promoting ilottery safeguards, and advocating for voluntary self-exclusion programs.

We are committed to growth, sharing our expertise across Massachusetts, the nation, and the world. Our initiatives include evidence-based services in Vermont, consulting with Spectrum Gaming Group, and expanding into video gaming and cannabis prevention through the Institute for Consumer Health.

A key initiative is our partnership with Betknowmore UK to provide a lived experience

peer services model across the US. The Gambling Recovery Information Network (GRIN) will enable treatment providers, operators, and regulators to better assist people in need.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We are just getting started.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marlene D. Warner".

Marlene Warner



A Message from MACGH Board President, Paul Sternburg



Dear Friends,

What a tremendous year it has been for the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health (MACGH)! As we reflect on FY24, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together.

Our inaugural Rewriting the Playbook conference in May 2024 was a groundbreaking event. This conference, held in collaboration with the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC), called upon all stakeholders in Massachusetts to prepare for the increased gambling harm due to the ubiquitous nature of online sports wagering today. It served

as a platform where we shared knowledge, fostered collaboration, and inspired action. The dedication of our staff and the leadership of our amazing board have been instrumental in making this event a success.

Our reputation precedes us. Everywhere I travel, I hear nothing but positive things about MACGH. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team. We are blessed to have a large and talented staff that shares their expertise not only across Massachusetts but also nationally and globally.

We continue to offer various touchpoints with our GameSense team members to help record numbers of people in Massachusetts land-based casinos and mobile sports bettors via chat. The results of Dr. Michael Wohl's third-

party evaluation of GameSense will only make us stronger as we strive to improve year over year.

Through our Institute for Consumer Health, we have increased our influence nationally, building capacity and responding to community needs to mitigate harm. Our efforts in prevention, research, and advocacy have positioned us as leaders in the field, enabling us to make a significant impact on the lives of those affected by gambling-related issues.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Sincerely,
Paul



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*Associate Professor of
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“Things are going well for me. I go to my home group every Thursday night I just purchased a new truck, something that I would never do if I was gambling. Hopefully some more people withdraw themselves from that casing. This is an awful disease I am just happy I am not gambling today. You were wonderful to me and I truly appreciate it.”

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*Psychotherapist; Founder,
Eyes Up Wellness*



MGC Conference - Changing the Playbook: Examining Sports Betting Emerging Societal Impacts



Conference Focus:

Understanding and responding to the social impacts of the rapid expansion of sports betting across the Northeast

Resource-sharing in New England.

Event organizers underscored the necessity of establishing a regional infrastructure for better communication and resource-sharing. "Sports betting is here. Gambling is here. While there are many benefits that come with this growth, we need to know what's working so we can build on proven tools," shared Massachusetts Gaming Commission Interim Chair Jordan Maynard. "We also need to know where improvements can be made to broaden the reach and depth of our most impactful programs."



Featured Sessions:

- The current sports betting landscape across the region
- Problem gambling identification and support resources
- Impacts on youth and families
- Advertising and responsible gaming tools
- Clinical perspectives on treatment and intervention
- The future of sports betting and implications for communities

Keep the conversation going:

- Importance of creating a game plan to promote healthy play
- Strengthening consumer protections
- Providing essential resources
- Impacting the national conversation on responsible gaming
- Study the impacts of gambling advertising on the public

"Hearing people's personal experience was so helpful in understanding the supports people need."



Dr. Wohl 3rd Party Audit

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission, along with researchers from Carleton University, sought to measure the awareness, perceptions, and engagement with the GameSense program in Massachusetts. The intention is to gauge how well this program encourages positive play behaviors and attitudes among casino patrons in the state.

Results from the survey:

- Polled 1,100 regular patrons and 280 casino workers.
- Found in-person interactions increased awareness of responsible gambling strategies.
- 74% of patrons who engaged with a GameSense Advisor felt more informed about safer gambling practices.
- More patrons are aware of GameSense but less familiar with all of its services.
- GameSense could reach more people by tapping into a younger demographic.
- Enhance GSAs' role should be better perceived to serve all casino players, not just problem gamblers.
- Create non-gaming spaces/designated "Play Break" areas for player wellbeing and focus away from gaming.

[Want to read more?](#)
[For more information, see the full report here ▶](#)



Youth Sports Betting Safety Coalition

CEO Marlene Warner previewed the coalition's collaborative efforts to develop a preventative education, health, and training curriculum geared to young people ages 12-20. The conversation was part of an announcement of a statewide coalition focused on ensuring that young people are equipped with the facts and risks of gambling.

Helpline and LiveChat Data MA

GamLine-VSE Line-LiveChat

FY'24 MASSACHUSETTS QUARTERS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
FY24 INTAKE CALL COUNTS	503	623	704	707	2537
FY'24 Non-Intakes	1123	1163	1332	1434	5052

FY24 GAMLINE INTAKE COUNTS	Month	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTAL
	0 SGEL	66	66	105	85	107	87	104	69	83	111	104	81	1068
1 HRIA	64	50	72	73	71	104	100	119	119	133	86	66	1057	
2 Urge	20	11	2	14	19	6	19	19	17	18	28	23	196	
3 Lottery	15	14	18	23	16	18	20	16	19	22	18	17	216	
4 VM ***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
TOTAL	165	141	197	195	213	215	243	223	298	284	236	187	2537	

FOR VERMONT:

FY'24 VERMONT QUARTERS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
FY24 INTAKE CALL COUNTS			28	18	46
FY'24 Non-Intakes			101	140	241

FY24 LiveChat data for MA

date	chats	date	chats
2023-07	80	2024-01	129
2023-08	61	2024-02	107
2023-09	114	2024-03	107
2023-10	126	2024-04	116
2023-11	162	2024-05	103
2023-12	142	2024-06	119

1366 total chats



Recovery, Lived Experience Advisory Panel, and GRIN:

“Having someone to talk through my concerns really helps me understand things and helps me make decisions on how to progress.”



Gambling Recovery Information Network (GRIN) Initiative

Utilizing Lived Experience to Deliver Compassionate Care



A collaboration project between:



In 2024 we continued to build out our infrastructure of recovery supports designed to help those working to reduce or eliminate problematic gambling in their lives. Almost 100 people who self-excluded received a follow-up from a peer in recovery offering additional resources and strategies to meet their goals around this new behavior change. In addition, 26 individuals engaged in the more intensive Telephone Recovery Support connecting with a peer on a weekly basis. Our 8 Peer Specialists received an additional 30 hours of training in addition to their current experience and have a wealth of skills and knowledge around the challenges and gifts of living a life free of gambling harm.

We rebranded our Recovery Advisory Board as the Lived Experience Advisory Program and were fortunate to have a diverse group of individuals around the country join this effort. (LEAP) meets monthly. These are 22 individuals with lived experience of gambling harm who convene to provide insight and feedback into programming, communication and program design. A special event was held at the NCPG Conference in San Diego to recruit individuals with lived experience for LEAP and Peer Specialist roles and to raise awareness among problem gambling treatment providers and the industry about the benefits of incorporation of lived experience into service design and delivery.

Our Director of Recovery Services, Jodie Neally, reached hundreds of people in recovery from substance use disorder throughout the state to raise awareness around the co-occurring nature of problem gambling and decrease stigma around help seeking for gambling. Jodie was also the prominent guest speaker at MOAZ.

We are thrilled to be working on a research grant in conjunction with Texas Tech University scholars to further understand more nuanced perceptions of recovery and harm reduction among people making changes to their gambling and substance use and look forward to the final report being released in 2025.

We are also excited to expand our peer support services nationally through the **Gambling Recovery Information Network**, providing essential resources that not only mitigate gambling-related harm but also support individuals in a holistic way. By fostering connections and community, we empower people to navigate their challenges and thrive.





Racial Justice and Health Equity Committee Activities:

Learning Activities:

- Engaged in learning about indigenous issues in the Northeast.
- Invited a professor to speak on the “wellbriety” movement within Native communities.
- Watched a documentary on the link between Native American residential schools, forced removal, intergenerational trauma, and addiction.

Film Support:

- Learned about the documentary “We are the Warriors” on Native American mascots at Wells High School, Maine.
- Donated to the filmmakers, received a pre-release screening, and discussed Native American representation in mainstream US culture.
- Attended the documentary premiere at the Maine Film Festival.

Group Discussions:

- Attended a screening of “Killers of the Flower Moon” and held Zoom discussions on the book and movie.

Land Acknowledgments:

- Studied the role of Land Acknowledgments in shifting historical narratives around land use and sovereignty.
- Created a draft Land Acknowledgment for the Council and opened the 2024 Sports Betting Conference with it.



Current Mass Council Land Acknowledgment:

The Mass Council on Gaming and Health operates on the unceded tribal lands of the Mahican, Mashpee, Nauset, Narragansett, Nipmuck, Pennacook, Pocumtuc, Stockbridge, Mohegan, Wampanoag, Massachusetts, and Pokanoket peoples. We honor their stewardship of the land and acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal. We support indigenous resistance and cultural preservation efforts.



MACGH in the News



Boom in youth gambling in Mass. fueled by online sports betting apps

A growing number of young people are showing up at mental health clinics and Gamblers Anonymous meetings.

[Read more ►](#)

“The highlight was speaking with so many different stakeholders who were committed to learning and engaging with others for the importance of the safeguarding vulnerable populations.”

“Voices of those with lived experience are critical in how we make decisions and evaluate ongoing success.”



Coalition launches to tackle scourge of youth sports betting

Attorney general's office joins gaming regulators and advocates, the NCAA, and professional sports teams to educate young people on sports betting dangers.

[Read more ►](#)



MACGH in the News



Sports betting has proven itself as big business in Massachusetts

One year in, the state has collected nearly \$94 million in taxes, but that comes as groups who work on the issue of problem gambling say they've seen record numbers of people in need of help.

[Watch here ▶](#)

"Spending time with my family with no distractions has been the best part since my self-exclusion."

Massachusetts, NCAA launch Youth Sports Betting Safety Coalition



[Watch here ▶](#)

How Massachusetts is using research to rewrite the gaming playbook



[Read more ▶](#)

The Institute for Consumer Health



VTGamblingHelp.org launch



We are thrilled to announce our new partnership with the Vermont Department of Mental Health, which officially launched in February 2024. This collaboration introduces a dedicated helpline and live chat service, ensuring that individuals have immediate access to problem gambling resources and support. Our goal is to provide referral and support for those in crisis and offer meaningful

strategies for safer player health. The helpline and live chat will be staffed by MACGH staff and our trained peer supporters, who are equipped to handle a wide range of mental health issues, offering compassionate and effective assistance 24/7.

Upon its launch in June 2024, our website underwent a significant rebrand to establish a new identity as the go-to resource for gambling help in Vermont. In the next quarter, we will introduce updates focused on prevention and parental support to combat youth gambling. As part of this initiative, we have rebranded the program as Vermont

Gambling Help to better reflect our mission and meet the needs of sports bettors in Vermont. Our current public awareness push has centered around core message flights that seek to raise awareness about the availability of resources, self-exclusion, and best practices in player health. By leveraging various marketing channels, including social media, community events, and partnerships with local organizations, we aim to reach a balance audience and foster a culture of player health statewide. This work expands the reach of MACGH and brings our expertise into a state still determining the impacts of digital sportsbetting.



In 2024 we launched a consultancy with MAPG

- Advocacy efforts
- Promoting player health practices to the public
- Supporting 1800 Gambler in the state
- Building connections with all operator



Bystander Intervention Training:

The training aimed to teach GameSense and MACGH staff five safe and effective approaches to address workplace incidents of bias, prejudice, harassment, or disrespect.

Upcoming – Conflict De-Escalation:

Conflict de-escalation training equips individuals with techniques to manage and defuse emotionally charged situations, promoting calm and constructive resolutions

National Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program (NVSEP) with idPair

- Continue to support and advocate for a national process
- Facilitate cross-state lines for voluntary self-exclusion



Gambling & Gaming Resources



Supporting Safe, Responsible Gambling

As gambling options continue expanding in Massachusetts and across the region, the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health (MACGH) remains committed to meeting individuals where they are in their gambling journey with compassion and expertise.

With the launch of legal sports betting in early 2023, we anticipate demand growing for our responsible gambling resources and support services. Our offerings through the GameSense Information Centers and free 24/7 GamLine cater to casino guests, sports bettors, concerned loved ones, and anyone seeking education around risks and responsible play.



GameSense Information Centers

Located inside all Massachusetts casinos and staffed by expert GameSense Advisors, our Information Centers continue providing critical on-site support seven days a week. Patrons can learn about game rules, odds, budgeting tools, and voluntary self-exclusion. Multilingual staff are also on hand for questions, conversations, and connections to further help.



GamLine

Our confidential, 24/7 GamLine (1-800-GAM-1234) offers an opportunity to speak with a highly trained GameSense

Advisor to request information related to Voluntary Self-Exclusion.



LiveChat

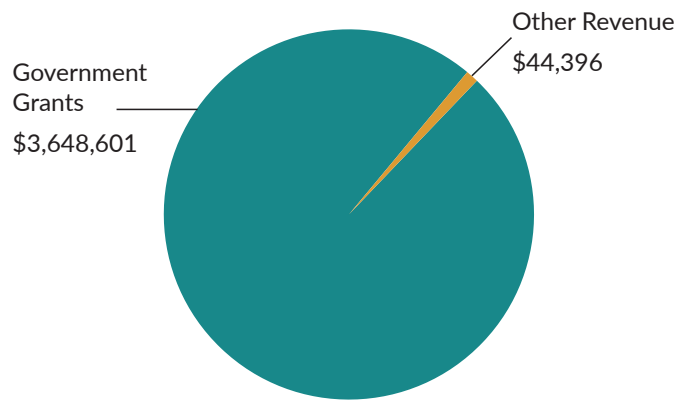
Our real-time digital chat platform enabled over 1,000 conversations this past year, fielding gambling-related questions and concerns from across Massachusetts and beyond. Available 24/7 on our websites, LiveChat remains a vital gateway to information and support.

As gambling evolves across the state and region, MACGH continues adapting our compassionate, judgment-free services to meet all individuals wherever they may be. We encourage safe, responsible gambling while fostering treatment and recovery for those experiencing hardship from disordered play.

Financials

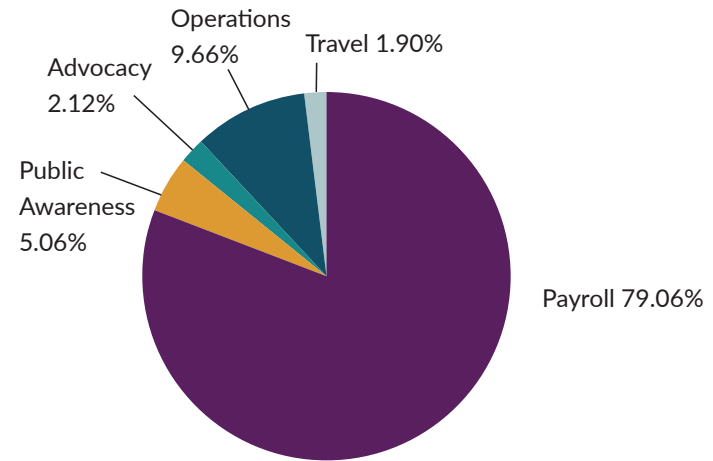
SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES - July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

FY24 Total income



TOTAL: \$3,692,997

FY24 Total Expenses



TOTAL: \$3,691,547.96



Contributors

MACGH is grateful to the following individuals and organizations who have contributed to our mission through their generous contributions.

Funders/Present Contracts

- Michigan Association on Problem Gambling
- National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS)
- National Voluntary Self Exclusion Program (NVSEP)/for idPair/Spectrum
- North American Association State and Provincial Lotteries (NASPL)
- Playtech for the Gambling Recovery Information Network (GRIN)
- SharpRank: subcontract for the Arizona Department of Gaming
- Spectrum Gaming Group: subcontract on MGC Kiosk Feasibility Study and New Hampshire Lottery Study
- Springfield Health and Human Services (MA); subcontract for MGC Community Mitigation Fund
- Texas Tech University: subcontract for MGC for community-based research
- Vermont Department of Mental Health

Why Contribute To MACGH?

Watch our video to find out why:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6Pw5x7cJPc>



120 Washington Street, Suite 202, Salem, MA 01970

Office: 617-426-4554

Web: macgh.org

 info@macgh.org  [@MassCouncilGH](https://twitter.com/MassCouncilGH)

 Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health

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 LiveChat with us 24/7 at macgh.org

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.