



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Public Health

Helping People Lead Healthy Lives In Healthy Communities

# Problem Gambling and Public Health: Challenges and Opportunities

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# Problem Gambling: National

- The field of problem gambling has historically focused on the individual experiences and characteristics of disordered gamblers.
- Historically, it has been an understudied field, and the level of societal impact is not well understood.
- Historical disconnect from community-level experiences of gambling and communities of color.
- Research estimates 75% of problem gamblers have a pre-existing mental health or substance related disorder prior to the on-set of a gambling disorder.
- Rapid growth of gambling opportunities.

# Problem Gambling: Massachusetts

- Massachusetts is one of the few remaining states without resort style casino gambling.
- The gambling environment is evolving.

## Research

- The current prevalence of problem gambling in Massachusetts is 1.7% of the adult population.
- An additional 7.5% of the population are at-risk gamblers.
- Additionally, about 1 in 6 Massachusetts adults (17.5%) reported knowing someone who they considered gambled too much.
- The prevalence of problem gambling in Massachusetts is very similar to prevalence rates identified in other states.

<http://www.umass.edu/seigma>

# Expanded Gaming in the Commonwealth

- The Expanding Gaming Act (2011) allows for up to three destination resort casinos located in three geographically diverse regions across the state and single slots facility competitively awarded for one location statewide.



# Problem Gambling Highlights in the Law

- Public health trust fund
- Onsite “treatment” center
- Statewide Exclusion list—self and 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- Helpline number(s) posted (multilingual)
- Research agenda
- Guidelines on credit extension/ check cashing
- Responsible Gambling guidelines on marketing
- Payback statistics posted

# Public Health Trust Fund

- The Expanding Gaming Act established the Public Health Trust Fund (PHTF) *to allocate significant resources to research, prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services in order to mitigate the harmful effects of problem gambling and related issues.*

# Public Health Trust Fund Strategic Plan

## Purpose:

Articulate strategies and activities that will effectively utilize funds allocated for problem gambling services

## Framework:

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention  
Framework

## Community Engagement:

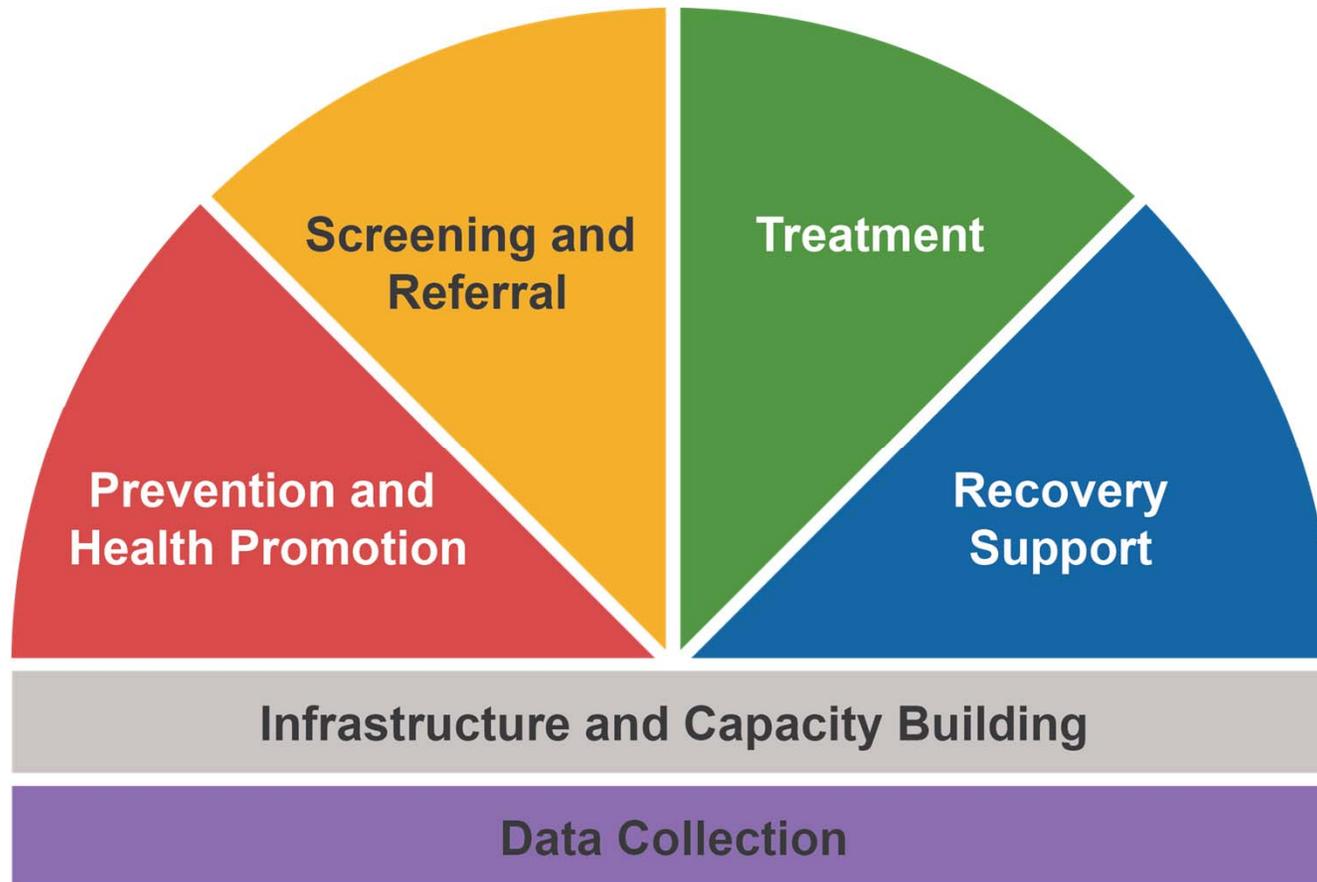
Interviews, surveys, data



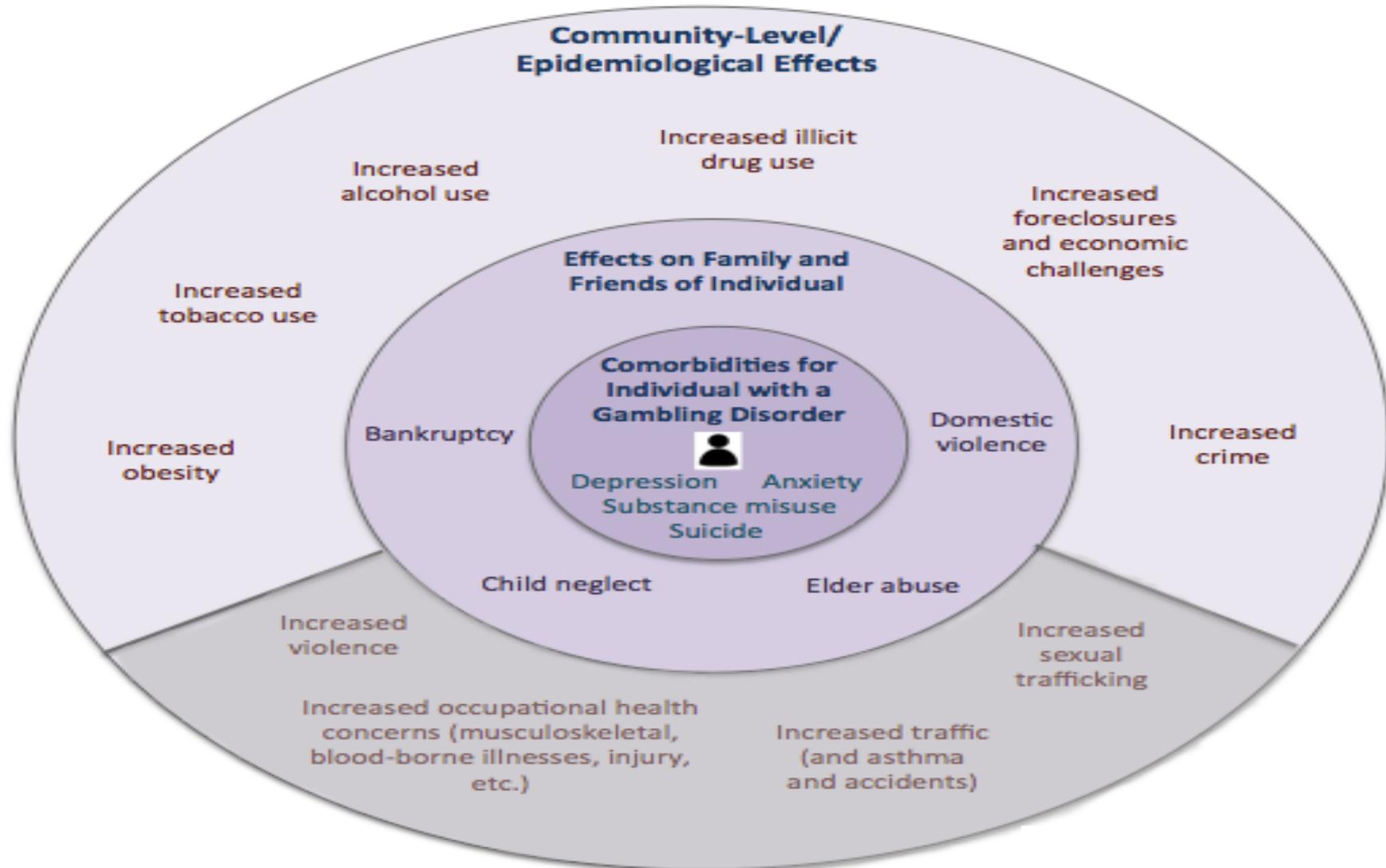
# Strategic Plan: Priorities Areas/Key Areas of Concern

- 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

# Continuum of Services



# Eco-System Map



# Gambling and Public Health: Opportunities for Massachusetts

- Address, plan, and develop problem gambling services with a public health lens with an emphasis on the social determinants of health and health equity.
- Engage communities to inform, develop, and implement services with a specific emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized populations.
- Utilize data to inform a public health response.
- Break down silos and create meaningful integration that will promote health and wellness for everyone.

# FY 17

## Introduced Three Initiatives

- **Prevention- Youth, Parents, and At-Risk Populations**
  - Regional Planning process in the Plainville/Region C
- **Workforce development- Community Health Workers**
  - CHW and Gambling Needs Assessment Plainville/Region C
  - Training of CHW in the Plainville/Region C
- **Workforce development- Providers**
  - Revision of the DPH Problem Gambling Practice Guidelines
  - Revision of self-assessment tool



# FY 18

## Advance Three Initiatives

- **Prevention- Youth, Parents, and At-Risk Populations**
  - Regional Planning Process in Region A/B
- **Workforce development - Community Health Workers**
  - CHW and Gambling Needs Assessment in Region B
  - Training of CHW in the Plainville/Region C
- **Workforce development- Providers**
  - Gambling Treatment and Services Gap Analysis
  - Practice Guidelines Training



# FY 18

## Introduce Three Initiatives

- **Suicide prevention**
  - Planning/Needs Assessment
  - Suicide and Problem Gambling Training
  - Suicide and Problem Gambling Screening
- **Intimate Partner Abuse Education Program (IPAEP)**
  - Programmatic Assessment
- **Communications Campaign**
  - Planning for campaign targeting at-risk populations



**THANK YOU**