



Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund

Annual Report
10/1/2023 to 9/30/2024

Required by:
22 M.R.S. §20006-B(2), P.L. 2011, c. 657

Submitted by:
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund, established by Public Law 2009, Chapter 622, provided the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) \$100,000 per year to prevent and address problems associated with gambling. When DHHS began receiving the funds in SFY 2011, collaborative relationships with key statewide stakeholders were re-established through regular conference calls. Members of this collaboration included but were not limited to the Maine Council on Problem Gambling, the former Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS) now known as Office of Behavioral Health, Maine Bureau of Alcohol Beverages and Lottery Operations (BABLO), the Gambling Control Unit, 211 Maine, treatment and prevention professionals, and Hollywood and Oxford Casinos. In February 2016, the substance use prevention team responsible for the oversight of this funding and programming moved from under SAMHS to Maine CDC Tobacco and Substance Use Prevention and Control Program (TSUPCP).

The Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund was established to support gambling addiction analysis, prevention and treatment. The fund is administered by Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). This 2024 report describes the continuum of care model used to identify the need for gambling addiction services, prevention efforts, intervention and treatment provided using money from the fund. It includes a summary of collaborative efforts between DHHS, the Gambling Control Board and licensed slot machine operators as it relates to use of the funds for fiscal year 2024. (5 M.R.S. §20006(B)).

INTRODUCTION

Problem gambling is defined as gambling behavior that is damaging to a person or their family. Gambling can cause problems with work, school, or other activities, and/or harm health, finances, reputation, or relationships. Anyone who gambles can be at-risk for developing a gambling problem. Gambling is included *DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – 5th Edition)* as being a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder. It is the only non-substance listed in the “Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders” section of the DSM-V due to the way it impacts the brain and body in the same way that substances do.

According to the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), some warning signs of gambling problems are:

- Thinking about gambling all the time
- Feeling the need to bet more money and more often
- Going back to try to win your money back (“chasing losses”)
- Feeling restless or irritable when trying to stop or cut down
- Feeling like you can’t control yourself
- Gambling despite negative consequences
- In extreme cases problem gambling can cause bankruptcy, legal problems, losing your job or your family, and thinking about suicide

Responsible gambling: Policies and practices put into place which result in reducing the likelihood of harm from gambling such as:

- Setting limits on time or money spent gambling
- Spending only what you can afford to lose
- Understanding the game and the odds of winning

From 2010 to 2017, problem gambling services (PGS) were implemented by DHHS staff and through contracted services. Following a competitive bid process in 2017 and 2022, PGS are implemented by AdCare Educational Institute (AdCare) and their subcontractor, the Maine Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG) with oversight by Maine CDC.

In November of 2023, legalized sports wagering became operational in Maine. Per statute Sec. A-1. 5 M.R.S. c. 376, one percent of the adjusted gross sports wagering receipts were deposited in the Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund established by 5 M.R.S. § 20006-B. The amount deposited in the fund during FY24 was \$323,254.15. Maine CDC staff began working on establishing priorities for using the new funds. The first priority was to bolster the capacity of the Problem Gambling Helpline at 211 Maine. Additional funds were added to the AdCare Problem Gambling contract to support the Problem Gambling Services (PGS) Coordinator shifting from a part-time to a full-time position, to add mini-grants for prevention and recovery, and to cover the increased usage of the Gambling Addiction Treatment Reimbursement Network.

Funds have continued to be used to support efforts to decrease problem gambling and develop and implement *responsible gambling* policies and practices which result in reducing the likelihood of harm from gambling such as:

- Setting limits on time or money spent gambling

- Spending only what you can afford to lose
- Understanding the game and the odds of winning

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following information outlines related activities and accomplishments in SFY 2024:

Workforce Development:

Maine's Annual Conference on Problem Gambling and other live training events were provided virtually as webinars. The webinar format has the benefit of increased participation from individuals in Maine's workforce who wouldn't normally attend a full-day problem gambling training. Webinars make obtaining training in problem gambling accessible to everyone in the state, without the need to drive long distances. Virtual trainings have allowed the Department to work with top-level experts from around the country in a more cost-effective way than bringing experts to Maine for in-person training. To increase the impact of the training, most webinars were recorded and bundled with handouts and resources as on-demand training modules. These are housed on the MCPG website to provide ongoing access to the content for those who did not attend the live webinars. In FY24, these on-demand units were accessed 78 times.

The annual conference webinar series featured expert speakers delivering training for Maine's workforce on the latest issues and trends in the problem gambling field and provided 6 hours of training to those who participated in all three sessions. The webinars were offered at no cost and had a total participation of 152 (133 unique participants attended a single session or multiple sessions). The individual webinars of the series are listed below:

- 3/7/24: *Gambling & Suicide: The Who, The Why, and What to Do* with Dr. Jeremiah Weinstock – 2 hours (74 participants)
- 4/11/24: *A Practitioner's Guide on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Gambling Disorder* with Dr. Jeremiah Weinstock – 2 hours (17 participants)
- 3/26/24: *The Importance of Digital Media Literacy for Youth* with Alison Wood-Drain – 2 hours (61 participants)

Additional webinars offered during FY24:

- 8/14/23: *The Hidden Battle: Problem Gambling Behavior Among Veterans* with Jonathan Crandall – 1.5 hours (80 participants)
- 11/2/23: *LGBTQ+ and Gambling Disorder: A Cultural Competency Primer* with Dr. Michelle Malkin - 1.5 hours (66 participants)
- 1/30/24: *An Overview and Introduction to Gambling Disorder and Its Treatment* with Jeremiah Weinstock – 1.5 hours (50 participants)

Maine participated in the New England Regional Problem Gambling Conference: *The Ripples of Sports Betting Across the Northeast: Tools, Resources and Data for the Social Impacts* in Worcester, MA on May 14, 2024. AdCare's PGS Coordinator served on the planning committee and attended the conference. Maine speakers included Maine CDC TSUPC staff and staff from

Maine's Department of Public Safety Gambling Control Unit). AdCare offered full scholarships and hotel reservations to various stakeholders such as counselors in Maine's Gambling Addiction Treatment Network, helpline staff, self-exclusion staff, and recovery center staff. One treatment network provider and one recovery center manager accepted the scholarship and attended.

In June 2024, AdCare partnered with Maine Health Affiliates to provide problem gambling breakout sessions during their in-person annual provider conference. AdCare contracted with Dr. Samuel Peter, a psychologist from the VA in Durham, NC, to present *Introduction to Gambling & Gambling Disorder* and *Evidence-Based Treatments for Gambling Disorder*.

Prevention:

- The PGS Coordinator recorded an episode of the *Healthy Maine Podcast* with the Maine Public Health Association. The episode was recorded to coincide with sports wagering going live in Maine. The topic was sports betting, what might be seen in the problem gambling space, and what services/resources are available in Maine.
- Preceding the launch of sports betting in Maine, the GCU set up two Zoom meetings with the athletic directors at Maine colleges and universities. College athletes are an at-risk group for gambling problems. The PGS Coordinator discussed the services and resources that are available to colleges and students and introduced a speaker from Epic Risk Management to talk about their contract with the NCAA to provide problem gambling training to college athletes.
- The PGS Coordinator participated in a 15-hour training on youth problem gambling prevention and media literacy.
- AdCare and MCPG maintain active social media feeds and frequently share posts with information, articles, training opportunities, and research related to problem gambling.
- Additional messaging may be done by press release, blog post, newsletter article, or email.
- In November and December, AdCare and MCPG participated in the NCPG "Gift Responsibly" campaign to educate people about the harm of exposing youth to gambling by purchasing lottery tickets as stocking stuffers.
- In March, AdCare and MCPG observed National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) with frequent social media posts, a proclamation from Gov. Mills, a newsletter article, and a press release. AdCare also published a special edition PGAM newsletter, which had 4,851 opens and 1221 clicks.
- Public service announcements created in previous years continue to be shared on social media. They are housed on the website of Maine Council on Problem Gambling and on the MCPG Facebook page:
 - *Know When to Quit* <https://youtu.be/VgoTtH5l5kA>
 - *Help Them Play it Safe* <https://youtu.be/UFc8m9ntQGc>
 - *Youth Problem Gambling: Know the Signs*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmLMCCp6uQM>
- In FY24, 993 problem and responsible gambling-related materials were ordered or downloaded from the Maine Prevention Store which provides information to the public through brochures, posters, rack cards, find help cards, and other such materials. The materials in the Maine Prevention Store are frequently discussed at training events as

easy-to-access, free materials. For more information, visit www.maine preventionstore.org

- Maine CDC and AdCare continued updating Maine Prevention Store gambling materials. A new *Has Gambling Become a Problem* flyer was created, and two brochures, *Problem Gambling Recognizing the Signs* and *Youth Problem Gambling*, were substantially revised and reprinted. The PGS Coordinator and TSUPC collaborated to create a new 13-page toolkit which includes information, worksheets, and a list of services and resources in order for people to assess themselves and choose the best path for treatment and regain control over their health.
- The PGS Coordinator at AdCare served as a judge in the NCPG Agility Grant process. The opportunity to review grant applications for innovative prevention projects from around the county and collaborate with subject-matter experts helped expand the prevention knowledge base that may serve Maine in the future.

Intervention:

- Self-exclusion (SE) is a self-directed intervention where an individual voluntarily completes a form which prevents that person from entering all casinos in Maine, or placing bets with Maine sports wagering operators, for a specific length of time. Until 2014, the only place a person could self-exclude was at a casino or the GCU office. For some people, entering the casino to complete the SE form will trigger an urge to gamble. Through collaboration with the Gambling Control Unit (GCU), legislation was passed that added non-casino sites in the State designated to serve as SE locations. In 2017, when AdCare took on the role of coordinating non-casino SE, additional sites were established. AdCare continues to recruit, train, and coordinate non-casino SE sites which can be viewed at <https://adcareme.org/problem-gambling/>
 - Self-exclusion Reinstatement Sessions: The Gambling Control Board (GCB) asked AdCare to research how other states handled requests to be removed from the Self-Exclusion list. AdCare submitted a report to the GGU and GCB. The Board approved a process for AdCare to do online Reinstatement Sessions using a process that Massachusetts uses. AdCare staff received training from the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health and set up the templates and technology to mirror that process. Online Reinstatement Sessions became an option beginning in January 2023. In FY24, seven individuals submitted written requests for reinstatement and four individuals followed through and completed a Reinstatement Session.
 - In December 2022, the GCB authorized the option to self-exclude online with trained staff at AdCare. AdCare again utilized the process used by the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health. Services began in March 2023. During FY24, 17 individuals completed the Casino self-exclusion using this process. Four individuals completed the sports betting self-exclusion using this process. In addition to convenience, the advantage of this online process is that the patron who has a gambling problem can talk to the Gambling Services Coordinator directly and receive information on resources and services. This has increased the utilization of counseling from Maine's Gambling Addiction Treatment Reimbursement Network.

- The PGS Coordinator Maine CDC TSUPC Public Health Educator collaborated to create a business card-sized self-exclusion resource with information and a QR code.
- The GCU reported that there were 243 individuals on the active statewide casino SE list as of June 30, 2024. As of the same date, there were four individuals on the new Sports Wagering Self-Exclusion List.
- In March, AdCare and MCPG observed National Gambling Disorder Screening Day by sharing materials distributed by NCPG and Cambridge Health Alliance, as well as the *Maine Problem Gambling Screening Toolkit* that AdCare created in 2021. AdCare began reaching out to stakeholders in February to provide them with information and resources to participate in Screening Day on March 12.
- AdCare continues to create resources to provide those seeking help with a gambling problem, including callers to the 211 helpline, with information designed to meet a wide variety of needs. AdCare created a comprehensive document with programs, services, and resources available to Mainers. This document is updated frequently. In addition to SE and counseling, these resources include self-help options such as podcasts, simple screening tools, and workbooks, as well as peer support options including online meetings, chat, and in-person mutual aid groups. This list is shared widely and is housed on the websites of AdCare, MCPG, and 211 Maine. AdCare also creates documents for specific audiences.
- In FY24, there were 96 problem gambling intakes through 211's Problem Gambling Helpline, up from 84 in FY23.
- In FY23, 211 began asking PG Helpline callers which type of gambling was causing problems. While not all callers choose to disclose this information, information can be useful in program planning. The FY24 call data by gambling type are as follows: Casino (37), Other (18), Online (13), Sports betting (8), and Lottery (13).

Treatment:

- Maine CDC, AdCare, and MCPG collaborate with 211 Maine to advertise and provide the PG Helpline. The helpline refers callers to the list of social workers and counselors with training in problem gambling treatment, self-exclusion information, and a list of resources.
- AdCare coordinates a network of counselors with training on problem gambling (Maine's Gambling Addiction Treatment Reimbursement Network).
- Ongoing no-cost trainings have been offered for treatment providers to become members of the network. Eligible providers receive reimbursement when they provide counseling services to individuals and their family members who can't afford to pay for treatment.
- Coordinating and growing the Gambling Addiction Treatment Reimbursement Network is ongoing. The implementation of telehealth has been a positive development in meeting needs of those who don't live near a provider.

Recovery:

Maine's Recovery Community Centers are a critical resource for individuals seeking support in recovery from gambling disorder. Though the centers don't often offer gambling-specific programs, there are many activities that are suitable for someone who has a gambling addiction.

- In FY24, AdCare continued to work with recovery centers to make staff and volunteers aware of the signs and risk factors for gambling disorders, and how their center can integrate gambling into their existing programming, such as SMART Recovery meetings. As part of outreach to the Recovery Centers, AdCare made visits, had email communications, and presented Problem Gambling 101 training upon request. Centers were also sent resources and suggestions to participate in the national observances of the Gift Responsibly Campaign, Problem Gambling Awareness Month, and Gambling Disorder Screening Day. AdCare and MCPG staffed resource tables at recovery events in several communities.
- In FY24, AdCare's PGS Coordinator wrote an article about self-exclusion and other problem gambling services and resources for Journey Magazine. This magazine is distributed at no cost to recovery community centers, medical practices, prisons, etc., and has a wide readership among individuals interested in recovery in Maine.
- AdCare held Problem Gambling Awareness Month events at recovery centers in Portland, Brewer, Rockland, and Lincoln.
- AdCare launched a mini-grant program to offer \$7,500 to an organization interested in promoting problem gambling programming in the recovery community. Coastal Recovery Community Center in Rockland was awarded the mini-grant and used it to launch a weekly problem gambling support meeting, that is offered on Zoom to make it available state-wide.

Additional Related Activities:

- In the fall of 2023, AdCare Maine hosted the Northeast Consortium on Problem Gambling, via Zoom with participants from CT, MA, ME, and RI. Updates and initiatives were shared and various topics of interest to PG advocates in the region were discussed. Maine participants who provided updates were AdCare, Maine CDC, Hollywood Casino, GCU, and MCPG. Discussions were about working on a national self-exclusion opportunity, gift responsibly campaign, the regional conference, and state updates.
- MCPG/AdCare serves on the NCPG State Affiliates Committee. Monthly meetings with attendees from around the country result in the sharing of information and resources. During FY24, AdCare's Problem Gambling Services Coordinator termed out as Chair of the committee but still participates in the monthly meetings and in additional task force opportunities, resulting in increased communication and collaboration with affiliates from across the country.
- AdCare published a special edition newsletter about the launch of sports betting. In addition to basic information about sports betting, the articles included information about services and resources, the treatment network, free materials at the Prevention Store, and the Screening Toolkit. 2,824 newsletters were opened.
- AdCare met with Maine 211 helpline staff prior to the launch of sports betting to discuss what other states were reporting about their experience with sports betting, and to strategize.
- AdCare organizes quarterly stakeholder calls that bring together Maine representatives from the lottery, casinos, self-exclusion sites, 2-1-1, MCPG, recovery centers, and other interested parties to provide updates, solicit feedback, and discuss issues pertaining to PG and RG in Maine.

CONCLUSION

It is expected that needs in gambling prevention, treatment, and recovery services will continue to increase due to recent expansion to gaming in Maine following the legalization of sports betting. Maine CDC will likely see additional funding from the dedicated one percent of sports betting revenue that is deposited into the Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund to support the increase of problem gambling services staff and program offerings for the state to address those needs. There will need to be a more direct focus on the prevention of problem gambling in school systems and increasing services that help adults monitor their gambling and manage their finances. Maine CDC hopes to increase our ability to understand the impact that gambling has on Maine residents in order to improve the way we measure our outcomes and success.