

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Adapting to Change:
Increasing Collaboration
for Awareness, Help & Hope



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Executive Summary

Although the fiscal year (FY) 2021 continued to be impacted due to pandemic restrictions, such as limiting in-person gatherings, the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) adapted to change and provided real-time support, help, and hope to all Maryland residents through virtual methods. In FY2021, the Center expanded engagement with behavioral health providers, private practitioners, preventionists, and other organizations; multiplied the number of individuals assisted through Peer Recovery Support; and increased the number of total participations in clinical training and educational programs.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Center continued to expand its public awareness and outreach in FY2021. Over 7,800 individuals within 598 organizations and communities across all awareness efforts “had a conversation” with Center staff and over 62,500 materials were distributed. Virtual awareness activities, including presentations and events, more than doubled in FY2021. Throughout the fiscal year, over 50,000 e-communications promoting awareness initiatives were distributed to providers, private practitioners, preventionists and other community organizations in collaboration with strategic partnerships. The Center also focused on expanding its awareness messaging and outreach through its existing social media platforms, more than doubling the number of followers.

TREATMENT AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

In FY2021, the provision of no cost treatment to Maryland residents for problem gambling, regardless of insurance or income status, continued as part of the collaboration between the Center, the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and Optum Maryland (at the start of January 1, 2020). To further the integration of gambling treatment services, the Center reached out to 562 organizations and private practitioners in the behavioral health field, as the means to increase the capability for the treatment of problem gambling. At the end of FY2021, 120 behavioral health treatment providers offering no cost treatment to problem gamblers and their families were listed on the Center’s Provider Referral Directory covering 19 jurisdictions. The Center enhanced access to resources for non-English speaking help seekers through awareness materials and a language line.

PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT

In its fourth year, the Center’s Peer Recovery Support Program for problem gambling helped widen the doorways of entry into treatment and recovery for individuals to limit, control, or stop their gambling. This program includes five Peer Recovery Support Specialists providing support to help seekers within every Maryland region. In FY2021, the Peers assisted 296 new clients, 229 of whom were referred to treatment and 88 of whom entered clinical counseling. Due to COVID restrictions throughout FY2021, presentations to recovery groups and provider staff were conducted virtually for most of the fiscal year. The Peers conducted 83 presentations to recovery groups and participated in 69 community events interacting with over 2,360 Maryland residents.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Center is committed to building the capacity of mental health, substance use and other health care and prevention providers through training and education to address gambling awareness and problem gambling/gambling addiction treatment



and recovery. In FY2021, a total of 4,150 participants from every jurisdiction in Maryland attended one or more of the 54 virtual clinical training and educational programs conducted by the Center. The 8th Annual Maryland VIRTUAL Conference on Problem Gambling was held on June 16, 2021, to 641 participants and featured 17 national and local speakers, nine exhibit halls, and one research poster.

PREVENTION

The goal of the Center's Prevention Program is to collaborate with local health departments, prevention providers, schools, social service organizations, and other organizations to educate and implement appropriate prevention policies and practices to address problem gambling using the public health model. In FY2021, the Center's Prevention Program focused on capacity building and expanding the number of special population grants to underserved areas of Maryland and minority populations by awarding nine grants. Through these grant efforts, 38 awareness and prevention projects were completed, reaching 3,228 people, and distributing over 10,804 awareness materials.

PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programs and actions to deliver desired changes in the real world. To that end, the Center, in concert with the Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy and the Public Health Law Clinic at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, continued to broaden their focus by beginning to include the international community in conversations around best practices in responsible gaming. The Center moderated panels at two events that looked at problem gambling and sports betting at the macro-level and translated lessons learned abroad into what can be done in Maryland to provide robust problem gambling safeguards as sports betting rolls out this year. The Center also engaged in the notice and rulemaking process by submitting public comments on sports betting regulations that were promulgated by the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Commission. In anticipation of problem gambling education legislation being introduced in the 2022 legislative session, the Center is beginning to research best practices among those states and countries that have similar educational programming.

RESEARCH

The goal of the Research Program on Gambling is to implement a research agenda that: informs our understanding of gambling behavior; monitors the impact of gambling on the population, and identifies evidence-based approaches to mitigate any harmful impacts of gambling. In FY2021, the Research Program focused on finalization of the bi-annual prevalence study (2020) which will be published in FY2022. In addition, focus continued on identification and prevention of problem gambling behavior and attendant consequences for public health.



History and Context

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 was the ninth year of operation of the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center). The Center is part of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, with its Research Division located within the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

MISSION: The Center promotes healthy and informed choices regarding gambling and problem gambling through public awareness, training and education, prevention, technical assistance to the behavioral health care system, peer recovery support, research, and public policy. It does so by working closely with appropriate state stakeholders and bringing together experts from a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, medicine, epidemiology, social work, law, and others.

The Center began operation on July 1, 2012 to help address the expansion of legal gambling availability within Maryland. Legislation authorizing this expansion also provided for a problem gambling fund to be established and administered by the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). The fund was designated to provide support for problem gambling research, public awareness, training, helpline services and prevention.

The primary goal of the Center is to minimize the risks and problems associated with gambling in the State of Maryland. In FY2021, ongoing outreach to behavioral health providers, private practitioners and communities to promote the "no cost" treatment program for problem gamblers and their families/significant others increased for a third straight year, and reported a 37% increase over FY2020.

The 8th Annual Maryland VIRTUAL Conference on Problem Gambling was held on June 16, 2021 and converted to a virtual platform based on pandemic restrictions. The conference drew 641 community organizations, mental health/behavioral health providers, peer support specialists, preventionists, and private practitioners from all Maryland jurisdictions with 37% of conference attendees attending problem gambling training for the first time.

The Center maintained its Problem Gambling Peer Recovery Support Program with a total of five Peer Specialists, all of whom were certified through the Maryland Addiction and Behavioral Health Profession Certification Board (MABPCB). In FY2021, the Peer Recovery Support program engaged with 296 new individuals, referring 78% to treatment providers and of those referrals, 38% entered clinical counseling.

The Center's Prevention Program continued collaboration with key Maryland stakeholders to promote prevention initiatives. FY2021 prevention grants expanded outreach to newly engaged organizations including: Area Health Education Center West (AHEC West); Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF); Black Mental Health Alliance; iLaunchiLand; and Youth Empowerment Source (YES). In addition, collaboration with the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA) provided additional problem gambling prevention education to lottery retailers.

KEY CENTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2021

Maryland Helpline received 402 help seeker calls, a 38% increase over FY2020.

Over 50,000 awareness e-communications and over 62,500 materials were distributed to Maryland organizations.

Total outreach conducted to 562 agencies, providers, and organizations across the state, increasing FY2021 engagement by 27%.

Peer Support Specialists assisted 296 new clients, a 104% increase compared to FY2020.

4,150 total participants attended 54 virtual clinical trainings and educational programs, an 81% increase in participation.

A total of 9 Prevention grants awarded with 38 projects completed, reaching 3,228 residents.

Active monitoring of public policy issues in Maryland around responsible and problem gambling.

Public Awareness

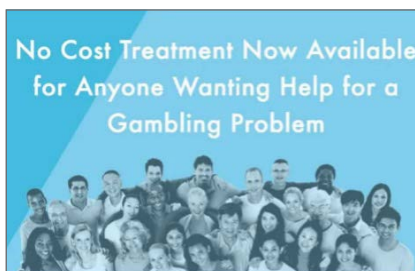
The Center's public awareness efforts remain a key focus to promote responsible gambling and reduce the stigma of problem gambling by informing Marylanders of help and treatment resources that are available to decrease any harm that gambling may be creating in their lives. In FY2021, overall outreach increased 35%, as did awareness through e-communications in collaboration with strategic partnerships. Although in-person contact continued to be limited due to pandemic guidelines, awareness activities utilizing virtual methods increased, totaling 163 activities throughout the fiscal year. In addition, targeted awareness messaging utilizing the Center's social media more than doubled the number of followers on all social media platforms.

GENERAL AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

For the majority of FY2021, pandemic restrictions limited awareness and outreach to virtual contact. Within these parameters, awareness distribution and outreach continued to be a priority, engaging 598 mental health/behavioral health organizations, private practitioners, preventionists, and other community organizations throughout Maryland and recording a 35% increase compared to FY2020 outreach. Of this outreach, 34% were recorded as newly engaged within their communities to promote responsible gambling awareness and problem gambling resources for treatment and recovery; this represents a 17% increase of new organizations engaged in FY2021 compared to FY2020.



Awareness messaging was conducted through multiple distribution channels on a variety of general themes, such as: the Maryland Helpline 1-800-GAMBLER; *No Cost Treatment* to Maryland Residents; *Have the Conversation* with Peer Recovery Support; *If you think Gambling is a Financial Solution You May Have a Problem*; and *Problem Gambling and the Family*. In addition, over 3,600 providers, private practitioners, private practitioners, and other organizational leaders were listed on the Center's master communications e-list. At the end of FY2021, over 2,808 Maryland residents were engaged through Peer recovery presentations and community events.



TARGETED AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

State and national awareness campaigns are a significant component of the Center's awareness activities and include specific messaging to targeted audiences. This messaging is incorporated into web postings, social media messaging, directed email communications and flyers/posters for distribution online and within communities.

Annual Awareness Campaigns

Annual/National campaigns and events, such as March Problem Gambling Awareness Month, provide the Center an opportunity to increase knowledge on that campaign topic and/or a special population through the development and distribution of a variety of campaign-centric communications as it relates to responsible gambling and /or gambling disorder.



In FY2021, 16 campaigns/events were selected for targeted communications. Campaign messaging was developed and distributed through web banners, social media posts, flyers, and email communications. Targeted campaigns/events included: Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, SAMSHA National Recovery Month, Children’s Health Month, Veterans Awareness Month, National Alcohol Awareness Month, Stress Awareness Month, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, National Mental Health Awareness Month, and Older American Month.



March 2021 – Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM)

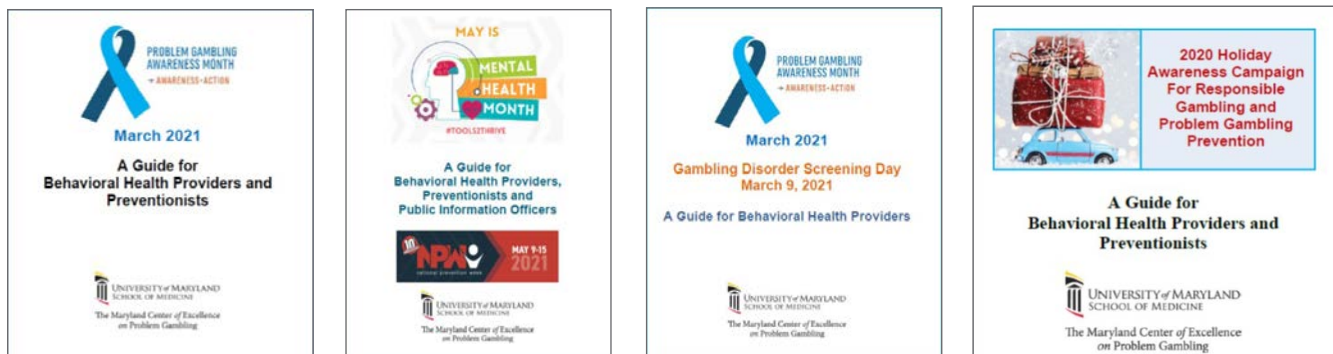
This annual grassroots public awareness and outreach campaign, a key awareness initiative for the Center each year, was created and sponsored by the National Council on Problem Gambling to educate the public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and to raise awareness about the help and resources available within the state.

Although pandemic restrictions impacted distribution in March to a virtual model, March awareness through a variety of methods increased substantially over FY2020 efforts, including: information disseminated by nine key strategic partnerships to over 25,000 community organizations and individuals; two press releases from strategic partners highlighting PGAM awareness and the Center’s resources; two statewide proclamations issued by the Governor’s office and the Maryland Senate; and two multi-page Guides distributed to providers and preventionists statewide to promote March PGAM awareness and Gambling Disorder Screening.



Awareness Campaign Guides

A total of four In-depth multi-page awareness guides were developed for three awareness months: December for the Lottery Holiday Campaign/Underage Gambling; March for Problem Gambling Awareness Month and Gambling Disorder Screening Day (March 9, 2021); and May for Mental Health Month. A combined total of over 5,000 guides were distributed virtually to behavioral health providers, preventionists and public information officers. These guides provided ideas for promoting themed awareness, tools to develop prevention messaging, and resources to actively distribute awareness within communities.



COMMUNITY EVENTS AND AWARENESS

The Center continues to work collaboratively through outreach efforts with key stakeholders and community partners within Maryland to facilitate and support community/awareness events around prevention, treatment, and recovery themes for dissemination of resources and materials. In FY2021, the majority of these outreach efforts were conducted virtually.

Center Sponsored Activities

The Center staff interacted with over 2,900 Marylanders at 163 presentations and events in 13 jurisdictions, engaging in virtual conversations about responsible gambling, personal stories of problem gambling, peer recovery support, and “no cost treatment” now available for individuals and their families. The number of these activities in FY2021 increased 426% compared to FY2020 due in part to the accessibility of virtual platforms. In addition, expansion across Maryland jurisdictions increased 18%.

Faith-Based Awareness

The Center, in collaboration with the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG), continued outreach efforts to faith and spiritual communities as “first time responders” in supporting individuals, families, and communities in their understanding of low and high risk gambling; increasing public awareness about problem gambling and the resources for treatment and peer recovery; and expanding awareness to the health and wholeness ministries they lead.



MCPG awarded five small awareness grants in FY2021 in four jurisdictions (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, and Prince George’s), including three jurisdictions with casinos (Anne Arundel, Baltimore City and Prince George’s). Grant recipients outreached to over 700 Maryland residents through gambling



wellness training utilizing Zoom and Facebook platforms, as well as gambling awareness outreach during a community food drive. In addition, virtual awareness events hosted on public television and Facebook Live drew an audience of more than 90 individuals.

Participants who completed the International Gambling Counselor Certification Board (IGCCB) Certification for Clergy/Lay Ministers also conducted awareness activities: (1) expanded outreach through distribution of awareness materials to 16 community stakeholders in Allegany and Worcester counties, and (2) a community wellness problem gambling spiritual outreach project entitled “Emotional CPR” which engaged 51 participants.



PRINTED MATERIALS AND GIVEAWAYS

The Center maintains a resource library of over 100 unique awareness items highlighting the Maryland Helpline number (1-800-GAMBLER) and the help seeker website (helpmygamblingproblem.org). The Center continued to develop and freely distribute awareness materials (flyers, posters, rack cards, etc.) at no cost. In FY2021, over 62,500 awareness materials were distributed either electronically or by mail. The Public Awareness Materials Order Form continues to be widely distributed; in FY2021, the order form was electronically distributed to over 5,000 individuals during outreach efforts and training programs.



ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Websites

At the beginning of FY2021, the Center maintained seven active websites: two general awareness sites (mdproblemgambling.com and helpmygamblingproblem.org), and five targeted special population sites (militarygamblesafe.org; asiangamblingsos.org; gamblesafewomen.org; baltimoregambler.org; and princegeorgesgambling.org). During the fiscal year, all websites were reviewed for effectiveness and then consolidated into four key sites (the remaining sites are live and redirect to helpmygamblingproblem.org):

- Help seeker website - helpmygamblingproblem.org
- The Center’s main repository - mdproblemgambling.com
- Outreach to the Asian Community – asiangamblingsos.org
- Military and Veterans – militarygamblesafe.org

Total web traffic in FY2021 to these four sites recorded over 138,000 visits. Demographics for the majority of visitors to the websites tracked to Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County. The most visited website pages included *Gambling Support Groups* (helpmygamblingproblem.org); *Getting Help* (militarygamblesafe.org); *Resources* (asiangamblingsos.org); and *Training* (mdproblemgambling.com). Chats to the Maryland Helpline from individuals and family members seeking help in FY2021 totaled 125, recording a 60% increase in chats compared to FY2020 (n=78).



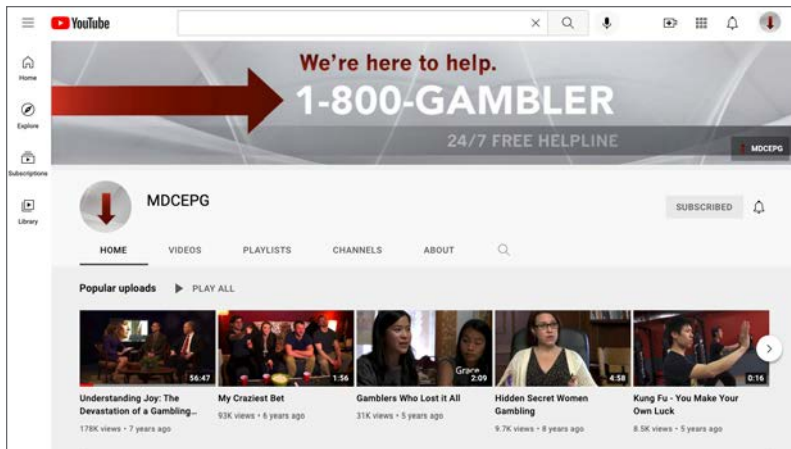
Social Media

In FY2021, the Center focused on expanding its awareness messaging and outreach through its existing social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. At the end of the fiscal year, followers on all social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) totaled 1,490, increasing 600% over followers recorded in FY2020.



Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and Documentaries

The Center maintains a library of over 55 PSAs ranging in length from 30 seconds to one minute. These PSAs encompass a variety of awareness messaging focused on topic, age group, special population, and/or lottery/scratch-off play, as well as “no cost counseling now available” messaging. PSAs are used in presentations as learning tools, hosted on the Center’s website, and viewed through the Center’s YouTube channel.



The Center also maintains videos ranging from five to 30 minutes in length that focus on targeted messaging and special populations. In FY2021, over 150 DVD copies of three produced documentaries were distributed to organizations at no cost: *Understanding Joy: The Devastation of Gambling Addiction* (30 minutes); *The Gambling Connection to Opiate Use: Personal Experiences* (15 minutes); and *Glenn’s Gamble: A Marine’s Battle for Gambling Recovery* (25 minutes). A new

five-minute video was produced in FY2021 which featured the Center's Peer Support team and focused on the possibilities of hope in the recovery journey; this video premiered at the 8th Annual Maryland VIRTUAL Conference on Problem Gambling on June 16, 2021, to over 600 attendees.

In FY2021, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Advertising Agency (MSAA, a division of Maryland Public Television) collaborated once again with the Center to launch a statewide problem gambling campaign focusing on the tag line *If you think gambling is a solution, it may be a problem*, developing digital images and an animated PSA to support the messaging. As a result of the campaign that ran March 22-June 7, 2021, the help seeker website (helpmygamblingproblem.org) received 39,740 visits, 131 help seeker calls and texts to the Maryland Helpline (1-800-GAMBLER), as well as 17 online chats.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS



As content experts, the Center is occasionally contacted for information and guidance on gambling and problem gambling within Maryland. In FY2021, the Center's Program Director engaged in four media interviews, with two of those interviews being recorded live for television. Interview topics ranged from general information on the Center and its initiatives, potential online gaming in Maryland, and the resources available for problem gambling.



Treatment and Intervention Services

In FY2021, the Center increased total outreach by 27%, engaging 562 agencies, organizations, and providers to increase the capability of treatment and awareness of resources for problem gambling; of this number, 37% of those contacts were newly engaged. The Peer Recovery Support Program increased support to new individuals by 104% in FY2021, assisting 295 individuals with support and resources to limit, control or stop their problem gambling; of this number, 78% (n=229) were referred to treatment.

IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF NO COST TREATMENT FOR GAMBLING PROBLEMS

In FY2021, the program to reimburse behavioral health providers for the delivery of no cost treatment for problem gambling, regardless of insurance or income status, continued as part of the collaboration between the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), Optum (at the start of January 1, 2020) and the Center. This reimbursement continues to include outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential/inpatient behavioral health services for both the gambler and/or concerned others who are Maryland residents.

Referral into Treatment

A total of 295 help seekers (individuals and family members) were referred in FY2021 to “no cost treatment” providers on the Center’s Problem Gambling Referral Directory. Referrals to a treatment provider from the Maryland Helpline comprised 22% (n=66) of total referrals. The Center’s Peer Recovery Support Specialists referred a total of 229 help seekers (78%) to treatment providers with 38% (n=88) making appointments with providers and 60% (n=53) confirmed to attend at least the first treatment session.

National Gambling Disorder Screening Day – March 9, 2021

The Center, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and in conjunction with March Problem Gambling Awareness Month, launched a targeted campaign to encourage healthcare providers to screen clients for problem gambling. The Center created a Screening Guide with tools and resources to integrate the screening of problem gambling/gambling disorder into current processes and protocols.

Both MDH and the Center distributed March awareness e-communications to healthcare providers and organizations across Maryland. In addition, the Center developed a March 2021 Problem Gambling Awareness Month Activity Survey distributed to the 107 providers participating on the Maryland Disordered Gambling (DG) Provider Referral Network Directory. Of those providers, 32% completed the March Activity Survey having actively promoted problem gambling awareness with the result of screening a total of 81 clients.

Court Mandated Referrals for Screening and Assessment

The Center, in collaboration with the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, continues its educational outreach to Maryland Courts and state’s attorneys as a means for intervening in the cycle of criminal behavior to provide early intervention for individuals identified as having gambling problems, providing options for interventions and treatment to those facing legal consequences as a result of gambling.



As part of this process, courts direct individuals to contact the Center and be connected to Peer Support Specialists for referral to a provider on the Center's Problem Gambling Provider Referral Directory. In FY2021, the Center received 23 court referrals.

INTEGRATED INTERVENTION APPROACHES FOR COMMUNITIES

In FY2021, the Center's staff reached out to, and collaborated with, 562 agencies, organizations, and private practitioners to provide technical assistance for addressing and integrating problem gambling awareness, prevention, and treatment strategies into existing protocols.

Of those 562, the Center's staff networked with 206 new agencies, organizations, and private practitioners. In addition, outreach was conducted to a total of 31 providers and private practitioners as a means of increasing the potential to provide no cost treatment for problem gambling through Maryland's Problem Gambling Reimbursement program, to evaluate needs, and to implement training strategies to increase proficiency.

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COLLABORATION AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION PROGRAM (VEP)

The Center continued its participation in the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gambling (MARG). MARG, a statewide partnership for responsible gambling, sponsored by the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA), continued to address ways to minimize the potential harm that may arise from gambling behavior, coordinating resources to address problem gambling in Maryland. The Alliance members, meeting quarterly, include representatives from MLGCA, Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland State Senate, Maryland House of Delegates, Maryland Council on Problem Gambling, Maryland's six casinos, and other interested nonprofit organizations serving individuals with gambling addiction. MARG meetings were limited in FY2021 due to pandemic restrictions and the ability to meet in-person.

The Maryland Voluntary Exclusion Program (VEP), operated by MLGCA, is available as an effective self-limiting/ exclusion tool for individuals who find themselves at-risk in any of the Maryland gaming venues (six Maryland casinos, 13 of Maryland's instant bingo facilities, and the Maryland Lottery). The Center continued to work collaboratively with the MLGCA to incorporate up-to-date resource information and materials for the problem gambler during their VEP application process.

Individuals who seek removal from VEP, after their compulsory two-year commitment, are required to complete a Healthy Lifestyle Choices Workbook, designed as a self-assessment tool. In FY2016, in collaboration with the Center, MLGCA and the Maryland Department of Health, the VEP removal process integrated a direct connection through the Center to a treatment provider at no cost to Maryland residents as a strategy for harm reduction of gambling behaviors. In FY2021, a total of 241 referrals from MLGCA were received by the Center. Of these referrals, 83% were Maryland residents and were referred to a counselor for VEP workbook review at no cost. In addition, 17% of referrals were out-of-state residents who completed this process at cost.



MARYLAND PROBLEM GAMBLING PROVIDER REFERRAL DIRECTORY

A priority for the Center is to continue to connect help seekers with resources to treatment and recovery within their communities. The Maryland Problem Gambling Provider Referral Directory (the Provider Directory) is maintained and updated by the Center once a month and is utilized as a referral source for callers to Maryland’s Problem Gambling Helpline, 1-800-GAMBLER. An interactive referral directory is available on the Center’s main website – mdproblemgambling.com, the Center’s help seeker website – helpmygamblingproblem.org, and on the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gambling website – mdgamblinghelp.org

At the end of FY2021, a total of 120 agencies, organizations, and private practitioners offering no cost treatment for individuals and families, were listed on the Center’s Provider List, representing 19 jurisdictions in Maryland, including the six casino jurisdictions (Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Calvert, and Worcester County) and the 13 licensed commercial instant bingo facilities in Anne Arundel and Calvert County. (See Figure 1)

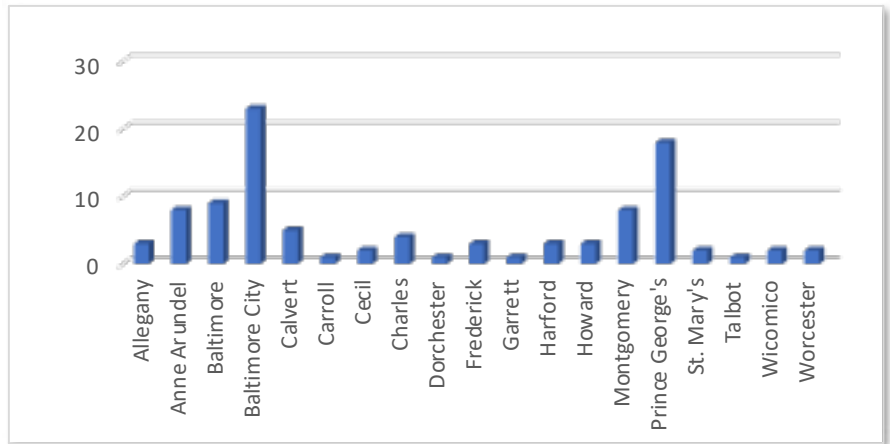


Figure 1: Provider Referral List by Jurisdiction

HELPLINE 1.800.GAMBLER

Help seeker outreach (calls, texts, and chats) in FY2021 recorded a total volume of 536. Of this total volume, help seeker calls represented 75% (n=402), recording a 38% increase in calls. Texts and chats represented 25% (n=134), recording a 28% increase compared to FY2020. This increase illustrates that many individuals seeking help may now be trending to use of electronic technology versus standard phone calls, whether as a preference or in response to state and federal COVID restrictions.

Helpline Caller Characteristics and Demographics

In FY2021, helpline callers were reported from 20 jurisdictions (See Figure 2). As compared to calls in FY2020, the Central region saw an increase of 27%, the Southern region an increase 43%, the Western region a slight increase of 1%, with the Eastern region remaining constant.

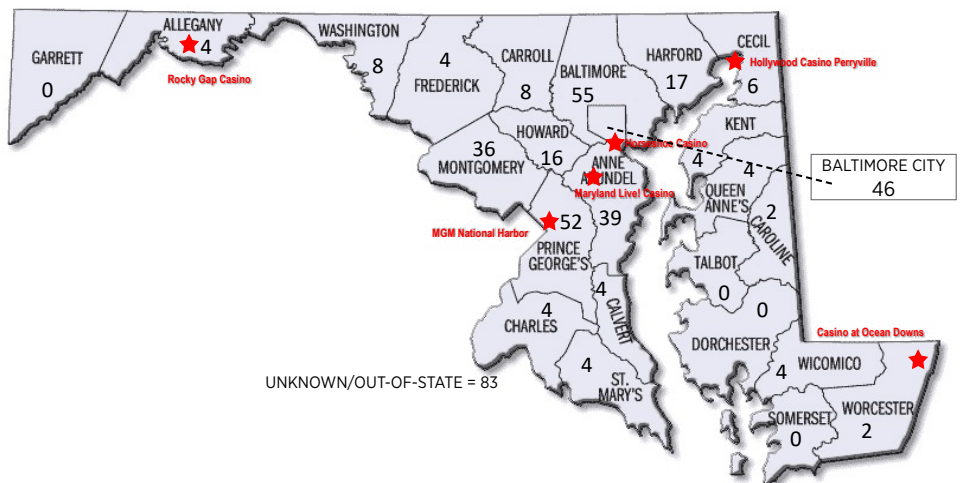


Figure 2: Helpline Callers by jurisdiction

Gender

Male callers continue to exceed female callers, recording a slight increase (7%) over FY2020. (See Figure 3)

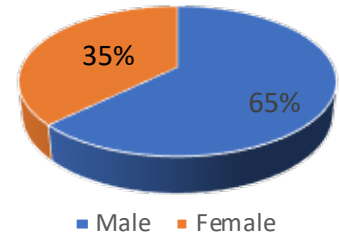


Figure 3: Gender by Percentage

Caller Age

In FY2021, callers to the Helpline tracked to a younger demographic compared to FY2020. Callers in age group 35-44 recorded the highest relative percentage increase (7%) and reported 21% of total calls (n=83). Callers in age group 25-34 also recorded a slight increase (2%) (n=69). Callers in age group 45-54 remained consistent with FY2020 (17%) (n=70). (See Figure 4)

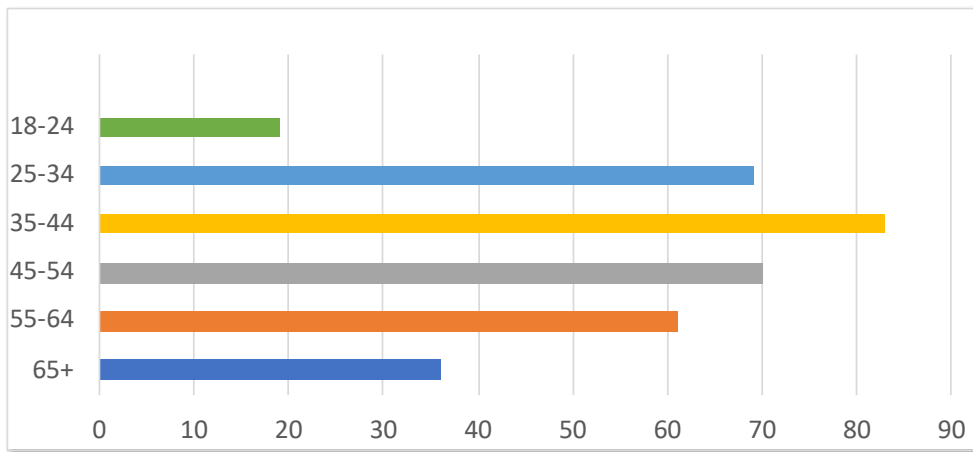


Figure 4: Number of Helpline Callers by Age Group

Primary Gambling Problem

Casino slots continue to be the primary gambling problem reported by Helpline callers representing 23% of total callers, followed by table games at 12%, and Lottery at 10%. Lottery and scratch-offs as a primary gambling problem decreased by 6% in FY2021 over FY2020. In FY2021, 11% of callers chose not to share their choice of gambling activity. (See Figure 5)

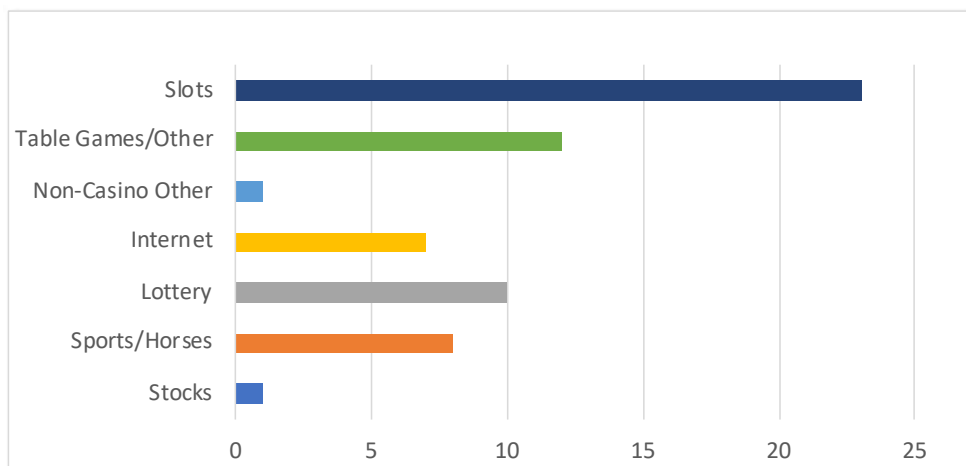


Figure 5: Primary Gambling Problem by Percentage

Caller Ethnicity

European Americans continued to comprise the majority of Helpline callers (49%) in FY2021, with relative percentage remaining constant with FY2020 data. African American callers also remained consistent (31%). Hispanic callers increased 2% in FY2021. (See Figure 6)

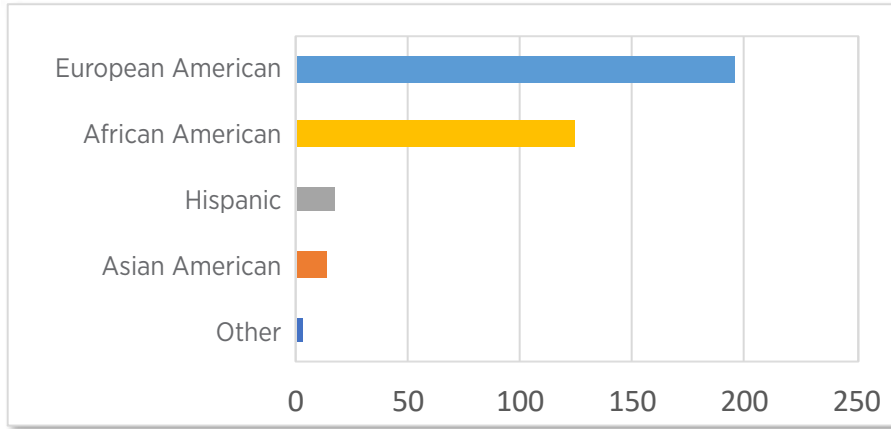


Figure 6: Number of Helpline Callers by Ethnicity

Primary Source of Helpline Number

Internet (53%) was the primary source for connecting Maryland residents to the Helpline, increasing in FY2021 8% over FY2020. In the Spring of FY 2022, the Center will be launching another statewide public awareness media campaign with many of its partners which will target messages across all forms of media, to include, but not limited, to TV and Radio spots, billboards, and social media outlets to ensure Maryland residents are aware of the resources available for help if gambling activity becomes problematic. (See Figure 7)

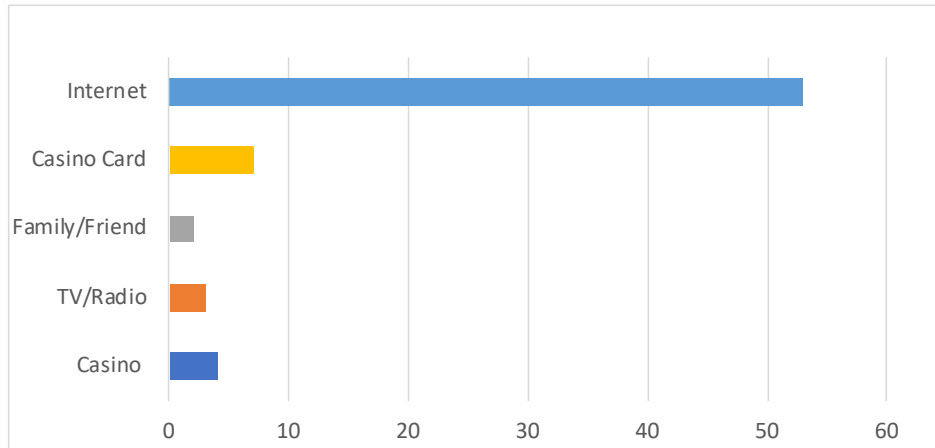


Figure 7: Where Callers Learned of Helpline by Percentage



Who is Calling

The majority of the calls to the Helpline in FY2021 were gamblers, representing 79% of total help seeker calls, which is consistent with FY2020. (See Figure 8)

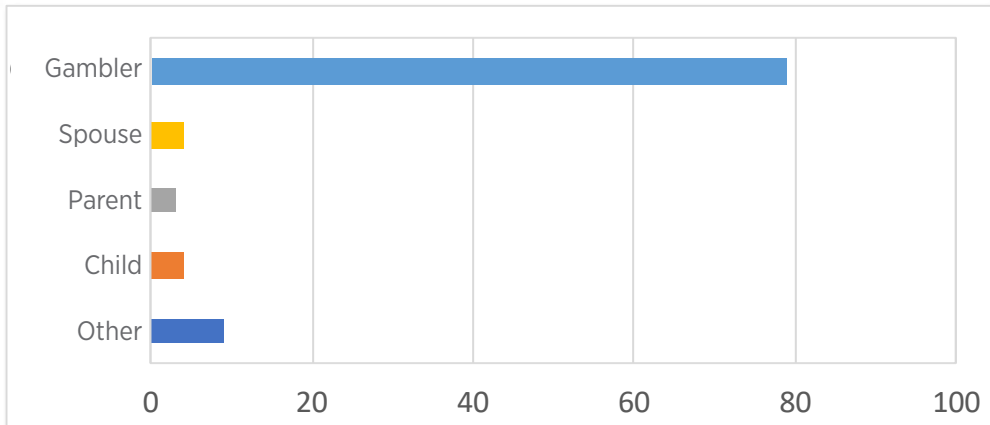


Figure 8: Person Who is Calling by Percentage

Helpline Caller Referrals

Referrals were given to 89% of helpline callers (n=385), with many receiving multiple referrals. In FY2021, warm transfers (real-time transfers with callers on the line) were implemented to treatment providers and peer support allowing for immediate connection for help. 58% (n=208) of callers were referred to a Center Peer Recovery Support Specialist, with 60% (n=125) being warm transferred as a means for immediate Peer support. This is a 46% increase in requests for Peer support over FY2020. 53% (n=190) of callers to the Helpline were referred to a treatment provider offering no cost treatment. Requests for Family Peer support (Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF)) represented 8% (n=27), with 48% (n=13) being warm transferred. (See Figure 9)

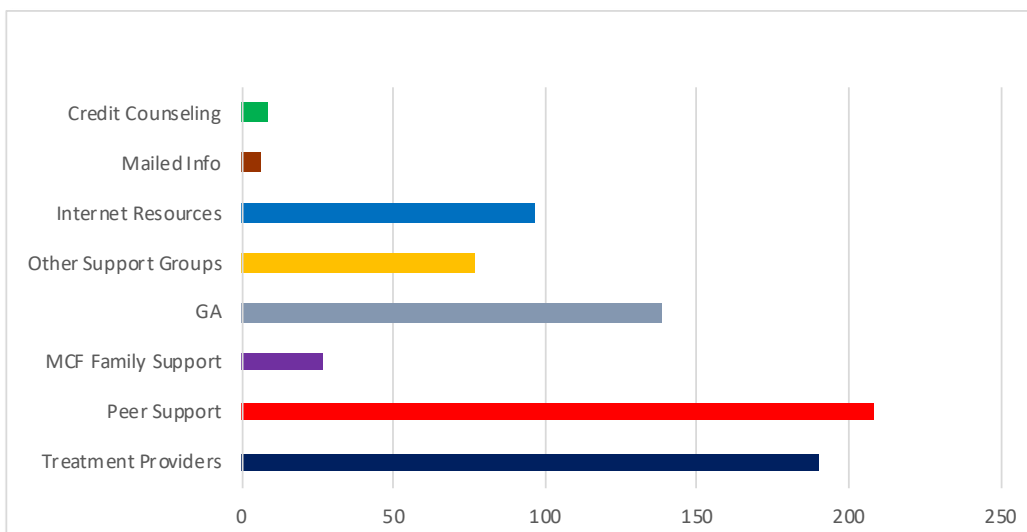


Figure 9: Helpline Caller Referrals

Peer Recovery Support

In FY2021, The Center maintained its Problem Gambling Peer Recovery Support Program with a total of five Peer Specialists, all of whom were certified through the Maryland Addiction and Behavioral Health Professional Certification Board (MABPCB). The Center's Peers have lived experience in recovery and are well-trained in assisting those seeking help with gambling behavior. With this experience, the Peers assisted 296 new clients, connecting them to resources to limit, control, or stop their gambling behavior. In addition, the Peers conducted 83 presentations to recovery groups and participated in 69 community events, interacting with 2,360 Maryland residents.

HELP SEEKERS SERVED

Peers received referrals to individuals seeking support for their gambling problems from the Center's Helpline, community behavioral health providers, and private practitioners. In FY2021, a total of 296 new clients were referred to the Center for peer support throughout the year, with a total of 347 individuals classified as active status within the database. New clients served by Peer Support in FY2021 represented a 104% increase compared to new clients served in FY2020.

In FY2021, 296 new clients were actively served by Center Peers and referred to treatment and resources, many receiving multiple referrals. Of these calls, 78% (n=229) were referred to "no cost treatment" providers, with 38% (n=88) making appointments for treatment. Referral data also tracked other referrals such as Gamblers Anonymous (GA) (80%), Maryland Lottery Self-Inclusion Program (VEP) (59%), Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) (21%), financial services (15%), and legal services (6%). (See Figure 10)

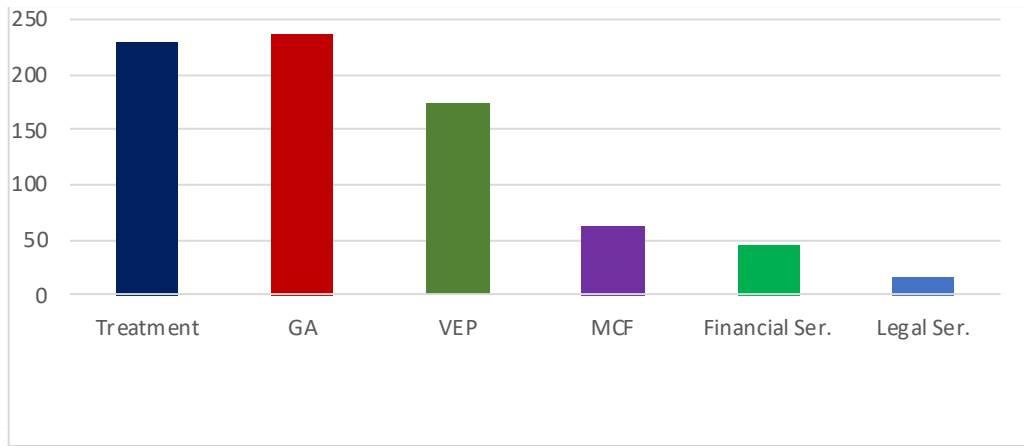


Figure 10: Peer Referrals to Support Services



PEER AGENCY/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In FY2021, Peers provided outreach to 206 agencies and organizations across Maryland not previously engaged with the Center to: provide awareness of the Center and its resources; connect with existing peer support specialists located within their treatment delivery system; offer assistance within their client base and community; and provide resources for those identified as having a problem gambling disorder.

A significant aspect of Peer outreach is collaborating with organizations to present personal stories of addiction and recovery, as well as share definitions of gambling, its risks, and the resources available for support if gambling behavior becomes a problem. Peer staff participated in 152 presentations and community events across all Maryland in FY2021, reaching 2,360 individuals.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MARYLAND COALITION OF FAMILIES (MCF)

The Center continued its partnership with the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) to ensure support for the family members who are faced with the negative consequences created by a gambler's out-of-control gambling behavior. In FY2021, a total of 89 help seekers were referred to MCF for family support, with 30% of referrals (n=27) directed from the Maryland Helpline. The remaining 70% (n=62) were direct referrals from the Center Peers as they worked collaboratively on a one-on-one basis with the MCF liaison to provide support of family members.



**Find your path towards
Gambling Recovery**

**Have the conversation
with someone
who "has been there"**

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (The Center) now has **Peer Recovery Support Specialists** with lived experience in recovery and training in how to assist those seeking help with gambling behavior.

A Peer can provide:

- Help to access treatment at no cost for Maryland residents to limit, control or stop gambling behavior
- Connection to resources for additional support
- Support and encouragement to continue to work toward goals.

If you or any one you know is gambling problematically or struggling with gambling addiction, call 1-800-GAMBLER today and ask to speak with a Peer Recovery Specialist or call The Center at 1-667-214-2120.

 UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
The Maryland Center of Excellence
on Problem Gambling



Training and Education

Outreach through clinical training and education programs across the state continues to be a key initiative for the Center. These programs build the capacity to prevent, address, and treat problem gambling/gambling disorder among mental health, substance use, social services, and prevention organizations. In FY2021, 4,150 total participants attended, in-person or virtually, one or more of the 54 clinical training and educational programs conducted by the Center. Of these total participants, 19% attended problem gambling training for the first time.

ANNUAL MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

This annual statewide learning forum brings together national and local experts in the field of problem gambling, as well as Maryland state and local policy makers, community leaders, behavioral health providers, and other health professionals. With pandemic restrictions in place regarding in-person gatherings, the Center hosted its first virtual conference on Friday, June 16, 2021.

The 8th Annual Maryland VIRTUAL Conference on Problem Gambling: *Adapting to Change: Increasing Collaboration for Awareness, Help & Hope* drew 641 conference attendees from all Maryland jurisdictions, with 37% (n=236) of participants (including community organizations, mental health/behavioral health providers, private practitioners, preventionists, and peer support) attending a Center sponsored training program for the first time.

The all-day conference (8:30 AM-4:00 PM EST) offered live plenary sessions on key and current topics from 17 national and local speakers: Legalized Sports Betting; Cultural Diversity in Addiction and Engaging Cultural Communities; Nevada's Gambling Treatment Diversion Court; and Youth Problem Gambling Prevention. In addition, nine Maryland organizations participated in virtual exhibit halls and one research poster session was highlighted.



AGENCY, REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE TRAININGS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Center offered a total of 49 in-person general awareness and clinical problem gambling virtual training programs and presentations in FY2021 reaching over 3,509 clinicians, health professionals, preventionists and peer support specialists across all regions. This participation records a 67% increase compared to FY2020.

Targeted outreach to over 310 programs and private practitioners was conducted by the Center to determine their problem gambling needs. A total of 13 In-service virtual programs and presentations as requested by agencies were held to 293 participants. The Center also conducted two separate 12-hour, four-day Basic Problem Gambling VIRTUAL Clinical Workshops in FY2021, with a total attendance of 290 Maryland clinicians.

DISORDERED GAMBLING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Center continued the Disordered Gambling Fellowship Program (Fellowship Program) in FY2021 to further enhance the ability of the participating behavioral health providers to serve as a trainer on the topic of disordered gambling treatment; to serve as a general resource regionally and at the state level on disordered gambling treatment; and to provide supervision of other professionals in the treatment, prevention, and public awareness of problem gambling.

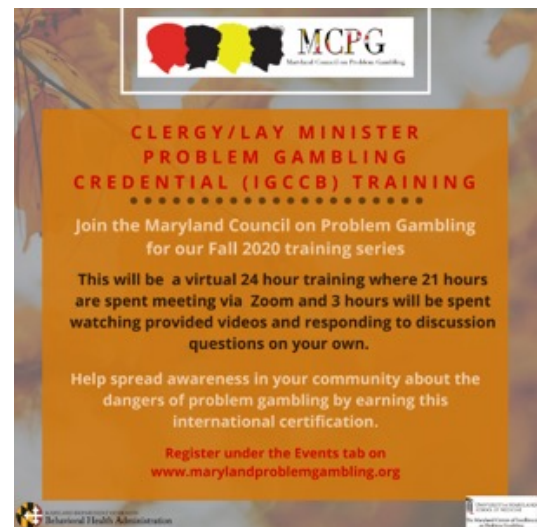
A total of five clinicians engaged in the Problem Gambling Reimbursement Program and listed on the Provider Network Referral Directory, participated in the FY2021 Fellowship Program, completing all the assigned Program deliverables and conducting a total of five virtual in-service presentations to behavioral health organizations with a total of 31 agency participants.



FAITH-BASED TRAINING

In collaboration with the Center, the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG) conducts faith-based training to lay ministers, clergy, and providers to educate and provide help to Maryland residents who may be struggling with a gambling problem. Since 2017, MCPG has trained approximately over 380 faith and spiritual community stake holders in problem gambling and spiritual outreach.

In FY2021, 36 virtual training modules were conducted to support the International Gambling Counselor Certification Board (IGCCB) Certification for Clergy-Lay Ministers. These programs were held virtually instructing 154 total participants. In addition, one webinar was conducted via Facebook Live during March Problem Gambling Awareness Month to 60 viewers entitled: *Wild World of Sports Betting*.



TRAINING FOR FAMILY SUPPORT, MARYLAND COALITION OF FAMILIES (MCF)

The Center and MCF collaborate to provide gambling peer support for families (MCF Peers) and individuals (the Center Peers). To that end, the Center provides ongoing problem gambling training for MCF staff to increase their understanding of how problem gambling affects families and their capability of providing support when needed. In FY2021, the Center conducted four instructor-led webinars with a total of 85 participants. Topics included: Children and Problem Gamblers; Suicide and Gambling Disorder; Addiction; and Alcohol, Drug Misuse and Problem Gambling Prevention.



ONLINE TRAINING

Participation in the Center's online and on-demand training programs continues to grow. In FY2021, participation totaled 2,159 participants, recording a 44% increase compared to FY2020 participation.

Live Webinars

The Center expanded presenter-led, one-hour Problem Gambling Webinars in FY2021, increasing the number of webinars offered, and broadening the webinar subject matter. A total of 2,088 participants attended 16 webinars, covering topics of finances, prevention, public policy, recovery, and treatment. Webinar participation in FY2021 increased 44% compared to participation in FY2020.

In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration and the University of Maryland School of Social Work, the Center developed a webinar in FY2021 to familiarize social workers and other participants with financial distress that is often present with clients and families within clinical settings, along with financial empowerment strategies that can be utilized by providers when working with clients. This two-hour webinar entitled *Fostering Financial Empowerment within Behavioral Health, Problem Gambling, and Other Clinical Settings* was presented to 231 participants.

On Demand

The Center's two-part, on-demand training program, *Integrating Problem Gambling into Substance Abuse Disorder and Mental Health Treatment, Part One and Two*, hosted on mdproblemgambling.com, are designed for staff at any level within behavioral health departments/organizations.

These on-demand programs further expand the commitment to integrate gambling counseling within existing behavioral health programs. At the end of FY2021, 71 unique individuals completed these on-demand training programs. A total of 823 individuals have completed on-demand training since these programs launched in FY2016.

CASE CONSULTATION CALLS

The Center continues to provide Case Consultation Calls four times a month to enhance the skills and competence of treatment providers to address the needs of clients with gambling problems and provide additional supervision support for national gambling counseling accreditation requirements. In FY2021, 39 case consultation calls were held with 196 total participants, reporting a 17% increase in attendance compared to FY2020.



Prevention

The Center's prevention efforts focus on working collaboratively with local health departments, community organizations and schools to educate and implement appropriate prevention policies and practices to address problem gambling. In FY2021, this effort was supported by the Center through special population grants to community organizations to promote problem gambling awareness and prevention. A total of 9 grants were awarded producing 38 completed projects, reaching 3,228 people with 10,804 awareness materials distributed. In addition, the Prevention Program conducted 33 presentations reaching 2,284 people.

SPECIAL POPULATION GRANTS

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Maryland

In FY2021, the Center collaborated with NAMI, a national non-profit organization with the mission of raising awareness and providing support to those affected by mental illness. During the fiscal year, the NAMI warmline email response listed the Center as a resource reaching 400 people. NAMI posted information through social media posts seen by 5,291 followers. In addition, two of the Center's electronic flyers were presented at two virtual events. Information on the Center was published in the October e-newsletter reaching 21,958 people and special announcements for PGAM were sent to 27,272 email contacts. A webinar on problem gambling was promoted and hosted during the month of May with 73 people attending live and 78 viewing the recording. NAMI created a fact sheet based on the webinar and posted it on the NAMI Maryland website. Finally, the Center was listed as a supporter for NAMI Walks Your Way Maryland Campaign reaching 930 participants.



Maryland Association of Prevention Professionals and Advocates (MAPPAs)

In FY2021, the Center continued a collaborative grant agreement with MAPPAs, the Maryland Association of Prevention Professionals and Advocates, a statewide organization promoting the field of prevention by assisting with certification of prevention professionals, providing forums and networking events for the prevention community, and hosting an annual conference. MAPPAs is open to all state prevention coordinators but focuses on substance misuse prevention.



The Center provided a grant to MAPPAs to increase the integration of problem gambling prevention with substance misuse prevention programming statewide. In FY2021, a session on problem gambling was included in the virtual Annual MAPPAs Conference reaching 32 preventionists and two webinars were hosted in the 4th Quarter, reaching 55 preventionists across the State. The Center continues to take a leadership role in planning quarterly MAPPAs Gatherings. MAPPAs collaborated with the Center to promote May Mental Health month, distributing the public awareness guide electronically to 90 preventionists.

My Life Foundation

The Center continued a collaboration with My Life Foundation during FY2021. My Life Foundation provides services to the Asian American communities in health and wellness, advocates for reducing health disparities, and promotes culturally sensitive education and awareness of mental health. In FY2021, My Life Foundation educated 162 people on problem gambling by integrating content into substance misuse and mental health promotion programs. In addition, My Life Foundation distributed problem gambling materials to 500 families through food drives. The Center's contact information and resources were included on My Life's website and through social media posts on Facebook. Also, My Life Foundation provided translation of materials to Korean for the Asian Gambling SOS website.



Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA)

The Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA), a new grantee in FY2021, develops, promotes and sponsors trusted culturally relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and their communities. The BMHA promoted Problem Gambling Awareness Month by using their electronic networks through email and social media. In addition, PGAM was promoted through BMHA's monthly e-newsletter.



iLaunchiLand

iLaunchiLand is a non-profit organization serving young males in the Cherry Hill area of Baltimore City by providing mentoring and goal setting for the future. The youth and young adults in iLaunchiLand created a problem gambling prevention video using YouTube, viewed by 160 people and presented the video at the Center's Annual Conference to over 500 participants. iLaunchiLand partnered with another non-profit to distribute 50 problem gambling prevention packets in the community. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, iLaunchiLand was unable to provide programming at Cherry Hill Elementary Middle, but the school distributed flyers, quizzes, and trivia facts to the school community. Over 100 students participated.



Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF)

The Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF) provides vital services to assist lower income, minority, and immigrant individuals to achieve a higher quality of life through a range of services. AACF collaborated with the Center in FY2021 to provide problem gambling educational materials to 990 people through food drives and the waiting room lobby. In addition, AACF provided feedback on the Asian Gambling SOS website for the Chinese population. The AACF promoted the Center on their website.



National Alliance on Mental Illness Prince George's County (NAMI PGC)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness Prince George's County (NAMI PGC) serves residents across Prince George's County with free mental health support, online groups, resources, and education. NAMI PGC conducted a problem gambling prevention initiative in the Oxon Hill area, located near the casino. A virtual kickoff event was held as well as three webinars to raise awareness of problem gambling. NAMI PGC also hosted a poster contest at Oxon Hill High School and distributed problem gambling awareness materials in the National Harbor area.



Area Health Education Center West (AHEC West)

Area Health Education Center West (AHEC West) improves access to and promotes quality in healthcare through education and collaboration. AHEC West hosted two webinars on problem gambling reaching 39 participants. Printed materials were distributed at the local jail and at community events. AHEC West posted problem gambling information and flyers through emails and social media, reaching hundreds of people. AHEC's Exploring Careers in Health Occupations (ECHO) Program for high school students created problem gambling prevention strategies. A press release for PGAM was posted in the Cumberland Times News.



Youth Empowerment Source (YES)

Youth Empowerment Source (YES) is a non-profit agency dedicated to providing critical supports to children, youth, and families in Cecil County. YES worked with the Center for the first time in FY 2021, engaging youth in problem gambling prevention. The Drug Free Cecil Youth Coalition designed a billboard that was posted on social media. A youth leader educated 141 of her peers on problem gambling prevention. A Kahoot game was designed by youth and played by 30 youth. A blog on gifting lottery tickets responsibly was posted on the YES website.



Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA)

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA) signed a letter of collaboration with the Center to implement problem gambling prevention strategies. MDoA posted on social media accounts for PGAM. In addition, the Center provided two webinars for Maryland Access Point (MAP) staff, reaching 23 people. The Center's helpline number was included in MDoA's resource directory for older adults and their caregivers who call in for assistance with services.



University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Medicine, National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

In FY2021, the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) updated the Maryland Smart Choices problem gambling prevention curriculum for middle and high school students to include mental health coping strategies and updated gambling examples. In addition, sample language was developed to assist schools in adopting a school gambling policy and suggestions for consequences for students caught gambling at school.



OTHER PREVENTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Prevention Office applied to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to become a host site for the Public Health Associate Program (PHAP). The Center was accepted and will host an early career public health professional for two years full time funded by the CDC beginning in October 2022.

A local health department requested a blog post in December for the NCPG's Gift Responsibly Holiday Lottery Campaign. The blog post focused on not gifting lottery tickets to youth under 18 and was posted on at least three organization's websites.

The Prevention Office established a collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Central East Prevention Technology Transfer Center. An inaugural problem gambling prevention webinar was held to recognize PGAM in March with the goal of providing a similar webinar each year.

The Prevention Office collaborated with the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA) to provide problem gambling prevention articles and resources to lottery retailers. The Center provided content for the quarterly retailer newsletter on responsible gambling topics. In addition, the Prevention Manager spoke about PGAM for the monthly retailer virtual meeting in February.

An Excellence in Problem Gambling Prevention Award was established in FY2021 and awarded to Meade High School at the Annual Conference in June.

Public Policy

The Center, in collaboration with the Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy (LRC) and the Public Health Law Clinic at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law (law school), actively scanned public policy issues arising in Maryland around responsible and problem gambling. The Center engaged partners, decisionmakers, and stakeholders across the state to align gambling laws and policies with the promotion of healthy and informed choices for all adult gamblers.

MARYLAND GAMBLING INITIATIVES

The Center continued to monitor proposed gambling legislation in Maryland during the Maryland Legislative Session. The Center tracked a total of 30 bills that referenced gambling within the House and Senate, provided written and oral testimony via Zoom as session was virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic, created and updated a real-time legislative tracking document to a listserv of over 300 registrants, and held weekly calls to discuss prominent public health legislation. Of special note was HB940 on sports wagering which set out the parameters of legalizing sports betting in Maryland. The Center continues to track and monitor all potential gambling legislation to ensure that responsible gambling practices are adhered to and potential harms from gambling are minimized and addressed.

PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORUMS

The Center participates and presents in a variety of policy forums with organizations such as the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, the Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration, Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gambling, National Council on Problem Gambling, Maryland Parity Coalition, and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-Maryland. In FY2021, the Center initiated new relationships with EPIC Risk Management and the Sports Fans Coalition to present panels at one state and one national conference on sports betting. The Center presented in these forums on a variety of topics including sports betting, gambling prevalence during COVID-19, problem gambling legal and policy levers, and a high-level overview of what is problem gambling and Maryland's unique approach at the Center.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE MONITORING

The Center monitored legislation across the country, primarily related to sports betting, as has been a national focus since the Supreme Court of the United States ruling in *Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association*. The Center has been actively participating in the notice and rulemaking process for Maryland's own sports betting regulations and been reviewing other states and other countries to help inform evidence-based recommendations for responsible sports betting in Maryland. As COVID-19 continues to impact the country, the Center has been monitoring gambling prevalence and public health policy measures across the country to help inform procedures in Maryland.



Research

In fiscal year (FY) 2021, the Research Program on Gambling (RPG) in collaboration with the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) continued to advance its research agenda with a continued focus on the identification and prevention of problem gambling behavior and attendant consequences for public health. The following report details the programs' progress and achievements over the past year including:

BIANNUAL GAMBLING PREVALANCE STUDY

The Research Program on Problem Gambling (RPG) is responsible for reporting the prevalence of problem gambling in the state of Maryland bi-annually. The final FY2020 study was submitted to Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and is anticipated to be released publicly at the end of FY2021.

COLLABORATION

Research staff worked closely with the Center over this past year to provide analytic needs, build a database to track activities and deliverables, provide information about problem gambling populations, and assist with areas for prevention of problem gambling. Research staff met with the Center 27 times over the past year to coordinate changes to benchmarks, assess REDCap capabilities, analyze data for the prevention manager, present research data at the annual conference, and obtain data from Beacon Health Options, Maryland (Beacon) and Optum Maryland (Optum). Neither data set were available, so RPG built a registry to track all caregivers for the Center. Research also worked with the Center on a "Sports one pager" to review with the legislators. In addition, RPG had discussions with the Center staff related to upcoming legislative sessions on sports gambling and how RPG will incorporate questions related to sports gambling into ongoing studies. In addition, research provided the Center and BHA with recommendations based on two race related studies focused on gambling in Marylanders.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

During FY2021, RPG submitted the proposal on the second research project on how the COVID pandemic affected problem gambling in the State of Maryland. Data has been collected and analyzed and the proposal has been written. The statisticians are reviewing the data for accuracy; an initial brief will be submitted to BHA for review in early 2nd Quarter, FY2022, with the final report submitted by 3rd Quarter, FY2022.

Additional sources of data

RPG worked with the Center's Program Director and Prevention Manager to identify sources of data about gambling in the state of Maryland. RPG worked with the Center to retrieve eight years of data related to adolescents and risky behaviors, to set up focus groups, and a needs assessment. In addition, RPG analyzed data from across the state to provide the prevention manager with target populations of problem gamblers to guide outreach efforts. RPG also worked with the Center's Program Director to systemize reporting out of REDCap to track peer activities.

Statewide Crash Outcomes Evaluation System (CODES)

Throughout FY2021, RPG continued to manage the CODES and statewide data warehouse and analyze data. Information was given to the Center's Prevention Manager as it related to adolescents, focus groups and target populations of problem gamblers to guide outreach efforts.

PEGASUS study

RPG continues to collect and analyze data from participants in the PEGASUS study. During FY2021, 1,346 participants completed year one, 1,143 participants completed year two, 1,114 participants completed year three, 1,010 have completed year four, and 467 have completed

year five. The overall retention rate is 81.6%. During this longitudinal study, 12 participants have died. The RPG worked with UMB Institutional Review Board (IRB) to report changes in staff and one issue related to participant compensation. This study is continuing.

PEGASUS Fantasy Sports sub study

During this fiscal year, with permission from BHA, questions related to fantasy sports were added to existing studies and one year of data is now accessible. A summary of this data will be provided to BHA in FY2022.

PEGASUS on-line sports betting

With BHA approval, questions were added to ongoing studies related to on-line sports betting. As noted previously, research worked with the Center on sport betting information related to recent legislature. In addition, a brief about on-line sports betting will be presented to BHA by 3rd Quarter, FY2022.

EVALUATION OF HELPLINE SERVICES

Based on previous briefs and studies, the RPG worked collaboratively with BHA and the Center to discuss and set benchmarks for the Center's Peer Specialists, the Maryland Helpline, Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF), the International Gambling Counselor Certification Board (IGCCB), and the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG). Data was analyzed quarterly. During FY2021, all benchmarks were met.

EVALUATION OF PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

During the fiscal year, RPG worked closely with the Center to update and modify the data captured in REDCap related to peer specialists, their work habits, training, and outreach services. RPG also set up reports that can be run randomly to give a snapshot of each peer's activities for closer supervision if needed. Also, RPG, the Center, and BHA reviewed the benchmarks that are being monitored and modified some of these to closer align with current practices. RPG reports quarterly on the meeting of benchmarks. All benchmarks were met in FY2021.

EVALUATION OF FAMILY PEER SUPPORT SERVICES (MCF)

Each quarter, MCF sends RPG data related to all their activities during that quarter. RPG analyzes this data and reports findings to BHA. During this fiscal year, data related to the training of staff was not available. RPG also reported quarterly on the progress made during FY2021 to offer information and support to loved ones of people with problem gambling and all other benchmarks were met. During FY2021, 16 outreach activities was conducted within each region.

ADMINISTRATION SERVICES ORGANIZATION (ASO) DATA

During FY2021, RPG worked with BHA to limit the data set requested from Beacon and/or Optum. RPG developed a tracking database for the Center's use of providers engaged in the problem gambling reimbursement program.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MARYLAND COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING (MCPG/FAITH BASED INITIATIVES) AND THE MARYLAND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (BHA)

RPG received data quarterly from MCPG on all activities for data analysis. Over the course of the fiscal year, benchmarks were set and modified in accordance with the data available. In general, FY2021 benchmarks for this Faith based initiative were met.

Future Directions

PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Continue to expand awareness messaging on responsible gambling and problem gambling through a variety of methods, including new printed materials.
- Implement a targeted multi-media statewide public awareness campaign.
- Enhance social media platforms to increase awareness and further visibility.
- Implement multi-language capability on all active websites to further increase accessibility for help seekers.

TREATMENT AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

- Continue to outreach to Maryland behavioral health providers and organizations to encourage participation in Maryland's no cost treatment network, a means for better serving individuals and/or concerned others struggling with gambling problems in the state of Maryland.
- Expand the Center's ability to provide clinical and technical assistance to behavioral health providers and/or organizations in Maryland.
- Increase the incorporation of problem gambling screening and assessment into Maryland behavioral health providers and organizations current treatment paradigms.
- Continue the Center's collaboration with the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gambling (MARG) and work jointly on the Voluntary Exclusion Program of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA).
- Increase Helpline visibility through increased public awareness of the Helpline number and other help seeking messages through a statewide public awareness campaign using a variety of outlets such as, social media, radio, web, and television.

PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT

- Continue outreach efforts to expand the use of Peer Recovery Support services within Maryland's Behavioral Health Provider Network to help individuals limit, control, or stop their gambling.
- Continue to strengthen behavioral health provider collaboration across the state, with a focus in the Western and Eastern Shore regions of the state where resources are more limited.
- Continue to increase the client base of individuals needing help with a gambling problem.
- Continue to increase client directed peer recovery presentations in partnership with behavioral health organizations throughout the state of Maryland.
- Continue to assist in referrals to partner organizations, such as Maryland Coalition of Families, National Council on Problem Gambling and the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency.



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- Expand the number on-demand trainings offered to broaden the access of problem gambling education for providers, private practitioners, organizations and preventionists.
- Increase the number of in-service trainings to behavioral health organizations through the Center's Disordered Gambling Fellowship Program.
- Continue to broaden training topics across awareness, prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Provide additional Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to certified licensees, such as Certified Peer Recovery Specialists and nursing personnel.

PREVENTION

- Continue to compile a problem gambling prevention needs assessment, including compilation of quantitative and qualitative data on problem gambling prevalence, trends, and negative outcomes for adults and youth.
- Develop a comprehensive problem gambling prevention strategic plan.
- Continue to implement and expand special population problem gambling prevention grants to minority populations and other populations at risk for problem gambling. In addition, reach geographic regions in Maryland that have not been awarded a problem gambling prevention grant in previous years.
- Continue to implement and expand youth grants in Maryland with a focus on expanding to college-age young adults and counties that have not received a youth grant.

PUBLIC POLICY

- Further involvement with the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency to comprise Center presentations at Lottery meetings throughout the year and further collaboration in Lottery and casino responsible gambling programming.
- Continue to communicate with a broader community of stakeholders, including legal organizations and the Maryland Judiciary, to build awareness of problem gambling as a mental health issue.
- Develop, as appropriate, an electronic policy publication to proactively share information and concerns with Maryland state and local legislators.

RESEARCH

- Continue collaborative efforts and the expansion of the research agenda on problem gambling: prevention initiatives; identification and surveillance; evaluation of public policy; ongoing impact assessment of expanded legalized gambling; identification of vulnerable populations; and promotion of scientific research on gambling.



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Acknowledgments

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Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF)

Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA)

iLaunchiLand

Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF)

Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA)

Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA)

Maryland Association of Prevention Professionals & Advocates (MAPPA)

My Life Foundation, Inc.

National Alliance on Mental Illness-Maryland (NAMI-Maryland)

National Alliance on Mental Illness Prince George's County (NAMI PGC)

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)

Optum Maryland (Optum)

Youth Empowerment Source (YES)



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