

An Eye to the Future of Sports Gambling in Minnesota

Although Minnesota did not pass a bill legalizing sports gambling during the last session, many think it's just a matter of time before it happens. With an eye toward the future – and an eye on the experiences of several other states who have legalized sports gambling – we talked to problem gambling leaders in Pennsylvania and Ohio for their observations and warnings. The next issue of *Northern Light* will highlight the sports gambling experiences of Michigan and New Jersey.

Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, retail sports betting debuted in November 2018, followed by the introduction of online and mobile options beginning in May 2019. What started as a relatively small piece of legislation to modernize the helpline ultimately grew to include online lottery games, fantasy sports and truck stop video gaming terminals (essentially small casinos). The bill also authorized airport gambling but that is not available yet.

Growth in sports gambling in the state has been astronomical. In 2019, the handle – the amount of money bet/put at risk – was \$1.5 billion. By 2022, the handle was \$7.25 billion, which represents roughly one percent of Pennsylvania's gross domestic product. (Prior to sports gambling expansion, Pennsylvania gambling revenue (all forms) was \$3.1 billion. By 2022, revenue passed the \$5 billion mark, with the growth in sports gambling cited as a major reason.)

Helpline calls have also gone up markedly in Pennsylvania. In the first year, with just a few months of both brick-and-mortar and online sports gambling, there were 30 calls. In 2022, there were more than 300 calls specifically for sports gambling. Overall call volume (for all forms of gambling) has also increased, going from an average of about 1100 prior to gambling expansion to more than 1200 through the middle of 2023.

"In addition to the uptick in problems related to sports betting, this increase might also be related to wider advertising of the helpline number," says Josh Ercole, executive director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania. "It's possible that folks have been struggling for a while and just now are learning that help is available."

In general, Josh was pleased with precautionary measures that accompanied Pennsylvania's legalization of sports gambling. "We asked for a lot — and got close to everything."

However, with the benefit of hindsight, Josh wishes that more attention was paid to the language of advertising, specifically the mention of "no-risk bets" that really aren't. He also wishes that — at least in the beginning — consumers who opened accounts were made more aware of the capability of adding limits to their betting. However, as of several months ago, when new bettors sign up, they are made more aware of how they can govern their play.

Josh feels that the culture for the gambling industry has begun to change, and is at least partly attributable to the growth in sports gambling. "I think the industry sees that gambling problems are not sustainable and they want to address responsible gambling as part of the culture," says Josh.

Josh also feels that it's important for states to learn from other states. "In Pennsylvania

we were able to look at other states with casinos and online regulations. We're also fortunate that the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board is always looking for new possibilities and regulations to implement to emphasize player protection."

Ohio

A wide-ranging sports gambling bill was signed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine in December 2021, and went into effect on January 1, 2023. Notably, the bill stipulated a universal start for all forms of sports gambling: mobile sports, brick-and-mortar sports books, and sports betting kiosks (primarily bars, restaurants and bowling alleys) licensed by the Ohio Lottery.

During the first month (January 2023), the handle for sports gambling was approximately \$1 billion. It has since subsided but is expected to pick up again in the fall.

Gambling advertising blanketed all outlets. "It didn't matter whether you were watching television, streaming a station or listening to the radio," says Derek Longmeier, executive director of the Problem Gambling Network of Ohio.

Derek notes that one piece the Ohio legislation got right was having firm guidelines for marketing. Advertisers couldn't promote risk-free bets unless they were truly risk-free, and every ad

Continued on page 3



Susan Sheridan Tucker
Executive Director
MNAPG

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Busy Summer

“Summertime and the living is easy” ... That may have been true in my younger days, but summer is a time for wrapping up our fiscal year and prepping for a brand new one. This year, we decided to move our annual conference to September 18. We’re hoping this change will enable people to travel without worrying about snow, ice and frigid temps. We’re hopeful that we can draw a larger group. We will have an excellent lineup of speakers from across the country and Canada and, unlike last year, the conference will be solely in person. Nothing beats the energy that comes from being together.

July is also a time when we hold our board of director elections. This year we will be saying goodbye and expressing immense gratitude for the longtime service and leadership of Sunny Chanthanouvong, Mary Magnuson and Randy Stinchfield. Sunny provided MNAPG an understanding of the issues impacting the Lao community and the intersections with gambling addiction. Over the course of his tenure, Lao-specific public awareness materials were produced and MNAPG commissioned a study on gambling prevalence within the Minnesota Lao community. MNAPG is committed to continuing its work within Minnesota’s diverse communities. Mary has offered me sound advice as I have navigated the waters with our diverse pool of stakeholders. Her wealth of knowledge regarding the gambling industry, Minnesota’s gambling policy history and her commitment to MNAPG’s mission will be missed, though Mary promised me I can still call her to tap into her insights! Randy Stinchfield, a MNPGA founding director, has shared his clinical knowledge and research expertise throughout his tenure. As one of the few researchers in Minnesota interested in problem gambling, Randy produced clinical assessments, long-term analysis of the Minnesota Student Survey and provided me important insights into gambling addiction, particularly when I first started. He’s been a great sounding board when MNAPG has commissioned surveys and helped me see the nuances when developing a survey question.

As you may already know, the sports betting bill did not make it past the finish line. It will undoubtedly be reintroduced in the 2024 session. We’ll be ready as we will continue to advocate that an appropriate level of funding be set aside for prevention, treatment and research. Minnesota needs to do better if it intends to expand gambling through sports betting.

Susan Sheridan Tucker

Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to help those affected by problem gambling in Minnesota. We do this by promoting awareness and understanding of the issue via our website, newsletter, community education programs, sponsorship of the Minnesota State Conference of Problem Gambling, and training of professionals in preventing and treating problem gambling.

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An Eye to the Future of Sports Gambling in Minnesota

Continued from page 3

was required to detail a state or national gambling helpline clearly and conspicuously.

The Ohio bill set aside two percent of gambling tax revenue (which initially was set at 10 percent but later increased to 20 percent) for problem gambling efforts managed by the state gambling commission. The bill also allowed Ohio colleges and universities to collect data to analyze the impact of sports betting on student gambling. Ohio also prohibited gambling advertising on college and university campuses, the first state in the country to do so.

There has been a substantial increase in helpline calls in Ohio since the introduction of legalized sports gambling. In the first month (January 2023) of sports gambling, there were about 1500 calls, compared to under 500 calls in January 2022. The October-December 2022 period also saw a record high number of calls.

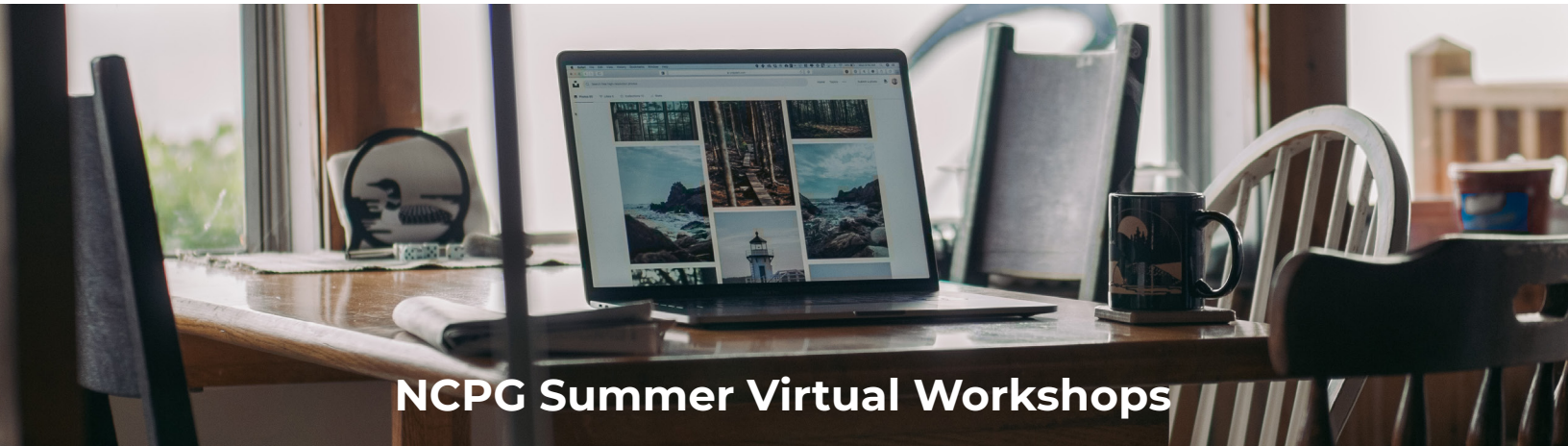
Derek says it's not clear that the increase in helpline calls correlates directly with sports gambling. "Because of marketing, the helpline was more visible on all advertising, so it's possible that more gamblers, not just sports gamblers, sought help for the first time."

Looking back on Ohio's process, Derek thinks a phased-in approach might have been better than a universal start date. The state gambling commission was under considerable pressure to write rules while also doing compliance checks for numerous operators. Derek also feels that consumer access — which went from literally nothing to everything overnight — didn't allow new consumers to become well educated about gambling.

Problem gambling advocates in Ohio sought to exclude sports betting ads on professional athlete's jerseys but were not successful. (A compromise was a prohibition on youth jersey advertising.)

Derek also emphasizes that problem gambling advocacy organizations, such as MNAPG, should be aware of how little legislators might understand about sports gambling. "With legislators and in conversations, the response we often received was, 'Wow, this was so much more complicated than we knew,' says Derek. "Legislators often only hear from sports betting advocates about how great gambling will be. An important piece of work is to really showcase the importance of advocacy and having subject matter experts in the community share their thinking."

Derek also encourages a focus on infrastructure so that all parts of a state are represented with certified gambling treatment counselors and to include appropriate telehealth options to communities challenged with identifying and cultivating counselors.



NCPG Summer Virtual Workshops

For the past three years, since the start of the pandemic, NCPG has offered virtual workshops prior to its regularly scheduled annual conference. This year NCPG presented a range of speakers and topics over the course of two afternoons. One advantage of online workshops is the ability to host international speakers, who might not ordinarily be able to travel. It's also helpful for those who cannot travel to the NCPG annual conference, providing access to excellent resources from the comfort of their computers.

Several of the presenters were from the United Kingdom, where they have been

dealing with the backlash from the 2005 policies that blew the door open on gambling accessibility and are now feverishly working to increase treatment services, prevention and research. Attendees benefited from listening to the lessons learned and hopefully can apply those lessons in their own backyards.

Several researchers presented on their most recent studies looking at the effectiveness of self-exclusion programs, the links between gambling and problem debt, the ever-evolving changes in gambling and responsible gambling language, and the value of providing peer support groups for women. We heard

from clinicians and their experiences treating gambling as a co-occurring disorder and about a fairly new integrative treatment model called Congruence Couple Therapy (CCT), which has been shown to have a relative advantage over individual treatment for reducing addictive and mental health symptoms and improving emotional regulation among couples. There was also a panel discussion advocating for gambling policies to move into the national spotlight. With no federal funding, and the increased opportunities to gamble, the field of gambling disorder is behind in workforce development, research and programs regulating gambling harm.



Connecting. Reflecting. Moving Forward.

Prevention + Recovery = Hope

2023

The gambling landscape continues to shift with rapid expansion and responses to regulations that seem insufficient. Those working in prevention, treatment and research need to understand and be responsive to these changes.

The MNAPG conference will feature presenters from across the country and Canada sharing their perspectives as clinicians, financial advisors, people in recovery and researchers. It will be a great way to network with others committed to minimizing the harms caused by gambling disorder and to learn more about recent trends and new tools available for those who need help.

Who Should Attend?

The conference is appropriate for many people, including:

- Gambling, alcohol and drug addiction counselors and therapists
- Other health care and social service workers
- Law enforcement officers
- School and church leaders
- Lawyers and financial professionals
- People in recovery and their families

CEU credits are available from various Minnesota professional licensing boards.

Programs and Speakers

While conference details are still falling into place as of this writing, here are some of the programs and speakers that will be part of the conference:

- **Resources and Tools for Financial Counseling in Gambling Disorder Treatment**, presented by Cara Macksoud, CEO of Money Habitudes, and Alex De Marco, founder and CEO of MoneyStack, Inc. and GamFin.
- **The All-In Podcast Comes to Minnesota!**, presented by Brian Hatch, peer recovery specialist for Bettor Choice, and Jeff Wasserman, MPA, JD, ICGC-I, CPRS, judicial outreach and development director for the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems.
- **Using Affordability Guidelines as a Tool for Player Protection Online in a North American Context**, presented by Lia Nower, J.D., Ph.D., a distinguished professor and director of the Center for Gambling Studies at Rutgers University.
- **Working with Clients and Gambling Harms: Why it Matters and How to Lower Resistance to Treatment**, presented by Jay Robinson, JR Consulting, an internationally sought-after expert in the field of preventing and responding to gambling harms.

- **The Public Health Impact of Sports Betting Expansion**, presented by Dr. Timothy W. Fong, M.D., a Professor of Psychiatry at the Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA.

What:
MNAPG annual conference

When:
Sept. 18

Where:
Hilton Minneapolis/ Bloomington, 3900 American Blvd W., Bloomington, MN

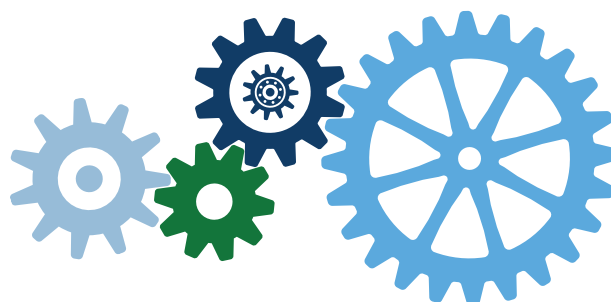
Cost:
\$30 (free to those in recovery)

Registration deadline:
September 8

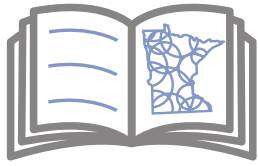
For More Information:
mnapg.org/conference

MNAPG Strategic Planning

MNAPG is undergoing a refresh of its strategic plan, initially approved in 2019. We'll be reaching out to our stakeholders for additional input as we get closer to finalizing our goals and strategies. The updated plan will capture and reflect some of the changes that have taken place in the industry since the original plan was created.



MNAPG in the News



Over the last six months, we contracted with Preston Spire's public relations team, One Simple Plan, to increase the visibility of numerous issues pertaining to problem gambling. Since starting this effort, MNAPG has had two op-ed pieces published, one which is circulating among various statewide outlets. This is important, as we want to reach as many Minnesotans

as possible. The first piece was published in the *Star Tribune* and the second in the *Duluth News Tribune*. MNAPG also received air time on local stations, with interviews on KTTC (Rochester), KARE 11 (Twin Cities) and Fox News 9 (Twin Cities). Our media communications can be found at mnapg.org/news.

MNAPG Debuts PSA



Working in conjunction with Preston Spire, MNAPG has created public service announcements (PSAs) that can be streamed wherever appropriate. We created a 30-second PSA and a 15-second PSA. Both can be viewed on MNAPG's YouTube channel.

The goal of the PSAs is to communicate that gambling addiction is as real as any other addiction. The PSAs depict a young man "drinking," "smoking" and "snorting" a deck of cards and closes with a reminder that there's help for gambling addiction, that it works and that it's free.

We plan to post this video frequently on our social media channels. In addition, the *Star Tribune* will use targeted emails and banner ads to help get these videos in front of the eyes of thousands of Minnesotans. We'd appreciate it if you would share the link mnapg.org/psa to your own networks.

MNAPG Provides Multi-lingual Resources



MNAPG strives to provide as many resources as possible so that all Minnesotans are aware of the risks and harms of problem gambling. Over the past year, we've been working with people in specific communities to ensure that our most basic messaging is available in the many languages represented in Minnesota. You can request a list of the problem gambling warning signs in Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, Vietnamese and Somali, as well as English, by visiting form.jotform.com/221867275834062.

We have also added a translate button on our website, which will provide access to 12 different languages: Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Haitian, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Somali, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese. (Please note that we're aware that the translations may not fully capture a specific community's turn of phrase, or the English terms might not be readily translatable; we're relying on an automated system.)

New Board Member: Sean Copeland

Sean Copeland, an attorney for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, is MNPGA's newest board member. He brings the important perspective of tribal interests to MNPGA.

Sean first learned about MNAPG from attending Minnesota Indian Gambling Association (MIGA) meetings. Although he doesn't have an in-depth knowledge of problem gambling, it's an area that he hopes to better understand.

"One of the reasons I joined the board was so that I could learn more about problem gambling and hopefully bring

some of that knowledge back to the Band and perhaps help implement some problem gambling solutions," says Sean.

Sean has worked as an attorney for the Band since 2010 and has served as the Band's tribal attorney since 2013. He performs legal work related to tribal governance, natural resources, education, healthcare and gaming.

Sean, who enjoys mountain biking around Duluth, grew up in Seattle but has lived all over the country. He came to Minnesota for a volunteer program and law school. "I previously worked in the criminal justice

system as a prosecutor and public defender, which is one of the reasons I'm interested in problem gambling," says Sean. "I've dealt with a lot of people with chemical dependency issues so I have some familiarity with addiction. I'm excited to be here and work on these important issues."



In Their Own Words Frank's Story



*Stay
in the present
moment as long and
often as you can, get
humble and be
teachable.*

The first time someone suggested I might have a gambling problem was in high school. Before I went on a casino trip that I won at an auction, my football coach pulled me aside. He told me to be careful with my gambling, to think about what I was going to do.

Looking back on it, I think it was really insightful for someone in the 1990s to realize that someone might have a gambling problem. Unfortunately, I ignored his advice.

I started gambling at a young age. By the time I was 10, I participated in church-related activities, including cake walks, nickel rolls and games of chance. I also played my share of Bingo.

I grew up at a time when casinos were just getting started in Minnesota, and I often went and gambled there although I was under age.

When I wanted to gamble, I would do whatever it took to get the high. This could be gambling in a casino, playing the lottery or playing cards. I bet on hockey games and would even bet with friends on how many times an elevator would stop at a floor.

Everything in my life involved gambling and games of chance.

The first time I sought help for my gambling was around 2007, when I went to Project Turnabout. I didn't finish treatment, but going there was an eye opener. They told me I was a compulsive gambler, an alcoholic and a drug addict. I didn't want to hear any of it, so I left. But I did take something from it.

For the next 10 years, I still gambled, though I had bouts of being gambling-free. I was in and out of GA meetings.

I suppose if there were a turning point, it might have been in 2017 when a little old lady pulled me aside at a GA meeting. She was probably frustrated because I still gambled some. I remember she told me three things: 1. "You're going to make it," 2. "Whatever you do for the next 12 months, don't gamble," and 3. "Keep going to the meetings."

I found that I took a natural bond to her and what she said. I built a trusting relationship with her. If someone else told me the same thing, it might not have stuck.

I now work as a treatment coordinator. At some point, I hope to work strictly with people who have gambling problems. I thought I would be a special education teacher but I became fascinated with the social services aspect. I feel I can help people in a different way and engage them in conversations about recovery.

My advice to people struggling with gambling is to go and check out many meetings. You will find one that feels right, and when you do, treasure it. Stay in the present moment as long and often as you can, get humble and be teachable.

Gamblers Anonymous Meetings

Visit www.minnesotaga.com to find open meetings for compulsive gamblers as well as family and friends, or closed meetings for compulsive gamblers and those who think they may have a gambling problem.



Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

A low-risk approach to gambling means choosing to gamble on a limited basis and because it's a fun recreational activity. By following these three guidelines, you can ensure you gamble responsibly (all guidelines should be observed to maximize safety).

1

HOW MUCH

Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

and

4

HOW OFTEN

Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

2

HOW MANY

Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

Note: these limits may not be suitable for those experiencing problems from alcohol, cannabis or other drug use, problems with anxiety or depression, or have a family history of addiction or problem gambling.

Action Required: Reserve Your Issue of *Northern Light*

In an effort to reduce printing and mailing costs, we will greatly reduce the number of hard copy newsletters we print going forward. If you'd like to continue receiving a print copy of this newsletter, please send an email with your name/ address and preference to info@mnapg.org.

If you would like to be added to a list for receiving an electronic version, please sign up online: www.mnapg.org/sign-up-for-mnapg-emails.



ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

Why belong to the Alliance?

You can make MNAPG's voice stronger and affirm the value of our work. Gambling disorder is a real and destructive addiction. Our work is not about prohibition, but to ensure those negatively impacted have available resources for recovery and to minimize the risks for all. Better informed consumers make better choices. More members equal greater credibility with decision makers. Visit our membership page at MNAPG.org/membership.

PLATINUM



Draft Kings

SILVER



Treasure Island Casino



CharitAbleMN

GOLD



Minnesota Indian Gaming Association



Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community



Running Aces



Canterbury Park



Minnesota State Lottery



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IN THIS ISSUE

- An Eye to the Future of Sports Gambling in Minnesota, *p. 1*
- NCPG Summer Virtual Workshops, *p. 3*
- 2023 MNAPG Conference, *p. 4*
- MNAPG Debuts Public Service Announcement, *p. 5*
- In Their Own Words – Frank’s Story, *p. 6*

