

# 2023 Gambling Disorder Screening Day Activities, Support, and Participation



Cambridge Health Alliance Readiness for Gambling Expansion (CHARGE)

Gambling Disorder Screening Day Report  
April 6, 2023

## Background

As opportunities to gamble continue to evolve and expand across the globe, there is a need to identify those who are at risk for gambling-related problems. Gambling Disorder leads to financial, emotional, social, occupational, and physical harms, yet many cases go undetected due to limited assessment for this problem. Screening for Gambling Disorder helps to identify individuals who should seek further assessment for potential gambling-related problems.

[Gambling Disorder Screening Day](#) (Screening Day) is a one-day event held annually on the second Tuesday of March during Problem Gambling Awareness Month. This event was established in 2014 by the [Division on Addiction](#) (the Division) at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital. Although the Division supports year-round screening for gambling-related problems, Screening Day is intended to increase awareness of gambling harm, and educate and support providers who want to screen for Gambling Disorder. This international grassroots movement addresses the imperative to detect gambling-related problems as early as possible. Since its conception, Screening Day has grown to include supporters and screeners from across the United States and around the world.

This year, Screening Day took place on March 14, 2023, and the Division celebrated 10 years of coordinating this grassroots event.

## New Materials & Resources

### Screening Day Materials

With funding and support from DraftKings, the Division was able to translate and print 10,000 Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS) [pocket screeners](#) in Spanish and simplified Chinese. Pocket screeners are the size of a folded business card and include the three-question BBGS, facts about Gambling Disorder, and resources for individuals who might be struggling with their gambling (e.g., the National Problem Gambling Helpline number). The Division also created merchandise to commemorate the 10th annual Screening Day, including pens, post-it notes, and mugs (Pictures 1 and 2) with funding from DraftKings. These materials were distributed to Screening Day hosts and supporters, as well as community-based organizations and addiction treatment providers in Massachusetts. See [Distribution of Screening Day Materials](#) for details regarding the distribution of these items.



*Pictures 1 and 2. Picture 1 (left) depicts translated BBGS pocket screeners in Spanish and simplified Chinese in addition to 10th annual Screening Day merchandise. Picture 2 (right) depicts these items along with other Screening Day materials to be distributed to a participant.*

## Screening Day Resources

The Division updated its [Screening Day Toolkit](#) with new resources. The [Screening Day Promotion Guide](#) provides participants with outreach ideas, promotional language, and [official logos and graphics](#) available for download. Another addition to the Screening Day Toolkit was an [interview with Debi LaPlante, PhD](#), Director of the Division and co-founder of Gambling Disorder Screening Day, about the history, growth, and future expansion of Screening Day.

## Distribution of Screening Day Materials

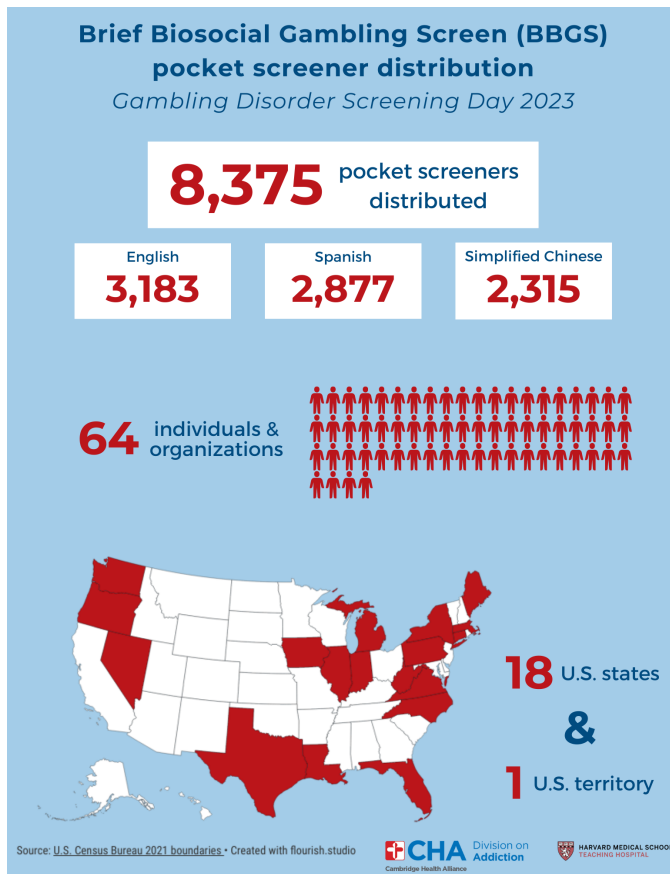
Every year, the Division provides BBGS pocket screeners to individuals and organizations who request them, at no cost. This year, these resources were made available in Spanish and simplified Chinese in addition to English. The Division received requests for BBGS pocket screeners from 34 individuals and organizations across the U.S.

*“We have distributed the BBGS pocket screeners (English and Spanish) to the casinos under our jurisdiction and have them available at our offices.”*

– Commissioner, Casino Control Commission in a U.S. territory

The Division also conducted targeted outreach and distributed BBGS pocket screeners to individuals and organizations located within Massachusetts. These included 13 outpatient substance use treatment providers, five community-based organizations that primarily serve Spanish- or Chinese-speaking communities, three GameSense Centers located in Massachusetts casinos, and four CHA Psychiatry providers. Additionally, the Division held a tabling event at the CHA Everett Hospital on Screening Day and handed out BBGS pocket screeners to patients, caregivers, and providers who stopped by the table.





*“We split the distribution up between our waiting area in the clinic, I passed them along to our SOAP [Structured Outpatient Addiction Program] Director who has placed them in the day program milieu, and provided some materials for the clinician we identified who has attended some of the offered gambling addictions training we found through M-TAC [the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment]”.*

– Chief of Clinical Operations,  
Massachusetts outpatient  
substance use treatment program

Figure 1. Distribution of BBGS pocket screeners for Screening Day.

The Division distributed 8,375 BBGS pocket screeners to 64 individuals and organizations, not including tabling guests at the CHA Everett Hospital (Figure 1). The Division also distributed 1,288 pens and 479 post-it notes. Mugs were distributed to 33 long-time supporters of Screening Day in the U.S. and in four countries. In total, BBGS pocket screeners and Screening Day merchandise were distributed to 118 unique individuals and organizations. More than half of these materials were sent to individuals and organizations within Massachusetts, including four CHA Psychiatry providers (Figure 2).

*"I shared the pocket screeners (English and Spanish) with our Boston Money Management Program. They assist well over 1,000 low income seniors and disabled people with paying their rent and utilities. I also shared them with my interns and some home care workers."*

– Mental Health Program Manager,  
Massachusetts community-based organization

*"I hosted a public screening event and used the simplified Chinese BBGS pocket screeners. I set up a table near the Chinatown gate and offered the screening there."*

– Family Connector, Massachusetts community-based organization

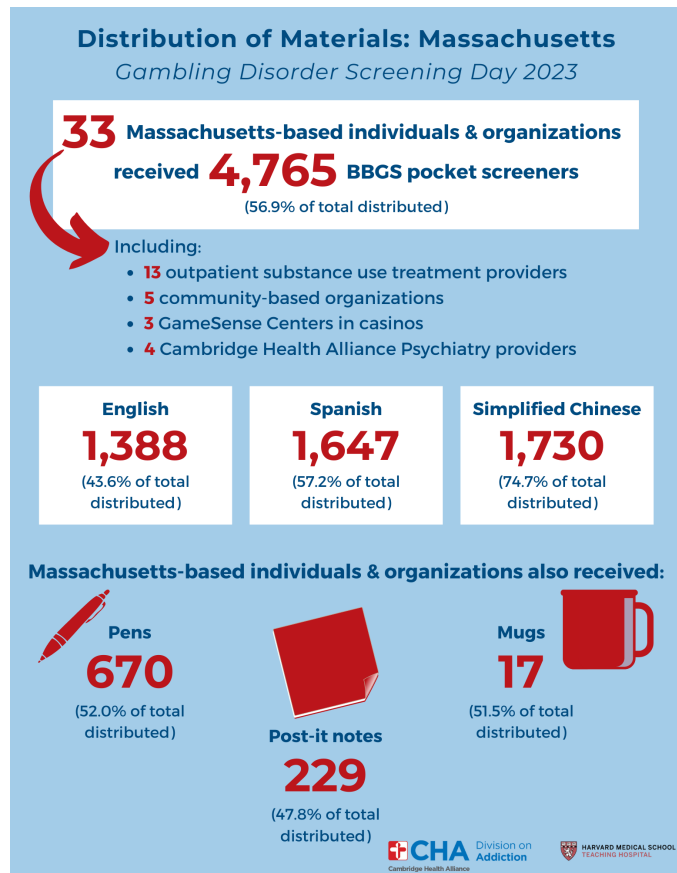


Figure 2. Distribution of Screening Day materials in Massachusetts.

## Outreach, Awareness, and Research Activities

The Division conducts outreach and awareness activities each year to promote Screening Day. This year, activities included:

- Presenting about Screening Day during multiple webinars and online events, including the National Council on Problem Gambling webinar “Gearing up for Problem Gambling Awareness Month” and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services Northeast Provider Meeting
- Conducting webinars, including “Introduction to Screening and Assessment for Gambling Disorder” for Massachusetts treatment providers and “Gambling Disorder Screening Day: Tools and Tips” for Illinois providers
- Participating in the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling’s “Twitter Chat Tuesdays: The Importance of Screening & Referral Sites”
- Guest speaking on [ALL IN: The Addicted Gambler’s Podcast](#) (episode #340)
- Publishing a peer-reviewed editorial, [“Calling for worldwide adoption of Gambling Disorder Screening Day.”](#) in the journal *Addiction Research & Theory*

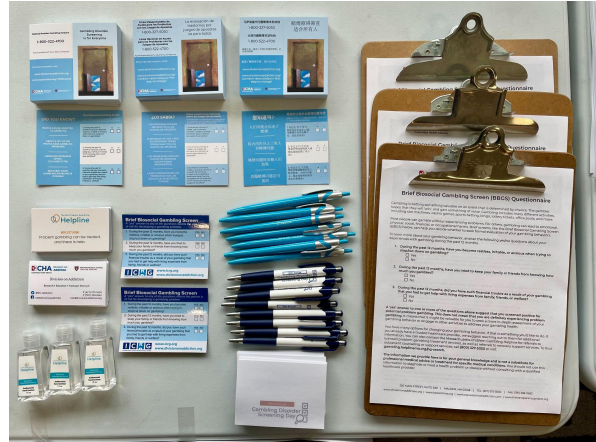
- Developing language for DraftKings to use to promote Screening Day in internal and external communications (including in retail locations and online). See Host and Supporter Screening Day Activities for more details on how DraftKings used this recommended language.
- Conducting an exploratory study of online gambling screening
- Holding a tabling event at the CHA Everett Hospital
- Information about Screening Day was featured in multiple newsletters, including the CHA In Brief, the CHA Wellness newsletter, and the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment newsletter
- Governor Healey issued a citation recognizing the Division's dedication to addressing addiction in Massachusetts

### Exploratory Study of Online Gambling Screening

This year, as in past years, most participating providers used the traditional in-person, paper-and-pencil approach to screening for Gambling Disorder. Additionally, for the first time and with DraftKings funding, we tested a novel approach to conducting large-scale screening: in an exploratory study, we screened 1,003 vetted [MTurk workers](#) from around the United States for Gambling Disorder, most of whom had never been screened for this condition. We examined key questions related to engagement in screening and use of, and attitudes toward, follow-up recommendations and resources. Our experience indicates that this is an affordable and high-speed way to conduct a large-scale screening event; data collection took just over 3 hours. We intend to publish two academic papers using data collected during this online screening.

### Tabling at Everett Hospital

Division staff held a tabling event on Screening Day at the CHA Everett Hospital (Picture 3). This tabling event was for patients, caregivers, and CHA staff to learn more about Screening Day, gain insight into their relationship with gambling by completing a gambling screen, and access gambling-related resources. Resources available at the tabling event included BBGS pocket screeners in multiple languages and resource packets with information on gambling support groups, referral information, helplines, and recovery resources (Picture 4). The Division is also grateful to our colleagues at [Health Resources in Action](#) for supplying items with the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline number (e.g., pens and hand sanitizer), informational gambling brochures, and the [Your First Step to Change workbook](#) in multiple languages (Spanish, traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese). At the tabling event, the Division also had 10th annual Screening Day merchandise, including pens, post-its, and BBGS magnets donated to the Division by the [International Center for Responsible Gaming](#), a long-time supporter of Screening Day.



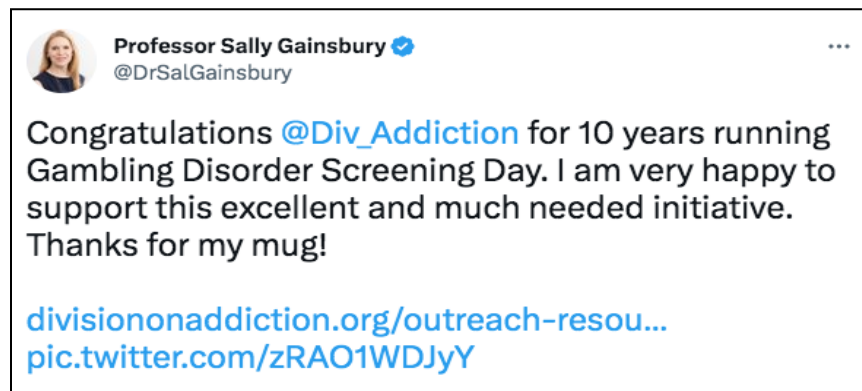
*Pictures 3 and 4. Picture 3 (left) features Division on Addiction staff tabling at CHA Everett Hospital. Picture 4 (right) depicts various materials available at the tabling event.*

The tabling event was a success, attracting CHA patients, caregivers, and employees. The majority of people who engaged in the event reported wanting resources for family, friends, or colleagues who they thought might have a potential gambling-related problem, as well as for clients who might benefit from gambling-related resources and information. More specifically, one individual who stopped by the tabling event mentioned having a husband who spent \$60-100 a day gambling, another mentioned having a family member who gambled not only in the U.S but in Costa Rica and frequently asked for financial help from family members in an effort to fund their gambling. One surgical unit manager admitted that they did not know of any clients who presented with gambling-related problems but passed on resources to social work colleagues. A few staff members referenced their own gambling (e.g., going to the casino) but mentioned being able to control this behavior by abiding to specific, self-prescribed, spending limits. Participants seemed to be interested in resources translated into other languages, particularly Spanish, and one participant asked about the comorbidity between gambling and alcohol use. Overall, this successful event gave us the opportunity to spread gambling awareness, disseminate gambling-related resources, and educate those who may not have otherwise thought of gambling as an addiction.

## **Screening Day Participation**

Given the grassroots nature of this event, tracking participation can be challenging. To estimate overall participation, the Division totaled the number of individuals and organizations who did one or more of the following: (1) posted on social media about Screening Day, (2) requested BBGS pocket screeners or information about participating in Screening Day, or (3) told the Division that they planned to participate in Screening day, either by hosting a screening event or promoting this event to their professional or social networks.





Pictures 5, 6, and 7. Picture 5 (top left) depicts a Screening Day tweet from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas International Gaming Institute. Picture 6 (top right) depicts a Screening Day tweet from the New York Council on Problem Gambling. Picture 7 (bottom center) depicts a Screening Day tweet from professor Sally Gainsbury, Director of the Gambling Treatment & Research Clinic and Professor of Psychology at the University of Sydney.

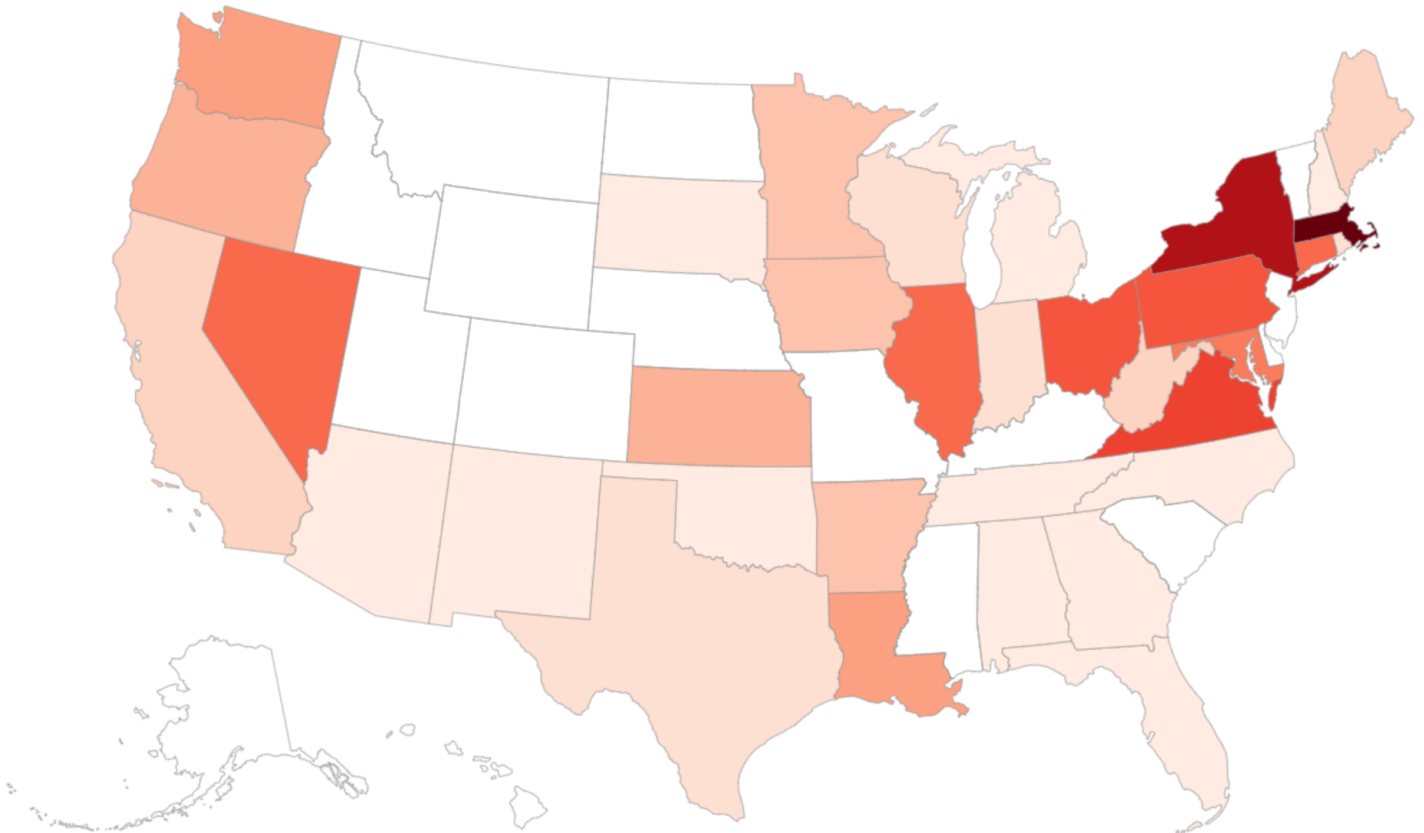
This year, at least 180 individuals and organizations participated in Screening Day. Participants represented 34 U.S. states, one U.S. territory, and seven countries (Figure 3). Participants included research institutions and academics, employee assistance and wellness programs, prevention-focused organizations, mental health and addiction treatment programs, community health centers, hospital systems, gambling operators, local and state governmental organizations, national and state problem gambling councils, education and awareness programs/initiatives, student health and wellness centers, homeless shelters, professional organizations, and more.



### 2023 Gambling Disorder Screening Day (GDSD) Participation

Unique individuals and organizations who posted about GDSD via social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), requested pocket screeners, and/or explicitly expressed their support or participation

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 boundaries • Created with flourish.studio

Not displayed is participation by national organizations (9), individuals/organizations in U.S. territories (U.S. Virgin Islands (1)), and individuals/organizations in other countries (Australia (1), Canada (3), Hong Kong (1), Nigeria (1), Paraguay (1), UK (3)).

Figure 3. Participation in Gambling Disorder Screening Day by U.S. state or country.

### Host and Supporter Screening Day Activities

Screening Day hosts and supporters participated in many different ways. Some participated by administering gambling screens to their clients, holding a tabling event, or hosting a drop-in screening event open to the public. Other creative approaches included:

- KGA Inc. featured Screening Day in their March newsletter that went to 260 client organizations that provide Employee Assistance Program Services. They also provided information about Screening Day on their client-facing website and to counseling staff.

- Adcare Maine and the Maine Council on Problem Gambling sent a newsletter about Screening Day to 11,000 providers across Maine, featured a [blog post](#) about Screening Day and held an informal Q&A session and resource table at a recovery center.
- The New York State (NYS) Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) had state landmarks lit up in yellow, including the Empire State Plaza, Niagara Falls, and the NYS Fairgrounds, to commemorate Screening Day.
- The American Psychiatric Association posted [a blog](#) about Screening Day.
- Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission aired three public service announcements on local radio and distributed pocket screeners to casinos under their jurisdiction.
- The International Center for Responsible Gaming distributed BBGS magnets at no cost to anyone who asked for them and promoted Screening Day on their [website](#).
- DraftKings featured Screening Day and included the BBGS on their [Safer Play Portal](#). They used the Division's recommended language to share information about Screening Day with employees via internal Slack channels, main employee intranet, and dedicated employee Safer Play Portal. They also included the Division's recommended language in external messaging via social media posts and signage in DraftKings retail locations.
- GameSense Info Centers held screenings in the three Massachusetts casinos. Multiple other casinos across the U.S. held similar events.

## Screening Day Host Data

Screening Day hosts are given an optional host data reporting form to complete after their event. This form includes data pertaining to the number of screens administered and demographic information of individuals who had a positive gambling screen. This year, 11 Screening Day hosts completed the data reporting form. They included behavioral health and addiction treatment providers, a state problem gambling council, and GameSense Information Centers in Massachusetts casinos. Four hundred and eighty-six individuals were screened for Gambling Disorder and 104 (21.4%) screened positive. Of the positive screens, 63.7% identified as male and 36.3% identified as female. The age distribution of positive screens was: age 18 - 25 (2.0%), age 26 - 44 (30.4%), age 41 - 55 (36.3%), age 56+ (31.4%).

## Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, Gambling Disorder Screening Day continues to grow in its successes and outreach efforts, reaching more people and organizations and creating more engagement than ever before. Staff at the Division on Addiction are tremendously proud of what has been accomplished by coordinating this event and look forward to seeing how it will progress in the future.

## Acknowledgements

DraftKings, Inc. provided funding support to expand Screening Day, including funds for translating the pocket screeners into Spanish and simplified Chinese, and funds for the exploratory study of online gambling screening.