

2024 Gambling Disorder Screening Day Activities, Support, and Participation



Cambridge Health Alliance Readiness for Gambling Expansion (CHARGE)

Gambling Disorder Screening Day Report
July 26, 2024

Executive Summary

Gambling Disorder Screening Day (Screening Day) is an annual event that increases awareness of gambling harm and encourages providers and others to screen for Gambling Disorder. It was established in 2014 by the Division on Addiction (the Division) at Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital. The 11th Screening Day took place on March 12, 2024.

Expansion and Participation

This year was the largest Screening Day to date. We saw many new participants, in addition to long-time event hosts and supporters.

- At least 240 individuals and organizations participated; they represented 40 U.S. states, one U.S. territory, and six countries. Participants included healthcare providers, governmental entities, community organizations, gambling operators, researchers, colleges, and more.
- 15 Screening Day event hosts voluntarily reported their event data to the Division; they screened 1,239 individuals, with 31% of those individuals screening positive.
- We collaborated with Health Resources in Action to expand screening in Massachusetts. Forty-seven providers and community-based organizations hosted Screening Day events. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services funded this project.

Outreach, Awareness, and Research Activities

The Division conducts outreach and awareness activities to engage new and repeat Screening Day participants and supporters. We also conduct research related to screening for Gambling Disorder.

- Division faculty and staff facilitated webinars, presentations, and trainings about Screening Day and on screening for Gambling Disorder.
- We published articles and information about Screening Day in Harvard Health Publishing, the Brief Addiction Science Information Source, and various online newsletters.
- Division staff held a Screening Day tabling event at the Cambridge Health Alliance Everett Hospital, where we educated and screened patients, their caregivers, and hospital staff.
- We collaborated with the Hoosier Lottery to conduct a study that explores a lottery-promoted Screening Day intervention, funded by the International Center for Responsible Gaming.

New Materials & Resources

The Division's Screening Day Toolkit includes free, comprehensive materials and resources to support participants in planning for, promoting, and hosting their screening event.

- Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS) pocket screeners were translated into three new languages—Brazilian Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. BBGS pocket screeners were also available in three existing languages—English, Spanish, and simplified Chinese. This was made possible with funding from DraftKings.
- 6,590 BBGS pocket screeners were distributed free of charge to 43 Screening Day participants across the United States; 4,810 of these were distributed across Massachusetts.
- The Screening Day Toolkit was updated with printable versions of the BBGS in six languages. New logos and graphics and a style guide for event promotion were also added.

Gambling Disorder Screening Day continues to grow, reaching more people than ever before. The Division on Addiction is extremely proud of all that has been accomplished over the past 11 years, and we are excited to continue our efforts to coordinate and expand this event in years to come.

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 in part 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 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 a one-day event intended to increase awareness of gambling harm, and educate and encourage providers to screen for Gambling Disorder. This international movement addresses the need to detect gambling-related problems early. 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 12, 2024, and the Division celebrated 11 years of coordinating this event.

New Materials & Resources

Screening Day Materials

With funding and support from DraftKings, the Division was able to translate and print 15,000 [Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen \(BBGS\) pocket screeners](#) in Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. DraftKings also funded the printing of additional BBGS pocket screeners in English, Spanish, and simplified Chinese (Picture 1).



Picture 1. Translated BBGS pocket screeners in English, Haitian Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese. Haitian Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese are new languages for Screening Day 2024.

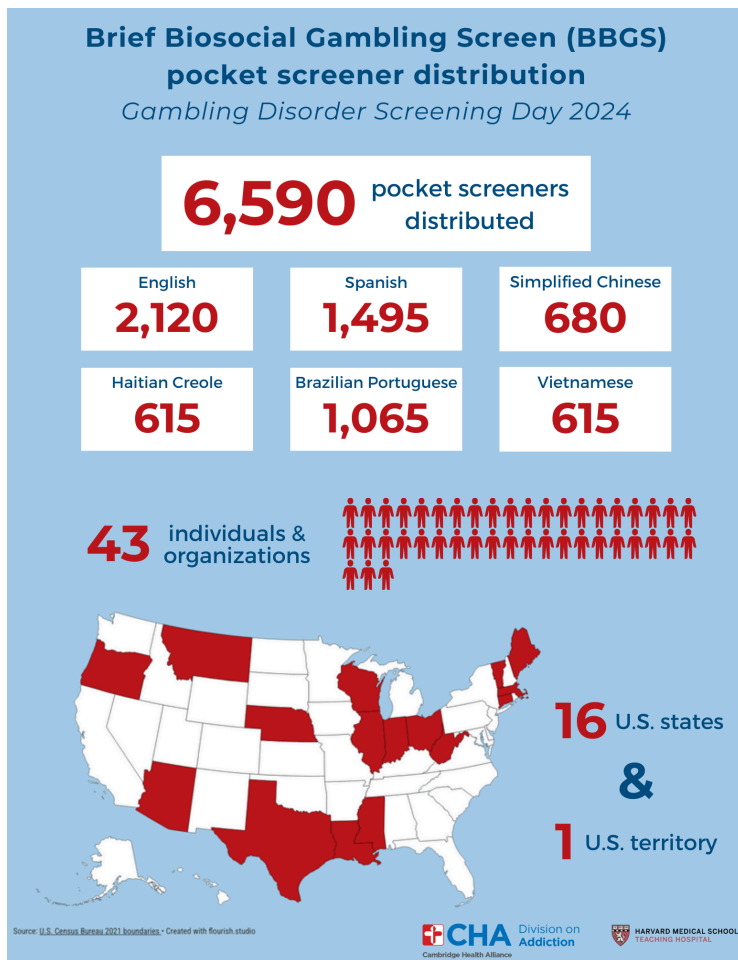
BBGS pocket screeners are the size of a folded business card and include the three-question BBGS, facts about Gambling Disorder, and resources for individuals who might be struggling with their gambling (e.g., the National Problem Gambling Helpline number). See *Distribution of Screening Day Materials* for details regarding the distribution of these items.

Screening Day Resources

The Division updated its [Screening Day Toolkit](#) with new resources. The [Screening Day Promotion Guide](#) update included new official logos and graphics available for download. We also added a [Screening Day Style Guide](#) for event promotion. [Downloadable and printable](#) versions of the BBGS were made available in various languages (English, Spanish, simplified Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese).

Distribution of Screening Day Materials

Every year, the Division provides BBGS pocket screeners to organizations who request them, at no cost. The Division distributed 6,590 BBGS pocket screeners to 43 individuals and organizations across the United States, not including tabling guests at the CHA Everett Hospital (Figure 1).



“I delivered translated BBGS pocket screeners to a local Asian community center and a local Hispanic community center. Not only are these effective tools for screening, they are a great conversation starter to set up relationships for Screening Day and beyond.”

– Education and Outreach Coordinator, an outpatient addiction treatment center in Nebraska

“We had a table at a local casino, with giveaways for anyone who did a screening. We had great interactions with the players. Having the BBGS pocket screeners was really helpful.”

– Senior Director, a behavioral health services organization in Illinois

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

Nearly three-quarters of BBGS pocket screeners went to individuals and organizations within Massachusetts (Figure 2). Some of those who received BBGS pocket screeners were reached through our targeted outreach. Those outreach efforts focused on CHA providers, outpatient substance use treatment providers, and community-based organizations – particularly those who serve Vietnamese-, Brazilian Portuguese-, and Haitian Creole-speaking populations. 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 are running a gambling-awareness project at a local high school. We are considering doing a Screening Day tabling event at lunch time. We will use these cards at this and other events as part of our program.”

– Director of Community Health Youth Initiatives, a healthcare system in Massachusetts

“I work with teens in a school-based health center. I would like to make the BBGS pocket screeners in all languages available for teens and families. I will also share them with school staff.”

– Social Worker, a school-based teen health center in Massachusetts

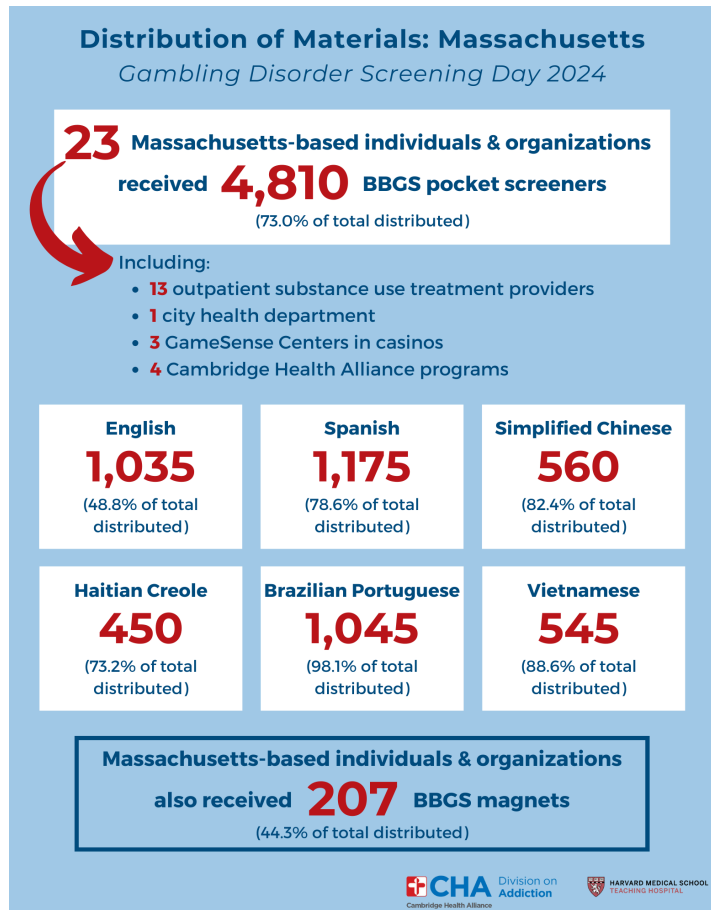


Figure 2. Distribution of BBGS pocket screeners in Massachusetts.

Outreach, Awareness, and Research Activities

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

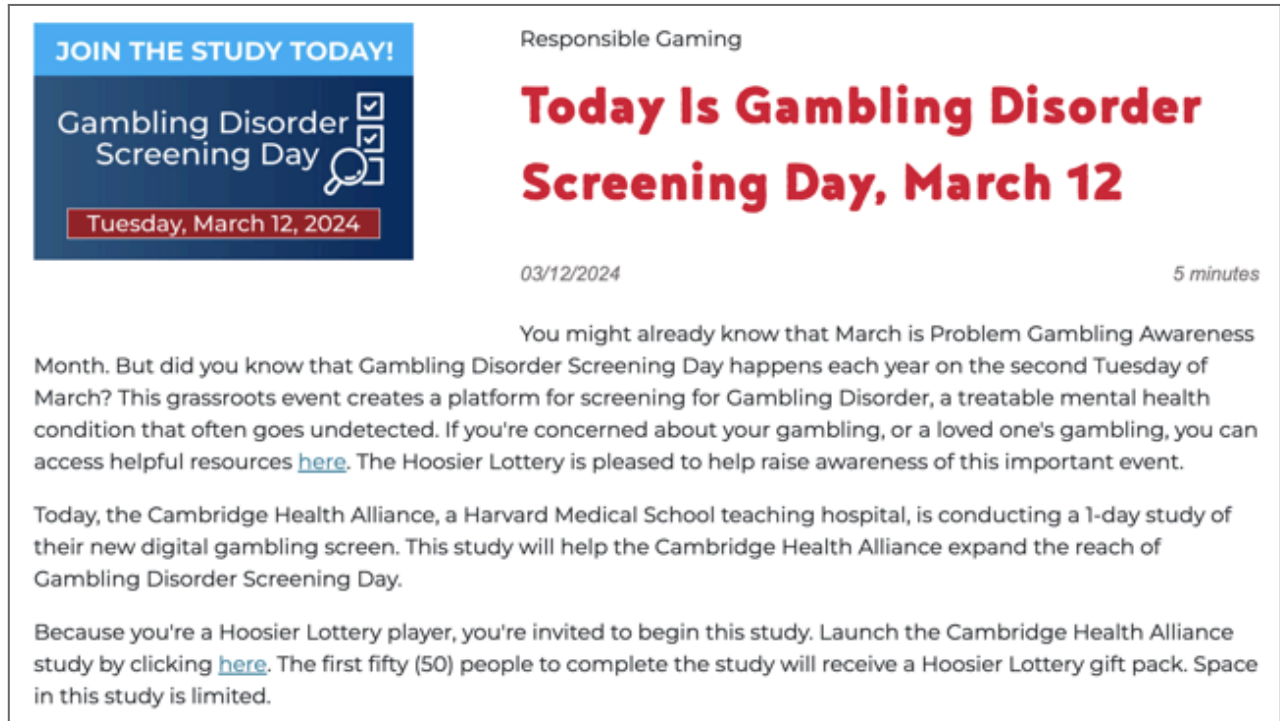
- Presenting about Screening Day during multiple webinars and online events, including the National Council on Problem Gambling webinar, [“Preparing for Problem Gambling Awareness Month 2024”](#), the International Center for Responsible Gaming webinar, [“Screening for Gambling Disorder”](#), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services’ Northeast Provider Meeting

- Conducting a study that explores a lottery-promoted Screening Day intervention, in collaboration with the Hoosier Lottery and with funding from the International Center for Responsible Gaming (see *Exploring a Lottery-promoted Gambling Disorder Screening Day Intervention*)
- Supporting the expansion of Screening Day in Massachusetts, in collaboration with [Health Resources in Action](#) and with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services (see *Gambling Disorder Screening Day: Expansion in Massachusetts*)
- Publishing the article [Every Worry About Your Gambling?](#) in Harvard Health Publishing
- Hosting a tabling event at the CHA Everett Hospital
- Featuring op-eds and editorials about Screening Day in The Brief Addiction Science Information Source (BASIS) research blog, including [My Experience with Gambling Disorder Screening Day](#) and [Gambling Disorder Day 2034](#)
- Conducting trainings, including “[Introduction to Screening for Gambling Disorder](#)” and “[Introduction to Assessment for Gambling Disorder](#)” for Massachusetts treatment providers through the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment
- Promoting Screening Day during the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment’s Spring Statewide Meeting
- Featuring information about Screening Day in multiple outlets, including the CHA “In Brief” weekly newsletter, the CHA Wellness newsletter, The BASIS weekly subscriber email, and the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment newsletter

Exploring a Lottery-promoted Gambling Disorder Screening Day Intervention

Throughout the history of Screening Day, gambling operators have occasionally promoted the event via their social media channels. This year, with funding from an [International Center for Responsible Gaming](#) Seed Grant, we are exploring the potential for gambling operators to more directly support Screening Day by encouraging their customers to engage in a web-based screening experience. We are collaborating with the [Hoosier Lottery](#) on this work. Before and on Screening Day, the Hoosier Lottery posted a website announcement that included a link to a web-based Gambling Disorder screening, feedback, and referral intervention (Picture 2).

Additionally, on Screening Day itself, the Hoosier Lottery promoted this link on its social media channels and in emails to subscribed players. The intervention included a survey about gambling and responsible gambling habits. We are analyzing data to determine the reach and effectiveness of a web-based screening intervention promoted by a gambling operator.



JOIN THE STUDY TODAY!

Gambling Disorder Screening Day

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Responsible Gaming

Today Is Gambling Disorder Screening Day, March 12

03/12/2024 5 minutes

You might already know that March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month. But did you know that Gambling Disorder Screening Day happens each year on the second Tuesday of March? This grassroots event creates a platform for screening for Gambling Disorder, a treatable mental health condition that often goes undetected. If you're concerned about your gambling, or a loved one's gambling, you can access helpful resources [here](#). The Hoosier Lottery is pleased to help raise awareness of this important event.

Today, the Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital, is conducting a 1-day study of their new digital gambling screen. This study will help the Cambridge Health Alliance expand the reach of Gambling Disorder Screening Day.

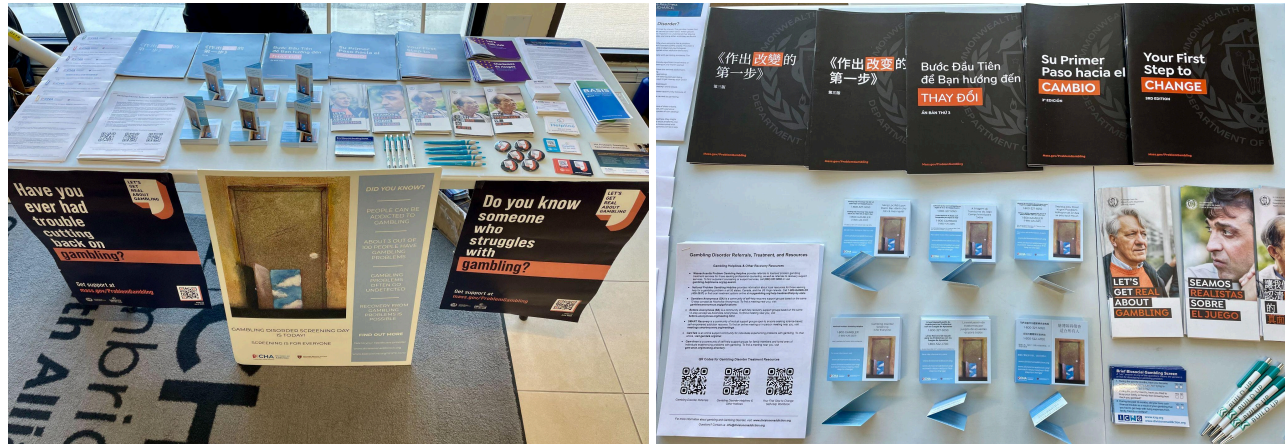
Because you're a Hoosier Lottery player, you're invited to begin this study. Launch the Cambridge Health Alliance study by clicking [here](#). The first fifty (50) people to complete the study will receive a Hoosier Lottery gift pack. Space in this study is limited.

Picture 2. Announcement by the Hoosier Lottery promoting Screening Day and inviting people to participate in the online study.

Tabling at Everett Hospital

Division staff held a tabling event on Screening Day at the CHA Everett Hospital (Picture 3). This event was for patients, caregivers, and CHA staff to learn more about Gambling Disorder and Screening Day, gain insight into their relationship with gambling by completing a gambling screen, and access gambling-related resources. Resources at the 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 grateful to the [Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse](#) and our colleagues at Health Resources in Action for supplying items with the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline number (e.g., stickers, cards), informational brochures, the [Your First Step to Change workbook](#) in multiple languages, and other resources. At the event, the Division distributed [BBGS magnets](#) donated to the Division by the International Center for Responsible Gaming, a long-time supporter of Screening Day.

This year's tabling event was a success, attracting CHA patients, caregivers, and employees. Among these attendees, a significant portion expressed interest in resources for loved ones, often a spouse or a friend, whom they felt might have a gambling-related problem. More specifically, one person shared an experience where they discovered their husband's gambling problem after their bank alerted them that their husband was withdrawing increasing amounts of money from their account. This individual mentioned feeling blindsided and betrayed by this action, underscoring the notion that gambling can be a "hidden addiction" that people might not identify until it reaches a critical point. Such accounts highlight the importance of routine screening to detect gambling-related problems early on and connect people with resources as soon as possible.



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

Participants were interested in resources translated into other languages, particularly Brazilian Portuguese. One CHA employee took BBGS pocket screeners in various languages to offer to their clients who mentioned gambling recreationally. Additionally, a CHA patient admitted to being unfamiliar with Gambling Disorder and gambling more generally. We helped them gain a better understanding by defining gambling and providing them with various examples. They screened themselves using the Brazilian Portuguese translated BBGS pocket screener and screened negative. Because they were not fluent in English, they mentioned finding it very helpful to have the screening questions translated into Brazilian Portuguese. Overall, this event served as a platform for raising awareness about gambling-related concerns, distributing gambling-related resources, and educating those who may not have previously recognized gambling as an addiction.

Gambling Disorder Screening Day: Expansion in Massachusetts

The Division supported efforts to expand Screening Day in Massachusetts, led by Health Resources in Action and with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services. Through a competitive awards process, Massachusetts-based addiction and behavioral health providers, recovery centers, and community-based organizations were given funding to host a Screening Day event in their community. These awardees also received training, technical assistance, resources, and promotional items to support them in planning and hosting their events. The Division provided consultation and planning support for this project. We created a comprehensive [Screening Day Best Practices Guide](#), and we facilitated four trainings and four technical assistance sessions to support awardees in planning for and hosting their events. We also provided support in the printing of BBGS pocket screeners in English and Spanish.

“We hosted screening days at one low-income housing project, the local library, the Senior Center, and at several food pantries. On two occasions, we gave a short presentation about problem gambling and then screened people.”

– Social Worker, a city health department

“Our Screening Day event [at the] New England Hong Kong Festival was very successful... We had the opportunity to talk to many Asians and Asian Americans about raising awareness of problem gambling. It was remarkable to learn that a lot of them support and agree with the need to address gambling issues in the AAPI [Asian American Pacific Islander] community.”

– Family Connector, an Asian and Asian American community center

Forty-seven awardees held screening events between January and June. Events took place in city halls, health centers, recovery centers, methadone clinics, faith-based institutions, libraries, housing projects, food pantries, senior centers, community festivals, cultural centers, colleges, and shopping centers, and more. Awardees provided gambling screens, education, and resources. Events included presentations, interactive activities and skits, and speakers with lived experience. Food and incentives (e.g., gift cards, promotional items) were provided to increase participation. Some events were held in languages other than English (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, American Sign Language). Email lists, WhatsApp, posters/flyers, press releases, social media, and media coverage were used to promote events.

In total, 3,050 individuals across Massachusetts were screened through this expansion work, with 20.0% screening positive.

Screening Day Participation

Given the voluntary and distributed 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) requested BBGS pocket screeners or information about participating in Screening Day, (2) posted on social media about Screening Day (for example, Pictures 5 and 6), (3) told us that they planned to participate in Screening Day by hosting an event or promoting Screening Day, or (4) received a stipend to host a Screening Day event.



Pictures 5 and 6. Screening Day social media posts from the New York Council on Problem Gambling (Picture 5, left) and MGM Resorts International (Picture 6, right).

By this measure, at least 240 individuals and organizations participated in Screening Day. Participants represented 40 U.S. states, one U.S. territory, and six countries (Figure 3).

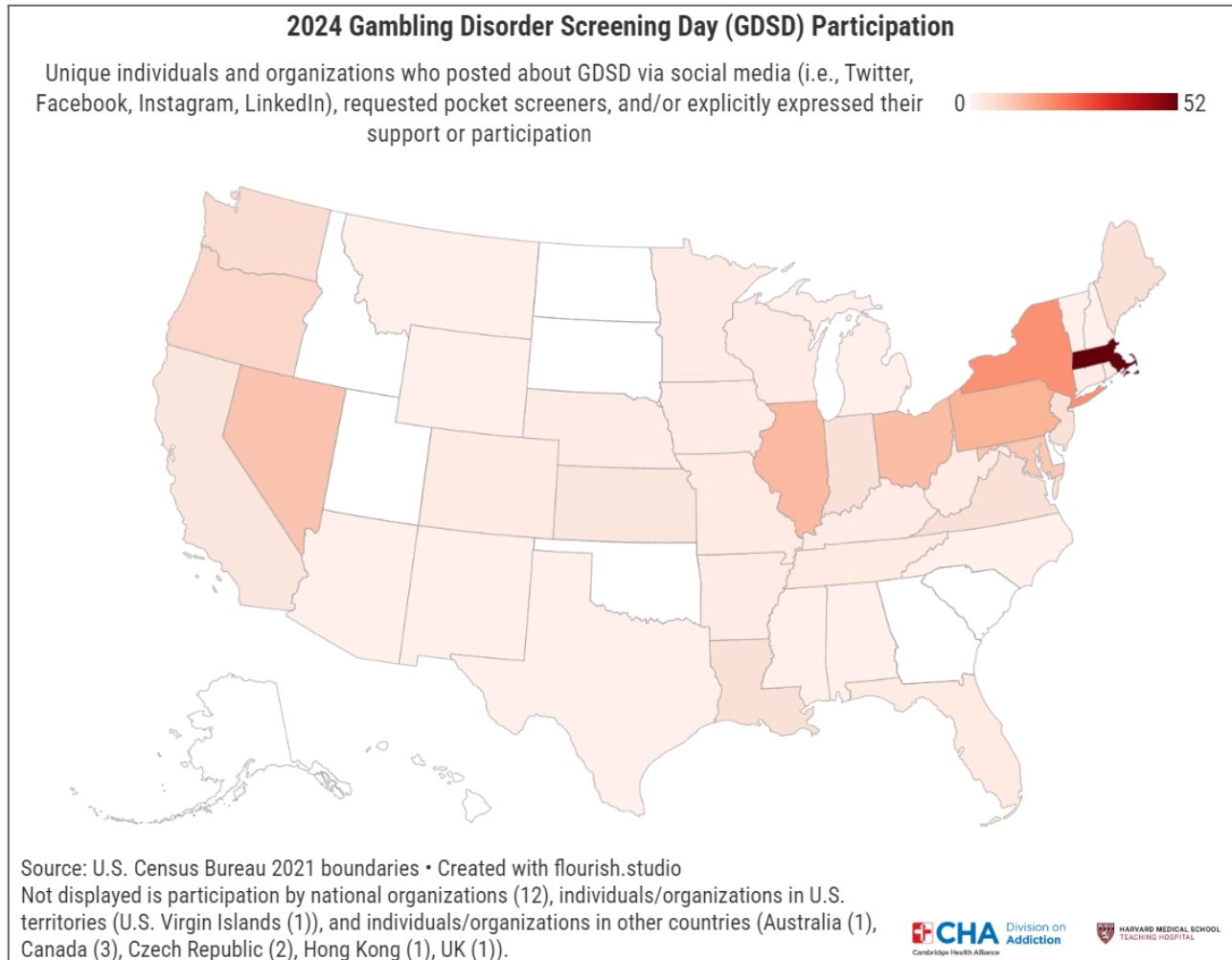


Figure 3. Participation in Screening Day by U.S. state or country.

Participants included mental health providers, addiction treatment and recovery programs, health centers, hospital systems, community-based organizations, research institutions and academics, employee assistance and wellness programs, gambling operators, gaming commissions, local and state governmental organizations, education and awareness programs, college student health centers, national and state problem gambling councils, professional organizations, and more.

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 drop-in screening events open to the public (Pictures 7 and 8). Other creative approaches included:

- The International Center for Responsible Gaming distributed [BBGS magnets](#) at no cost to anyone who asked for them.

- KGA Inc. featured Screening Day and Screening Day materials in their March Wellness newsletter that went to 250+ client organizations that provide Employee Assistance Program services. They also shared information about Screening Day with counseling staff.
- GameSense Info Centers held screenings in the three Massachusetts casinos. Multiple other casinos across the U.S. held similar events. Ten casinos in Illinois held tabling events at which treatment providers conducted screens and provided resources.
- Multiple state lotteries, including the Colorado Lottery, Hoosier Lottery, Louisiana Lottery, Michigan Lottery, and Rhode Island Lottery, promoted Screening Day and encouraged self-screening on their websites and through social media posts.
- The New York State (NYS) Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) had state landmarks lit up in yellow, including Empire State Plaza, Niagara Falls, the NYS Fairgrounds, and One World Trade Center, to commemorate Screening Day.
- DraftKings featured Screening Day and included the BBGS on their [Safer Play Portal](#), and shared information about Screening Day with employees via internal channels. Similarly, MGM Resorts shared information about Screening Day with employees at all MGM Resorts properties and promoted Screening Day externally on their social media channels. Other gambling operators took similar actions.
- The Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies at the University of Nevada, Reno made their training “[Screening for Gambling Problems](#)” free during March.
- New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. held a virtual discussion via Zoom about Gambling Disorder and screening for Gambling Disorder.
- Screening events took place in many locations, including behavioral health and healthcare centers, addiction treatment centers, recovery centers, community centers, libraries, college campuses, faith-based institutions, casinos, local poker tournaments, farm expositions, city halls, tribal government offices, cultural centers, and senior centers, and more.



Pictures 7 and 8. Social media posts promoting Screening Day events at Nicasa Behavioral Health Services (Picture 7, left) and the Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (Picture 8, right).

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, 15 Screening Day hosts completed the data reporting form (not including Screening Day awardees in Massachusetts). They included behavioral health and addiction treatment providers, a state problem gambling council, a student health center on a college campus, and GameSense Information Centers in the three Massachusetts casinos. These Screening Day hosts screened 1,239 individuals for Gambling Disorder, and 389 (31.4%) of those screened positive. Of the positive screens, 71.2% identified as male, 28.0% identified as female, and 0.8% identified as neither male nor female. The age distribution of positive screens was: age 18 - 25 (19.5%), age 26 - 44 (41.1%), age 41 - 55 (25.7%), age 56+ (13.7%).

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 BBGS pocket screeners into Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole, and for additional printing of BBGS pocket screeners in English, Spanish, and simplified Chinese. The International Center for Responsible Gaming and the Hoosier Lottery are funding the study, “Exploring a Lottery-promoted Gambling Disorder Screening Day Intervention”. We are grateful to the International Center for Responsible Gaming for providing Screening Day magnets. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services funded “Gambling Disorder Screening Day: Expansion in Massachusetts”. We are grateful to all of the individuals and organizations around the world who supported and participated in Screening Day.