

## No Change in Problem Gambling in Springfield with the Opening of MGM Springfield

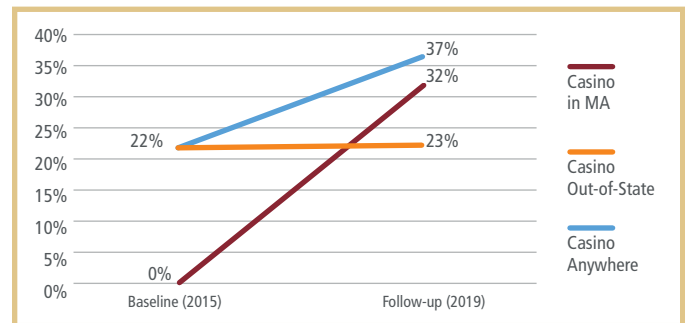
MGM Springfield, the first resort-style casino in Massachusetts, opened on August 24, 2018. However, in 2015, the SEIGMA team carried out a baseline survey of gambling attitudes, participation and problem gambling in Springfield and the Surrounding Community. A follow-up survey was conducted in 2019, one year after the opening of MGM Springfield, to determine if attitudes and behaviors in the community had changed. The findings will contribute to the development of strategies to minimize gambling-related harm and bring the greatest possible benefit of expanded gaming to the people of the Commonwealth. The report, *Impact of MGM Springfield on Gambling Attitudes, Participation and Problem Gambling*, provides details of the surveys' findings.

### Attitudes about Gambling

- In both 2015 and 2019, the majority of residents believed that some forms of gambling should be legal (56%) and some should be illegal (52%). Roughly a third (31% in 2015; 35% in 2019) of residents continued to feel all forms of gambling should be legal.
- Compared to 2015, residents surveyed in 2019 believed more strongly that the availability of gambling in MA was too high (20% to 28%).
- Between 2015 and 2019, fewer respondents (39% to 22%) viewed the impact of expanded gambling in Massachusetts as harmful, however, significantly more respondents (17% to 35%) viewed the impact of having a new casino or slot parlor in Massachusetts would be neither beneficial or harmful.
- The majority of residents in 2015 believed the harm of gambling to society outweighed the benefits (52%) with significantly more residents feeling this way in 2019 (64%).

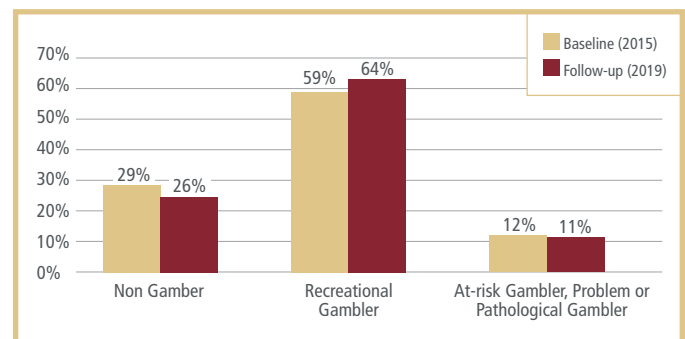
### Gambling Participation

There was a slight increase in overall gambling participation among respondents in this period from 71% to 74%. Gambling at out-of-state casinos changed very little but there was a significant increase in casino gambling anywhere in the past year likely due to more residents of Springfield and surrounding communities in 2019 gambling both in Massachusetts and out-of-state.



### Problem Gambling

One of the main negative social impacts of expanded gambling availability tends to be an increase in problem gambling. There was no significant change in the prevalence of at-risk and problem gambling between 2015 and 2019 among residents of Springfield and surrounding communities.



In addition, changes observed in overall gambling participation and overall casino participation for individuals with lower education and lower income levels suggest they may be vulnerable to experiencing gambling harms or developing gambling problems as the location of MGM Springfield makes it easier to engage in a type of gambling with which they have had relatively little previous experience. It will be important to direct prevention and treatment resources toward these groups going forward as well as to assess at-risk and problem gambling rates in these groups in the future.

### SEIGMA PROJECT OVERVIEW

SEIGMA is a project that uses experts from several disciplines to carry out the different parts of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's research effort. The project team is dedicated to working closely with many other groups throughout the Commonwealth. The study uses a state-of-the-art design, rigorous data collection and research methods, and a careful analytic approach to establish the effects of casino gambling at state, regional, and local levels. The SEIGMA team collects its own data as well as using data gathered by other organizations. The SEIGMA study is funded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.