



Moving Forward Together

Transforming Challenges Into Opportunities

Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Contents:

Director's Note	3
Public Awareness	4
Treatment & Intervention	6
Training	7
Helpline	8
Prevention	11
Peer Recovery Support	12
Public Policy	14

CENTER STAFF

Christopher Welsh, MD
Medical Director
UMSOM Faculty

Robert K. White, LCPC
Director of External Affairs and
Business Development

Mary Drexler, MSW
Program Director

Jessica P. Brown, PhD
Director of Research
UMSOM Faculty

Teresa E. Yates
Business Operations Director
Research Services

Ahmed Al-Hadidi, MPH
Clinical Research Specialist

Kristen Beall, LCSW-C, ICGC-I, CAC-AD
Clinical Manager

Michael Kafes
Communications Manager

Heather Eshleman, MPH
Prevention Manager

Davene Hinton, MBA
Training Coordinator

Katrina Davis, MHRM
Business Manager

Blair Inniss, JD, MA
Government Affairs Manager

Francina Benjamin
Program Assistant

Kenneth Wolfson, CPRS, RPS
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

William Hinman, CPRS, CRC, RPS
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

Kenneth Crawford, CPRS, CRC
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

James Nowlin, CPRS
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

Carin Miller, CPRS, CRC
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

Lori Rugle, PhD, ICGC II
Consultant

Anthony Parente, MA, LCPC, NCC, MAC,
ICGC II, BACC
Consultant



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

THE Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is a program of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and funded by the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration. 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.



FY24 was the 12th year of operation of the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center). 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) to support the services provided by the Center. The primary goal of the Center is to minimize the risks and problems associated with gambling in the State of Maryland.

In the FY 2024 Annual Report you will see accomplishments achieved through the programs offered by the Center. These included: monitored all proposed gambling legislation and provided written and oral testimony in Annapolis; reached out to behavioral health and other organizations; conducted on-line and in-person trainings across the State; the Center's Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists actively supported over 700 Maryland residents; and the Prevention Program focused on capacity building and expanding the number of special population and college/university grants.

Our goals for FY25 will include: continuing to monitor all legislation relating to legalized

gambling in Maryland; increasing outreach to behavioral health and community providers; increase awareness of problem gambling; expanding the Center's ability to provide clinical assistance to behavioral health agencies, organizations, and private practitioners; increasing the inclusion of evidenced-based screening and assessment for gambling as part of regular treatment practice within substance use and mental health organizations; increasing the number of providers who are willing to provide no cost treatment services; continuing tracking of Peer services to ensure Marylanders have the support of those with lived experience; continuing to target outreach and training opportunities to private practitioners, behavioral health agencies, organizations, and preventionists; collaborate with the UMB Epidemiology Department to complete and publish the 2024 Maryland Statewide Gambling Prevalence Study; continuing the expansion of the Center's research agenda on problem gambling to include prevention initiatives, identification and surveillance, evaluation of public policy, ongoing impact assessment of expanded legalized gambling, and identification of vulnerable populations.

With the expertise of Center staff and the partnerships the Center has established, we will continue to ensure Maryland residents remain aware of the services and resources available should gambling activity begin to negatively impact their daily lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary Drexler".

Mary Drexler, MSW
Center Director

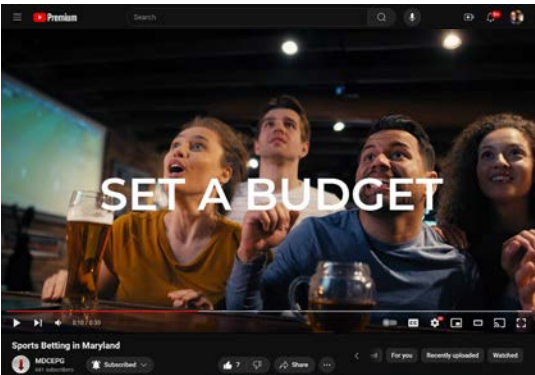
Public Awareness

If a Maryland resident should experience negative consequences from excessive gambling activities, it is the Center's primary mission to provide ease of access to community resources and information. Access is provided and promoted through physical and digital platforms, such as websites, social media, and traditional advertising partnerships. When implemented, these awareness advertising efforts consistently show an increase in Helpline calls.

AWARENESS MEDIA AND DISTRIBUTION

The Center concentrated its awareness efforts primarily in two areas: mobile sports betters; and the family and loved ones of gamblers:

MOBILE SPORTS BETTERS



- Showing on scoreboard at all Orioles home games
- Radio play all home and away Orioles games
- 2 Superbowl pre-show ads
- Cinema pre-movie ads (Fall, Winter)

FRIENDS AND FAMILY



- TV and radio ads for 3 months
- Cinema pre-movie video ads (Spring, Summer)
- Internet radio broadcast :30 PSA (iHeart, Spotify)



- Full page print ads (bimonthly sports magazine)
- Paid Social Media



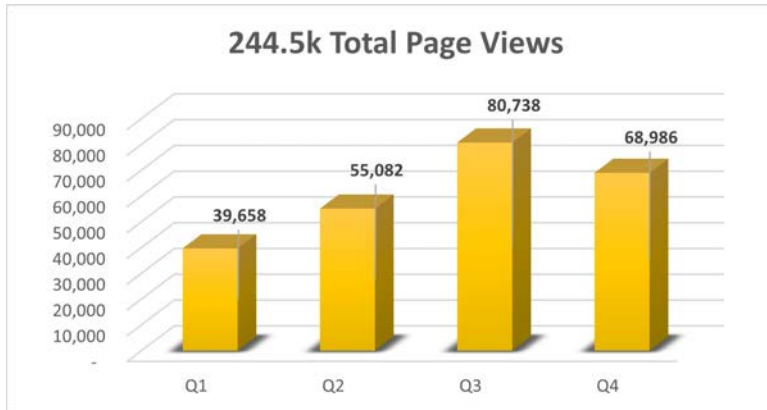
- Billboards, gas station toppers, Digital Display ads
- Paid Social Media, Internet radio,

147,164,987
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

DIGITAL MANAGEMENT

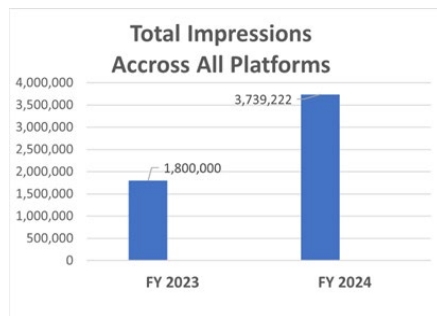
WEBSITES

The Center currently maintains two websites. Whether you are a public health professional or an inquisitive Maryland resident, the “Center facing” website provides people with information and services which the Center provides. The Help Seeker site is dedicated to providing anyone who wants information, help, and/or resources for themselves or their loved ones who have or may have a gambling problem.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Unpaid Social Media



The Center saw a steady average growth rate of **11%** to its social media platforms. Currently, across all platforms, the Center has **2,202** followers, of which, **210** subscribed in this fiscal year. **816** posts reached a total of 3.7 million users that engaged with the page a total of **41,821** times.

Both Websites	Visits
Sports Betting Landing Page	39,318
Get the Facts Landing Page	14,785
Take Self-Assessment	4,718
Find a Counselor	5,659
HELPLINE Clicks:	
Click to Chat	1,913
Click Helpline Number	1,951

Paid Social Media and Internet Search

The paid search and social media campaign delivered a total of **15,704,985** impressions across six separate platforms which generated **93,130** clickthroughs to the Center’s websites; of which, **68,344** were target driven to specific pages (see below).

Disclaimer: People that clicked the contact link did not necessarily speak with a helpline staff. (i.e., Hangups)

The two most distributed print awareness materials for FY24:

- MARG Wallet Card – **18,844**
- Signs of a Gambling Problem – **11,179**

The two most distributed awareness giveaways for FY24:

- Pens – **19,917**
- Chip Clips – **18,154**



Treatment & Intervention

The Center provides ongoing presentations to providers and private practitioners across the state. The Center's leadership continues to meet bi-monthly with BHA and the State's Administrative Services Organization (ASO) to discuss any potential consultation and technical assistance needed by the ASO to ensure services provided by Maryland clinicians through the State's Problem Gambling Fund are reimbursed in a timely manner. This updated Directory of Providers for no cost treatment continues to be maintained by the Center.

The Center continues to provide ongoing presentations to providers and private practitioners across the state.

PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH

Professional Health Organizations

1065



Interactive Map

View Telehealth Only Counselors

Find a Counselor

Active Filter: Baltimore 25 mi Outpatient Outpatient

Address: 4212 Overton Ave, Nottingham, MD 21236, US

Get my Location Reset all Filters Show all

Counselors

Find Counselors

Filter

Baltimore

25 mi

Care Levels

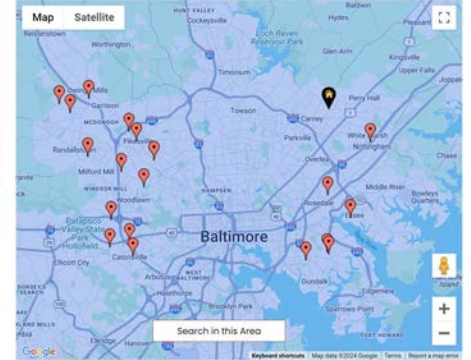
Inpatient/Residential

IOP

Outpatient

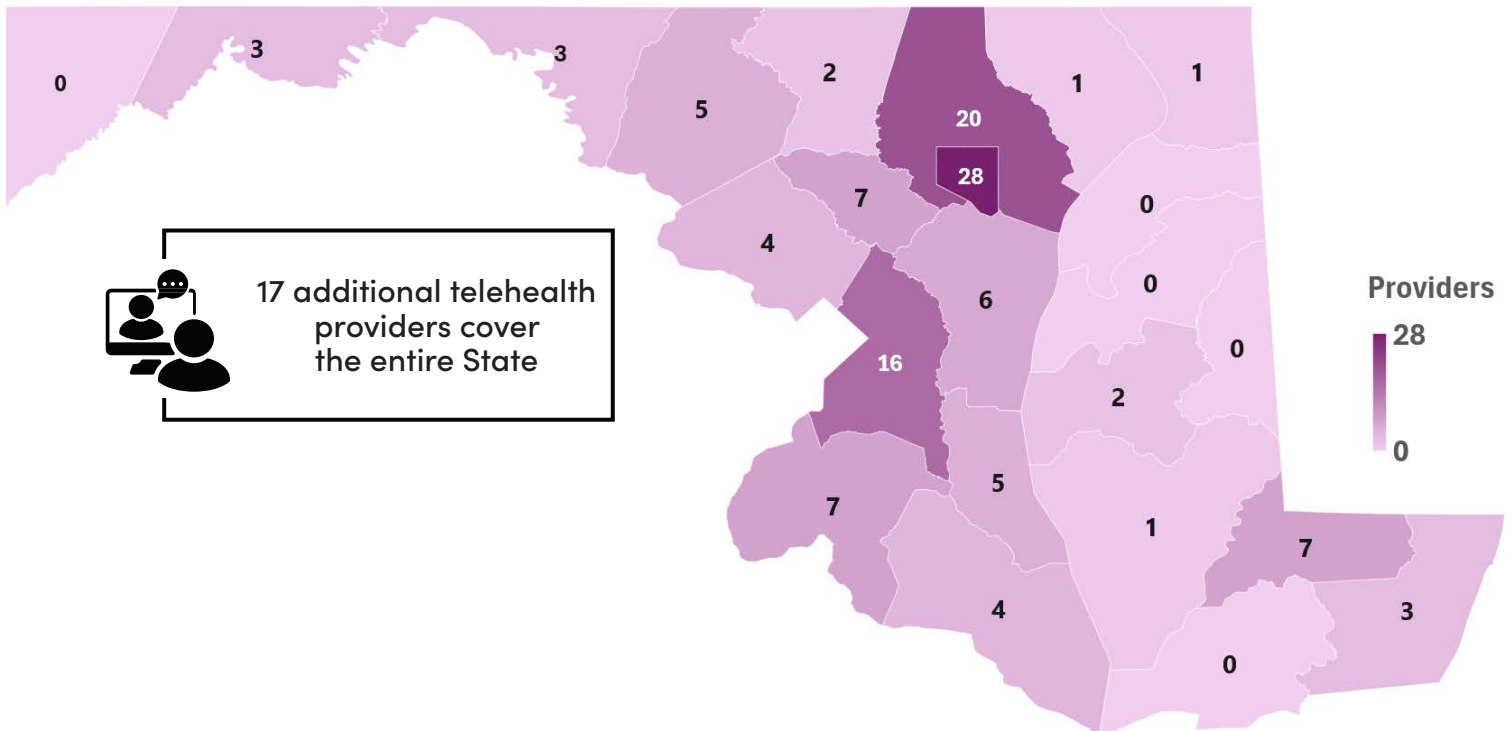
Outpatient

Residential



Maryland residents can access no-cost therapeutic treatment services, including individual, family and/or couples counseling, as well as, intensive outpatient (IOP), Inpatient or Residential services.

No-cost Treatment Providers by County

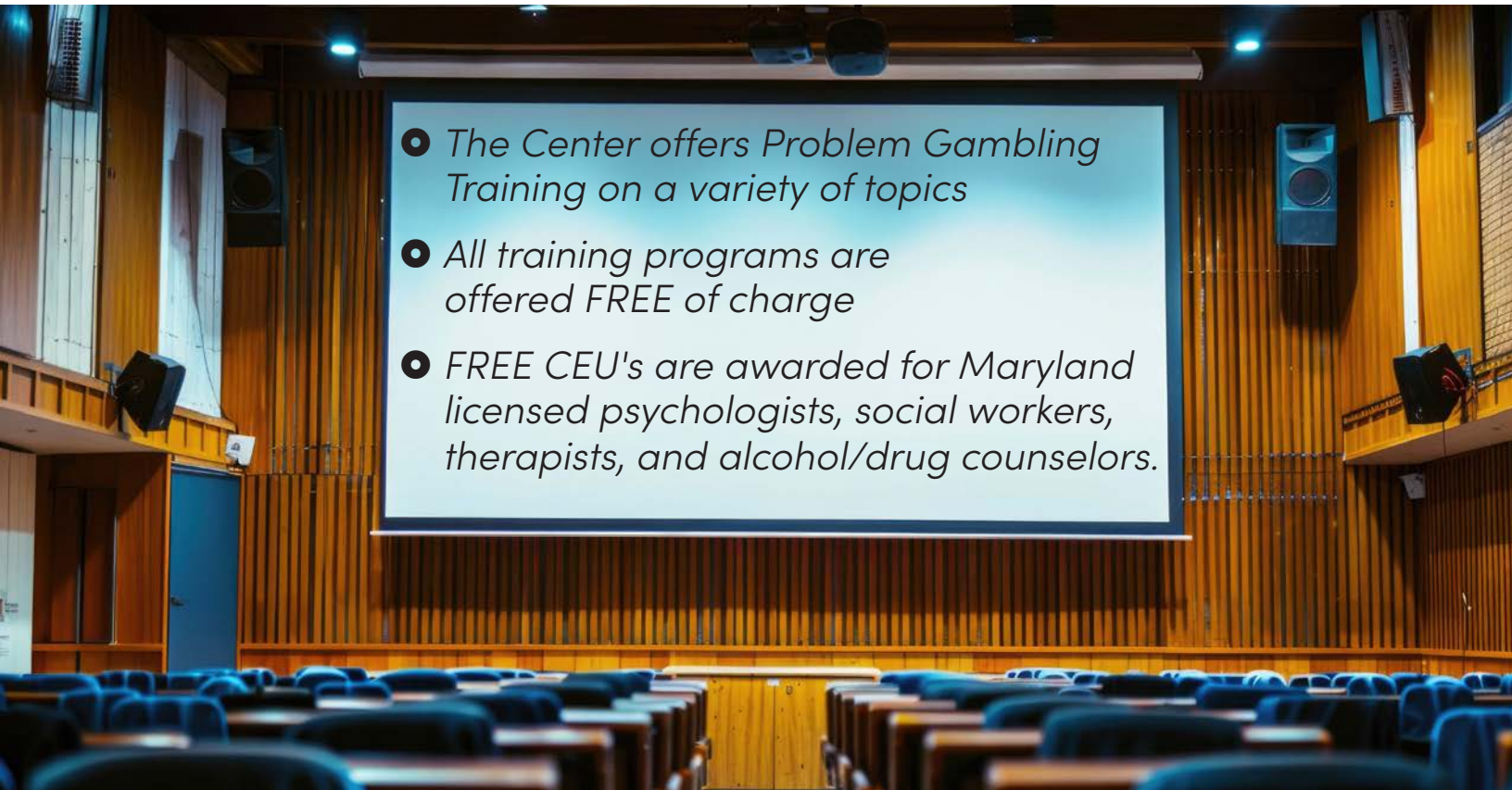


Training & Education

The training program is an integral part of the Center's work. It is an opportunity for behavioral health organizations and private practitioners to broaden their competencies for supporting and treating individuals and their families faced with the challenges created by problem gambling.

In FY24, the Center conducted:

- 42 trainings offering 71 CEUs
- 3090 total attendance, with
- 351 first time participants



- The Center offers Problem Gambling Training on a variety of topics
- All training programs are offered FREE of charge
- FREE CEU's are awarded for Maryland licensed psychologists, social workers, therapists, and alcohol/drug counselors.

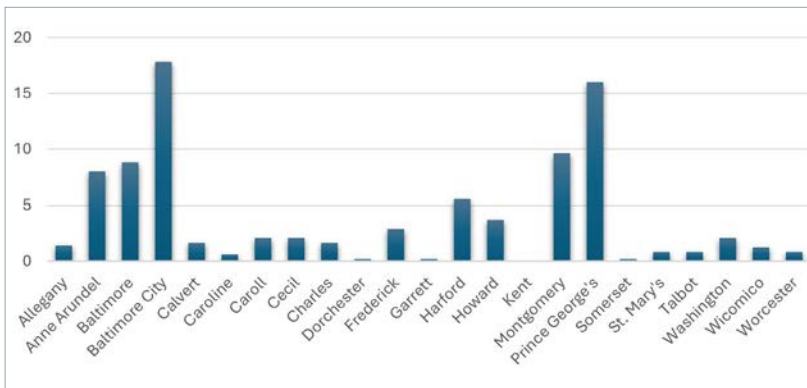
Previously held trainings and materials can be viewed in the training section of the Center's website:

<https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/training>

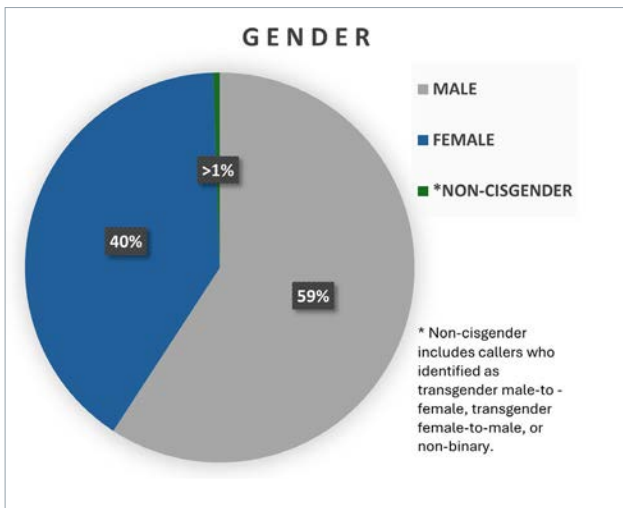
In FY24, the total volume of help seeker outreach was 1150, including calls, chats, and texts. Calls constituted 48.9% (n = 562) of the total, while chats and texts accounted for 51.1% (n = 588). Of the chats and texts, 38.6% (n = 227) were actual intakes. At the request of BHA, the monthly Helpline chat and text report sent to the Center only details intakes for FY24. Therefore, the data described below represent intakes and not all helpseeker contact with the Helpline.

1-800-GAMBLER

HELPLINE CALLER CHARACTERISTICS BY JURISDICTION



Helpline callers were reported from 22 jurisdictions in FY24. The Central and Southern regions of Maryland had the highest call proportions (31.1% n = 175 and 24.4% n = 137). The Western and Eastern regions accounted for 15.8% (n = 89) and 5.2% (n = 29), respectively. The remaining 23.5% (n = 132) of callers resided outside the state of Maryland (13.2%, n = 74) or were unwilling to share their location (10.3%, n = 58).

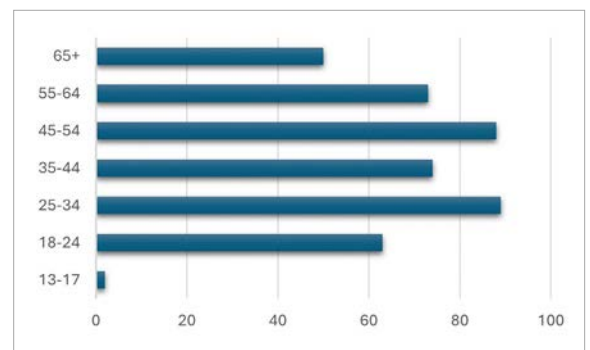


GENDER

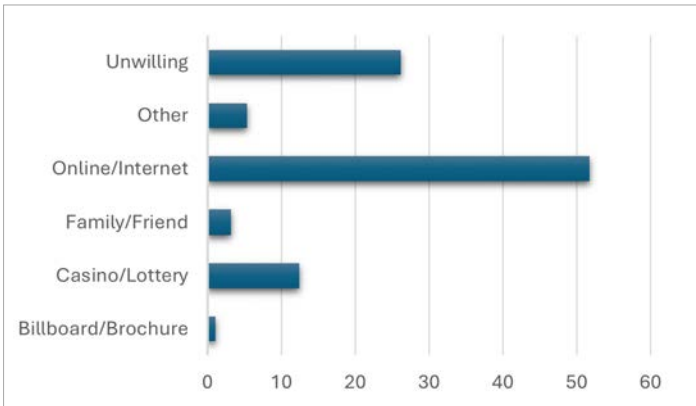
Male callers continue to outnumber female callers in FY24, accounting for 59% (n = 328) of total calls compared to 40% (n = 223) from female callers. The option to identify as non-binary or transgender became available to callers in Q2 FY24. Overall, less than 1% (n = 3) of callers identified as non-cisgender in FY24.

CALLER AGE

The largest reported age groups in FY24 were 25-34 and 45-54 years (15.8% n = 89 and 15.7% n = 88 respectively) and were closely followed by 35-44 years (13.2% n = 74) and 55-64 years (13.0% n = 73). During this fiscal year, there were also 11.2% (n = 63) of callers aged 18-24 years, 8.9% (n = 50) of callers aged 65 years and above, and less than 1% (n = 2) of callers were under 18 years. Those who were unwilling to disclose their age comprised 21.9% (n = 123) of callers.



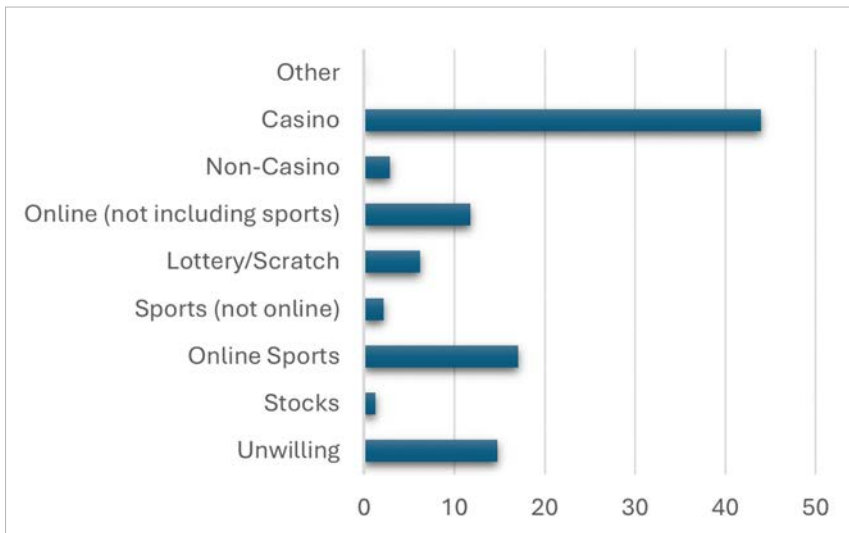
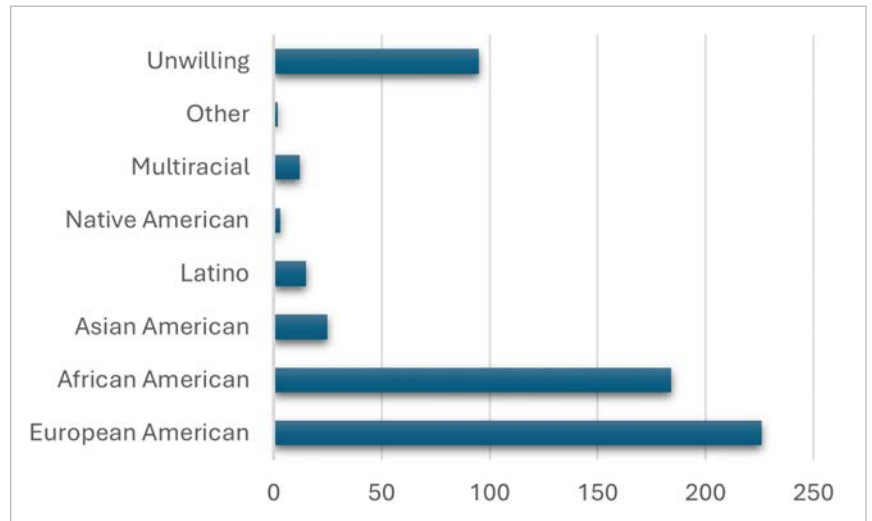
PRIMARY GAMBLING PROBLEM



In FY24, casino-based gambling remains the most frequently reported primary gambling problem among helpline callers, accounting for 44.0% (n = 247) of calls, with slots being the most popular game at 47.4% (n = 117) amongst those callers. Online sports betting follows as the second most common primary gambling problem, reported by 17.1% (n = 96) of callers. This is followed by internet gambling (excluding sports) at 11.7% (n = 66), Lottery or Scratch at 6.2% (n = 35), non-Casino gambling at 2.8% (n = 16), and sports betting (not online) at 2.1% (n = 12). Additionally, 14.8% (n = 83) of callers chose not to disclose their primary gambling problem.

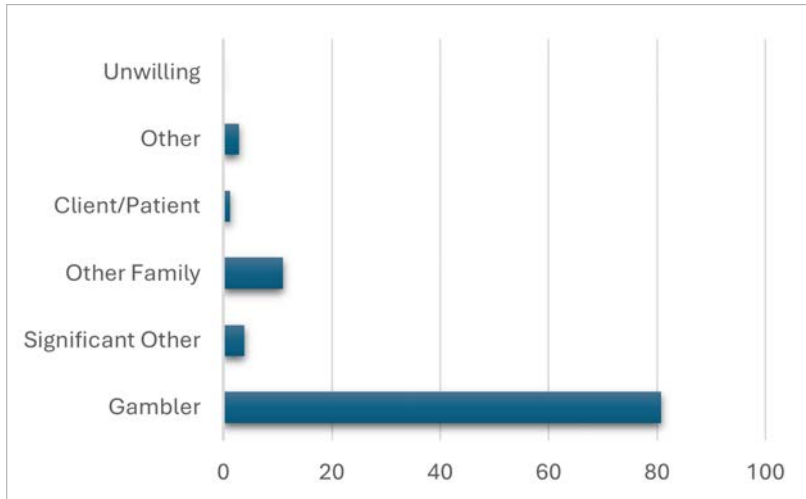
CALLER ETHNICITY

Most helpline callers in FY24 identified as European American, 40.2% (n = 226), followed by African American, 32.7% (n = 184).



PRIMARY SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER

Callers continue to report that the internet is their primary source (51.8%, n = 291) and casinos/lotteries (12.5%, n = 70) are their secondary source for connecting to the helpline.

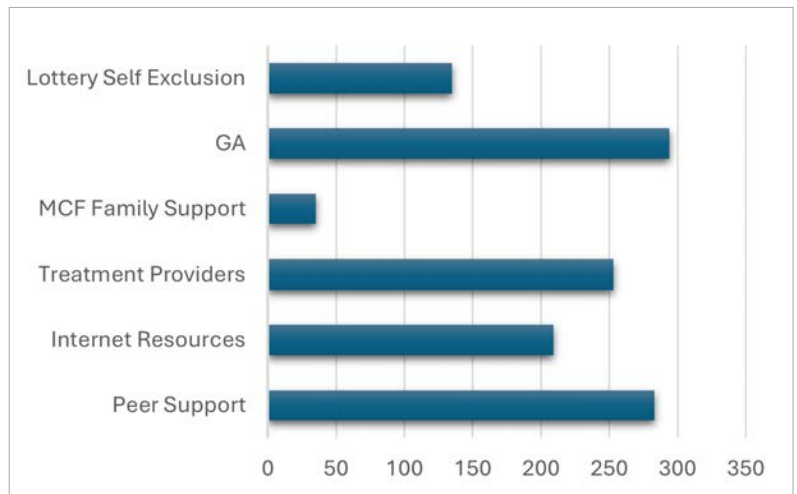


WHO IS CALLING

Helpline callers mostly identified as gamblers in FY24, comprising 80.8% (n = 454) of all callers. Family members comprised 11.0% (n = 62) and significant others comprised 3.9% (n = 22). Callers who were grouped as other (2.8%, n = 16), identified as a client or patient (1.2%, n = 7), or were unwilling to disclose their relationship (0.2%, n = 1) comprised the remainder of all helpline callers.

HELPLINE CALLER REFERRALS

Most helpline callers accepted one or more referrals in FY24 (86.7%, n = 487). Referrals made to a Center Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist constituted 50.4% (n = 283) of calls with 38.2% (n = 108) being warm transferred (real-time transfer with callers on the line) as a means for immediate Peer support. Gamblers Anonymous (GA) referrals comprised 52.3% (n = 294), followed by referrals made to treatment providers offering no cost treatment (45.0%, n = 253). Referrals to internet-based resources comprised 37.2% (n = 209) and the lottery self-exclusion program comprised 24.0% (n = 135). Lastly, 6.2% (n = 35) were referred to Family Peer Support at the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF).



Prevention initiatives primarily target those who do not presently exhibit signs of a gambling problem. In FY2024, the Center's Prevention Program focused on capacity building and expanding the number of special population and college/university grants serving Maryland's emerging adults and underserved populations through strategic partnerships with grantees.

PREVENTION

- Professional outreach to 1,065 organizations & private practitioners.
- 27 Grantees to provide awareness and outreach
 - 3 HBCU's
 - 5 Additional colleges
 - 9 Community Organizations
 - 5 Adolescent Programs
 - 5 Behavioral health Organizations

Grantees

1. Alston for Athletes
2. Asian American Center of Frederick
3. Ascending Counseling Solutions
4. Bi-County Business Roundtable
5. Bowie State University
6. Brain Injury Association of Maryland
7. Building Mosaic Solutions
8. Coppin State University
9. Eager Park Neighborhood Association
10. East-John Youth Center
11. Frostburg State University
12. Harvesting Hope Youth & Family Wellness
13. Hood College
14. iLaunchiLand
15. Minary's Dream Alliance
16. Morgan University Counseling Center
17. Morgan University Center for Data Analytics and Sports Gaming
18. My Life Foundation
19. National Alliance for Mental Health Maryland
20. National Center for School Mental Health
21. Pro Bono Counseling
22. Sheppard Pratt
23. St. Mary's College of Maryland
24. St. Mary's County Health Department
25. Summit Community Health
26. Towson University
27. Towson University Northeastern
28. Uneo Health
29. University of Maryland Eastern Shore
30. University of Maryland Extension Service

Peer Recovery Support

The Center's Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS) have been helping individuals seeking to stop, control, or limit the negative outcomes from their gambling since 2018. The Peer's role is primarily focused on linking persons seeking help for gambling related problems with the most useful resources in their communities. Initial contact between Peers and callers seeking help is usually made through the problem gambling helpline (1-800-GAMBLER) or from group presentations at behavioral health facilities.

Peers:



Have lived experience with problematic gambling and substance use



Assess caller's willingness to change



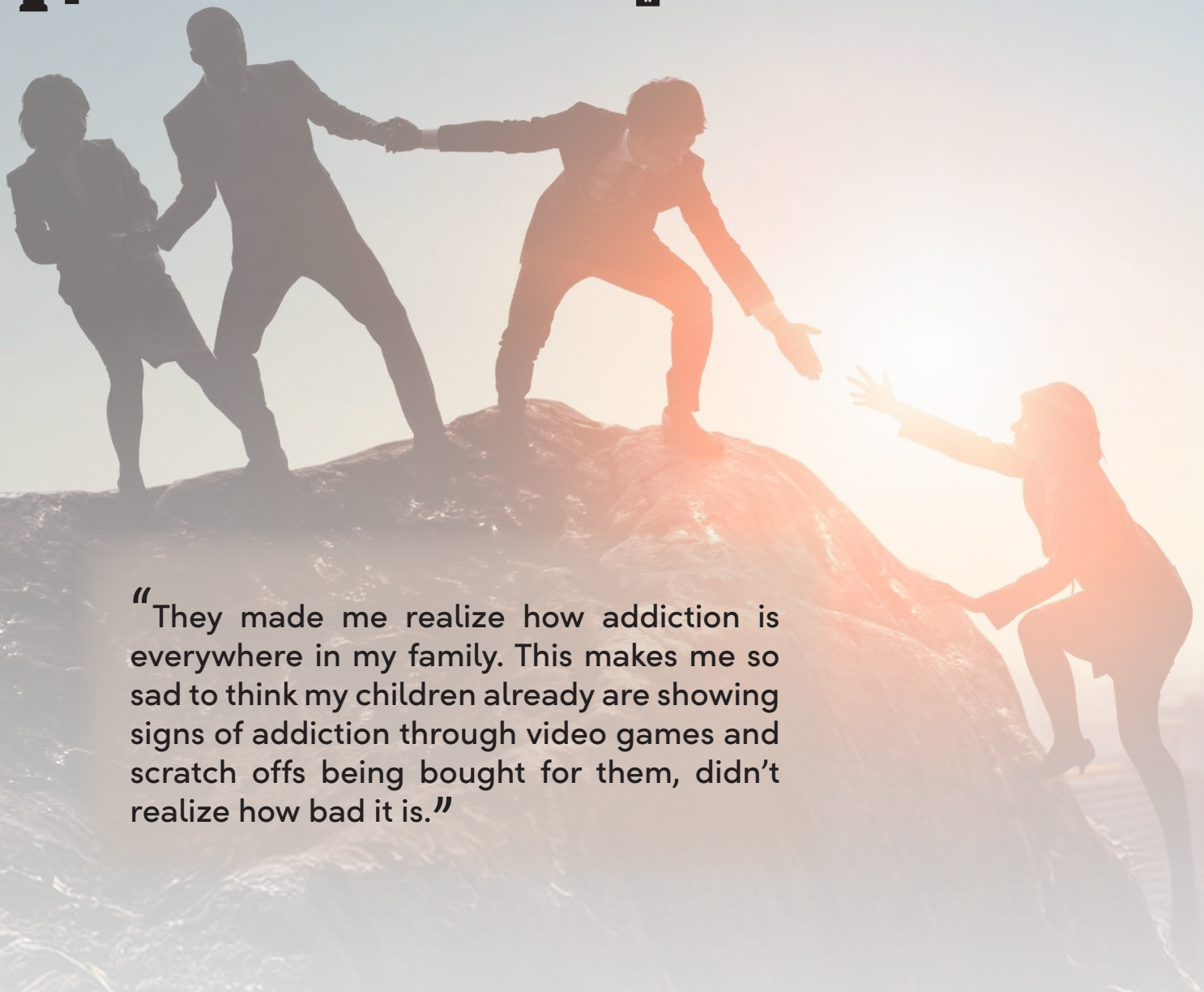
Decrease stigma



Remove barriers to care



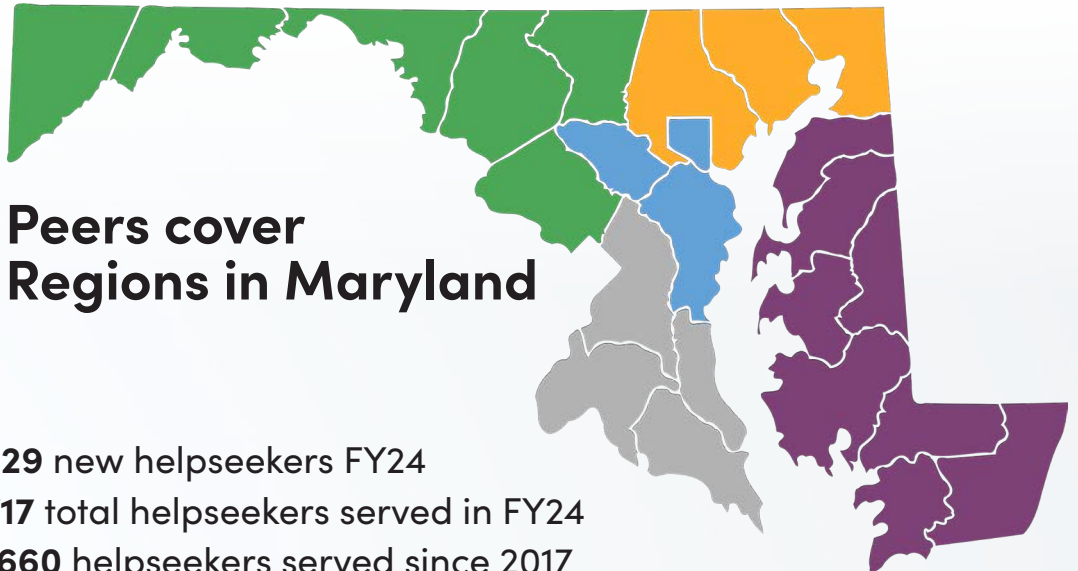
Provide a path to recovery



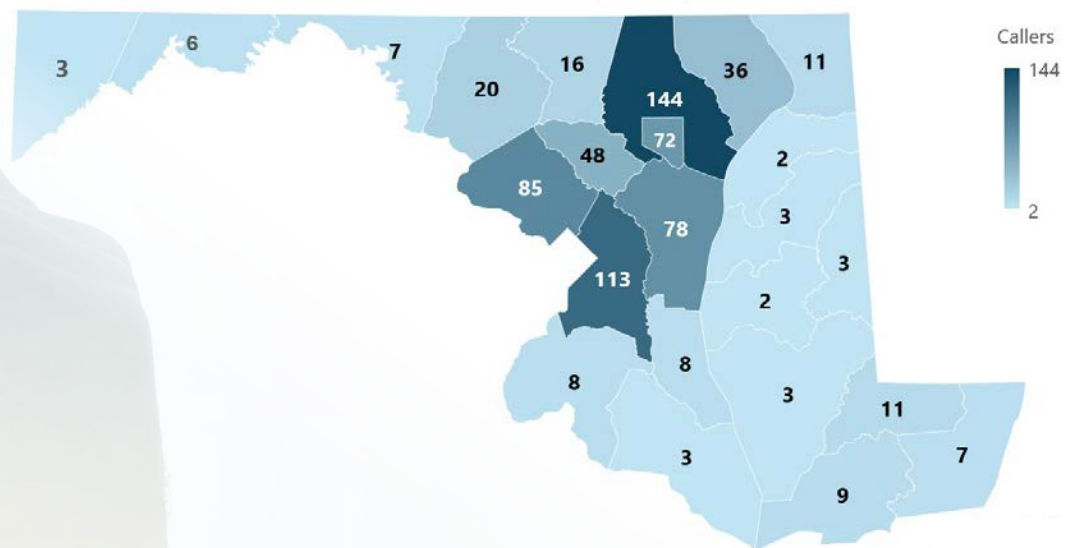
"They made me realize how addiction is everywhere in my family. This makes me so sad to think my children already are showing signs of addiction through video games and scratch offs being bought for them, didn't realize how bad it is."

5 Peers cover 5 Regions in Maryland

229 new helpseekers FY24
717 total helpseekers served in FY24
1660 helpseekers served since 2017




Active Peer Clients by County



“After talking to him, I now realize I might seriously have a problem.”

The Center continued to monitor proposed gambling legislation in Maryland during the Maryland Legislative Session. The Center tracked a total of 31 bills that referenced gambling within the House and Senate, provided written and oral testimony in Annapolis, created and updated a real-time legislative tracking document to a listserv of over 400 registrants, and held bi-weekly calls to discuss prominent public health legislation.

HB-1087



This was one of three iGaming bills introduced in 2024 that moved the farthest in the legislative process. It set up the framework for legalized iGaming in Maryland which was defined as “casino-style gaming through an on-line gaming system on a computer, mobile device, or any other interactive device.”

HB-1319

Prohibited online gambling while on campus at an institution of higher education in Maryland.

SB-878/HB-1029

Required the Maryland Department of Health to conduct prevalence studies concerning problem and pathological mobile gambling and distributed a portion of proceeds from fantasy competitions, sports wagering, and the Lottery to the Problem Gambling Fund. The bill did not pass, but is expected to be revived in 2025.



The Program Director, Center Peers, and community stakeholders testified before the:



- Senate Budget & Taxation Committee 2 Times
- House Ways and Means Committee 3 Times

Partners

PUBLIC AWARENESS

G3GROUP AGENCY, LLC

Anita Schott
CEO

John E. Pusey
Director, Development & Hosting

Tammy Vinson Schott
Project Manager

MARYLAND COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING (MCPG)

Dr. Shandra Parks, PhD, LMSW,
CFSW
President

Deborah G. Haskins, PhD, LCPC,
ACS, MAC, ICGC II
President Emerita

POLICY

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE OF MARYLAND (NCADD-MD)

Nancy Rosen-Cohen, PhD
Executive Director

Susan Pompa
Associate Director

Ann T. Ciekot
Partner, Public Policy Partners

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND FRANCIS KING CAREY SCHOOL OF LAW

Kathleen Hoke, JD
Law School Professor
Director, Network for Public
Health Law, Eastern Region,
Director, Legal Resource Center
for Public Health Policy

PREVENTION

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (SOM) NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH, SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Nancy Lever, PhD
Executive Director

Acknowledgments

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)

Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF)

Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA)

Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control
Agency (MLGCA)

Maryland Alliance for Responsible
Gambling (MARG)

Maryland Association of Prevention
Professionals & Advocates (MAPPA)

National Council on Problem Gambling
(NCPG)

Optum Maryland (Optum)



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**Maryland Center of Excellence
on Problem Gambling**

250 W. Pratt Street, Suite #1050
Baltimore, MD 21201
667-214-2120

- www.helpmygamblingproblem.org
- www.mdproblemgambling.com

MARYLAND HELPLINE: 1-800-GAMBLER