# Rise in Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline Calls Tied to Sports Betting App Issues



### Increase in Calls to Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline Linked to Sports Betting Apps

From July 2022 to June 2023, the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline experienced a 121% surge in call volume compared to the previous year, as reported by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The report, released on Wednesday, highlighted that a significant portion of these calls were for technical support related to sports betting apps.

The helpline received 2,069 calls between February and June 2023, with 1,043 of these being non-helpline calls seeking technical assistance. This rise in call volume coincided with the introduction of sports wagering in Massachusetts casinos on January 31, 2023, and online sports wagering on March 10, 2023.

Public awareness campaigns and sports wagering advertisements are thought to have contributed to the increased visibility of the helpline. However, there is no direct evidence linking the hike in call volume to a rise in problem gambling within the state.

In fiscal year 2023, the helpline received 3,050 calls, a notable increase from 1,378 calls in fiscal year 2022. Calls from individuals in recovery grew by 230%, and calls from loved ones also saw a notable increase.

Public Health Commissioner Robert Goldstein emphasized the importance of preventative and treatment measures for gambling problems. Victor Ortiz, Director of the Office of Problem Gambling Services, echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for responsive referrals.

For assistance, individuals can contact the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-327-5050 or visit gamblinghelplinema.org.

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