

## Expansion of Legalized Gambling Fact Sheet

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This is the first generation in a century to grow up with access to widespread legalized gambling.

- Early America was so marred by gambling problems that states other than Nevada began banning gambling in the 1870s.<sup>1</sup>
- After nearly a century of gambling prohibitions, New Hampshire inaugurated the state lottery in 1964, with multiple states subsequently following suit.<sup>1</sup>
- Prior to 1990, only two states allowed casino style gambling. Currently, 48 US states allow legalized gambling, with casinos now operating in over 30 states.<sup>2</sup>
- In regions with multiple forms of legalized gambling widely available, lottery and scratch tickets are the most common gambling activities, followed by Keno and slot machines.<sup>3</sup>

Gambling problems relate to accessibility.

- Rates of problem gambling are twice as high among persons who live within 50 miles of a casino relative to those who do not.<sup>4</sup>
- Prevalence rates of problem gambling are higher in surveys conducted after 1993 relative to those conducted before 1993, prior to widespread legalization of gambling.<sup>5</sup>
- Crimes increase, especially property crimes, in regions proximal to gambling venues within a few years of them opening.<sup>4,6</sup>

Some groups are at increased risk for developing gambling problems.

- Youth and young adults are at high risk for experiencing gambling problems.<sup>5,7</sup>
- Lower education is related to greater gambling problems.<sup>7</sup>
- Racial and ethnic minorities are particularly likely to experience gambling problems.<sup>7,8</sup>
- Persons with substance use disorders, and even those with family histories of substance use problems,<sup>9</sup> are at increased risk of developing gambling problems.<sup>7,8</sup>
- Persons with psychiatric conditions suffer from gambling problems at extraordinarily high rates,<sup>7,8</sup> and up to one-third of persons with gambling disorder attempt suicide.<sup>10</sup>

**Gambling problems disproportionately affect youth, minorities, the indigent,  
and individuals with mental health problems.**

### **Considerations:**

1. Greater access to popular types of gambling (i.e., slot machines, Keno) is likely to increase the proportion of the CT population who gamble and develop problems, especially in high risk, heavy social service utilizing groups.<sup>7,8</sup>
2. Increases in gambling problems will require greater need for social services in CT, including:
  - Police to assist with gambling-related crimes and violence.<sup>6,11</sup>
  - Economic support for those experiencing gambling-related divorce, job loss, and bankruptcy.<sup>4,12</sup>
  - Treatment for medical and psychiatric problems associated with gambling problems.<sup>7,8,13</sup>

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