

Report to/Rapport au :

Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa

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CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE

Ref N°: ACS2013-OPH-HPDP-0006

**SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SOCIAL IMPACTS RELATED TO PROBLEMS WITH
GAMBLING IN OTTAWA**

**OBJET : RÉPERCUSSIONS LIÉES AUX PROBLÈMES DU JEU SUR LA SANTÉ
ET SUR LE PLAN SOCIAL À OTTAWA**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit:

1. Receive for information the Ottawa Public Health gap analysis of gambling prevention, outreach and treatment services, as outlined in this report;
2. Approve that the Chair of the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit write the following letters, and that the Mayor of Ottawa be provided the opportunity to co-sign these letters:
 - a. To the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) and the Ontario Minister of Finance with a copy to the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Ottawa-area Members of Provincial Parliament, requesting that the OLG:
 - i. Fully implement healthy public policies, as outlined in this report, for current and future gambling sites in Ottawa;
 - ii. Allocate \$2.0 million on an annual, on-going basis to the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, an increase from current funding of \$741,000, to address the funding gap for community-based gambling treatment services in Ottawa, as outlined in this report;
 - b. To the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care requesting that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care augment the *Open Minds*,

- Healthy Minds, Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy** by including a comprehensive approach to prevent gambling-related harm in Ontario, provide early identification and timely treatment, and protect vulnerable populations, through integrated planning and services across the Ministries assigned to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Ministry of Consumer Services, the OLG and local Boards of Health;
- c. To the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Public Health Ontario requesting that studies be commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies that mitigate problems with gambling and to strengthen provincial surveillance of populations at risk of gambling-related harm;
3. Approve Ottawa Public Health's position against increasing access and availability of gambling in Ottawa;
 4. Recommend that City Council:
 - a. Receive this report for information; and
 - b. Approve as part of the 2014 City of Ottawa Draft Operating Budget an allocation of 6.5% of the City of Ottawa's municipal commission from the OLG on an annual, on-going basis (estimated to be approximately \$350,000) to Ottawa Public Health, an increase from current funding of zero per cent, to fund gambling prevention and outreach with community partners, as outlined in this report.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa :

1. Reçoive l'information issue de l'analyse des lacunes faite par Santé publique Ottawa concernant la prévention du jeu, les services de sensibilisation et de traitement, comme il est présenté dans ce rapport;
2. Approuve que la présidente du Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa rédige les lettres suivantes, que le maire d'Ottawa aura la possibilité de cosigner :
 - a. à l'intention de la Société des loteries et des jeux de l'Ontario (SLJO) et du ministre des Finances de l'Ontario, avec copie à la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario et aux députés provinciaux de la région d'Ottawa, demandant à la SLJO :
 - i. de mettre en œuvre les politiques de santé publique décrites dans le présent rapport, concernant les sites de jeux de hasard à Ottawa;
 - ii. d'affecter tous les ans la somme de 2 millions de dollars au Réseau local d'intégration des services de santé de Champlain, une hausse comparativement au financement actuel de 741 000 dollars, afin de combler l'écart sur le plan du financement des services communautaires de traitement des problèmes de jeu, comme il est décrit dans le présent rapport;
 - b. À l'intention de la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario afin que la ministre élargisse la Stratégie ontarienne globale de santé mentale et de lutte contre les dépendances appelée *Esprit ouvert*,

- esprit sain* en intégrant une démarche complète visant à réduire les dangers que présentent les jeux de hasard en Ontario, à assurer le dépistage hâtif et à fournir le traitement en temps opportun et à protéger les populations vulnérables. Pour ce faire, il faudrait intégrer la planification et des services au sein des ministères concernés par le Comité de la politique sociale, du ministère des Services aux consommateurs, de la SLJO et des conseils de santé régionaux;**
- c. À l'intention de la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario et du président-directeur général de Santé publique Ontario pour demander la mise en œuvre d'études afin d'évaluer l'efficacité des politiques publiques visant à diminuer les problèmes liés au jeu de hasard et pour renforcer la surveillance provinciale des populations à risque;**
 - 3. Soutienne la position de Santé publique Ottawa qui s'oppose à ce qu'on accroisse l'accès aux jeux de hasard, et leur nombre, à Ottawa;**
 - 4. Recommande que le Conseil municipal :**
 - a. Prenne connaissance du présent rapport;**
 - b. Approuve, dans le cadre du budget de fonctionnement provisoire de 2014 de la Ville d'Ottawa, l'affectation annuelle et récurrente de 6,5 % de la commission municipale que reçoit la Ville d'Ottawa de la SLJO (montant estimatif de 350 000 \$) à Santé publique Ottawa, soit une augmentation du financement actuel qui est inexistant (0 %), pour financer la prévention du jeu de hasard et des campagnes de sensibilisation avec les partenaires communautaires, comme il est décrit dans le présent rapport.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gambling has emerged in the literature as a public health concern, which has the potential to cause mental health, social, physical and major financial impacts to individuals, families and communities. In Ottawa, a majority of the population engages in at least one gambling activity, and does so without negatively affecting their health or the well-being of others. However for some, gambling behaviours can vary within a lifetime, moving back and forth between non-problematic to severely problematic. About two per cent of the population over the age of 18 – approximately 13,000 people living in Ottawa – are estimated to be experiencing problems with gambling.

Given the current City Council debate regarding gaming expansion at the Rideau Carleton Raceway and/or another location, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has collected information from community partners as well as population health and social data, to help inform this discussion. This report outlines the health and social impacts related to problems with gambling, healthy public policies to mitigate these effects, and current gaps in preventing and treating problems with gambling in Ottawa. Based on this information, OPH developed recommendations to address current and future needs.

Findings from OPH's key informant interviews, consultations with more than 40 agencies and review of best practices include:

- A coordinated, locally-focused approach to prevent gambling-related harms is needed in Ottawa. Also, a better model to identify individuals experiencing problems with gambling and link them with available, local treatment services is needed. Only about 280 individuals seek treatment in Ottawa each year for problems with gambling.
- In 2011-2012, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) allocated approximately \$54 million to address problems with gambling within the province of Ontario. This includes approximately \$41 million for problem gambling prevention, treatment and research, and approximately \$13 million for socially responsible gambling initiatives. These initiatives include funding the Responsible Gaming Council that operates the *Know your Limits* campaign, supporting research at the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, providing on-line resources and some on-site support at casinos. Although these programs are available, they lack local context and typically require individuals to actively seek out the information.
- In 2010-2011, the OLG revenue was \$6.69 billion. Of this amount, 0.8% (\$52.1 million) was distributed to initiatives across Ontario to address problems with gambling. In contrast, OLG spends approximately \$300 million yearly on marketing and promotion of gambling. During roughly the last decade, funding for problem gambling treatment services has not appreciably increased, while the cost of treatment has risen. Funds flowing from OLG revenues to Ottawa treatment providers have remained essentially unchanged since 2007 at approximately \$741,000.
- In recent years, plans to increase availability of and access to gambling across Ontario as a means to generate revenue have been proposed without concerted, increased efforts to mitigate gambling-related harm among Ontario residents. There is an identified need to improve awareness-raising, early identification of people experiencing problems with gambling and to provide these individuals with timely and adequate treatment. All relevant Provincial Ministries should contribute to protecting vulnerable, at-risk populations through integrated planning and services. Local public health units can contribute by strengthening partnerships between primary care providers, prevention and treatment providers and OLG staff to implement effective policy initiatives and increase referrals of at-risk gamblers to treatment providers.
- On-going research and program evaluation is needed to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs that are designed to mitigate gambling-related harm, as is surveillance of at-risk populations.

In order to address current gaps in the prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harm, OPH recommends that:

- City Council allocate 6.5% of the City of Ottawa's municipal commission from the OLG on an annual, on-going basis to OPH, an increase from current funding of zero per cent, to fund gambling prevention and outreach with community partners. (It is anticipated that the City will receive a \$5.3 million municipal commission in 2013;

this is an increase of approximately \$1 million from previous years, and it is assumed that this level will be sustained.)

- The OLG:
 - Fully implement healthy public policies for current and future gambling sites in Ottawa that mitigate gambling-related harm by limiting gambling availability, gambling modality and hours of operation
 - Allocate \$2.0 million on an annual, on-going basis to the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, an increase from current funding of \$741,000, to address the funding gap for community-based gambling treatment services in Ottawa.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care augment the ten-year *Open Minds, Healthy Minds*, Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, that aims to transform the mental health system, by including a comprehensive approach to prevent gambling-related harm in Ontario
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Health Ontario commission studies to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies that mitigate problems with gambling and to strengthen provincial surveillance of populations at-risk of gambling-related harm

Furthermore, OPH recommends against increasing access and availability of gambling in Ottawa, including new casinos or slot machines, as increasing such access and availability has been shown to increase the prevalence of problems with gambling. Gambling opportunities already exist in many forms in Ottawa, including online and in casinos. But electronic gaming machines, such as slot machines, and casino table games are more likely to be associated with gambling problems.

OPH's consultations with local agencies as well as a review of the literature and best practices exposed several significant gaps in the prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harms. These gaps should be addressed to help mitigate current and future gambling-related harm.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans la documentation actuellement disponible, le jeu est présenté comme une question très préoccupante pour la santé publique, qui peut entraîner des problèmes de santé mentale, et avoir des répercussions sociales, physiques et financières importantes sur les personnes, leur famille et la collectivité. À Ottawa, la majorité des résidents participent à certaines formes de jeu et le font sans nuire de quelque façon que ce soit à leur santé ou au bien-être d'autres personnes. Cependant pour d'autres, les comportements liés au jeu peuvent varier tout au long de la vie, alternant entre les périodes où le jeu n'est pas un problème et les périodes où ce problème devient très grave. À Ottawa, environ deux pour cent de la population de plus de 18 ans, soit près de 13 000 personnes, éprouveraient des problèmes de jeu.

Compte tenu du débat qui a cours actuellement au Conseil municipal concernant l'agrandissement des installations à l'hippodrome de Rideau Carleton et/ou dans d'autres emplacements, Santé publique Ottawa (SPO) a compilé de l'information auprès de ses partenaires communautaires ainsi que des données sociales et sur la santé de la population, pour éclairer la discussion. Le présent rapport décrit les conséquences des problèmes de jeu sur la santé et la société, les politiques en santé publique pour atténuer ces effets et les lacunes actuelles dans la prévention et le traitement de ces problèmes à Ottawa. En fonction de cette information, SPO a formulé des recommandations afin de combler les besoins actuels et futurs. Voici certaines conclusions tirées des entretiens qu'a eus avec des informateurs clés, des consultations avec plus de 40 organismes et de l'examen des meilleures pratiques :

- Il faudrait mettre en œuvre à Ottawa une démarche coordonnée et ciblée localement pour prévenir les dommages liés au jeu. Il faudrait également élaborer un modèle amélioré pour repérer les personnes éprouvant des problèmes de dépendance au jeu et les mettre en contact avec les services de traitement locaux. Seulement 280 personnes environ demandent de l'aide chaque année pour des problèmes de jeu à Ottawa.
- En 2011-2012, la Société des loteries et des jeux de l'Ontario (SLJO) a affecté environ 54 millions de dollars pour résoudre les problèmes de jeu dans la province de l'Ontario. Ce montant comprend environ 41 millions de dollars pour des initiatives de prévention et de traitement des problèmes de jeu et la recherche sur le jeu et environ 13 millions de dollars pour des initiatives sociales portant sur le jeu responsable. Ces initiatives comprennent notamment l'allocation de financement au Conseil du jeu responsable qui administre la campagne « Dépasser ses limites, ce n'est plus du jeu », le soutien à la recherche effectuée au Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, la fourniture de ressources en ligne et de soutien sur place dans les casinos. Bien que ces programmes soient disponibles, ils ne sont pas vraiment adaptés au contexte local et exigent que les personnes concernées cherchent activement ces informations.
- En 2010-2011, les recettes de la SLJO se sont chiffrées à 6,69 milliards de dollars. De ce montant, 0,8 % (52,1 millions de dollars) a été distribué à des initiatives dans l'ensemble de l'Ontario pour résoudre les problèmes liés à la dépendance au jeu. Par opposition, la SLJO dépense environ 300 millions de dollars par an pour le marketing et la promotion des jeux de hasard. Pendant à peu près toute la dernière décennie, le financement pour les services de traitement des problèmes de dépendance au jeu n'a pas augmenté, contrairement au coût du traitement. Les fonds alloués à même les revenus de la SLJO qui sont versés aux fournisseurs de services de traitement d'Ottawa sont restés essentiellement les mêmes depuis 2007, soit environ 741 000 dollars.
- Au cours des dernières années, des plans ont été élaborés afin d'accroître la disponibilité du jeu en Ontario et de favoriser l'accès, comme moyen de générer des revenus, sans pour autant augmenter les efforts concertés pour atténuer les dommages liés au problème du jeu chez les Ontariens. Il est devenu évident qu'il

faudrait améliorer les campagnes de sensibilisation, les méthodes de détection hâtive des personnes qui ont un problème de dépendance au jeu et offrir à ces personnes un traitement adéquat en temps opportun. Tous les ministères provinciaux concernés devraient participer à la protection des populations vulnérables à risque, au moyen d'une démarche intégrée de planification et de prestation de services. Les unités de santé publique peuvent contribuer localement en s'efforçant de renforcer les partenariats entre les prestataires de soins primaires, les fournisseurs de services de prévention et de traitement et le personnel de la SLJO afin de mettre en œuvre des initiatives politiques efficaces et d'accroître le nombre de cas de joueurs à risque qui sont aiguillés vers les fournisseurs de services de traitement.

- Il faudrait également examiner constamment les programmes et les études visant à évaluer l'efficacité des politiques et des programmes qui sont conçus pour atténuer les dommages liés au jeu, ce à quoi servent déjà les mécanismes de surveillance des populations à risque.

Afin de combler les lacunes actuelles dans la sensibilisation aux dommages liés au jeu, la prévention et le traitement, SPO recommande :

- Que le Conseil municipal affecte à Santé publique Ottawa, sur une base annuelle et récurrente, 6,5 % de la commission municipale que reçoit la Ville d'Ottawa de la SLJO, représentant une augmentation du financement actuel qui est inexistant (0 %), pour financer la prévention du jeu de hasard ainsi que des campagnes de sensibilisation avec les partenaires communautaires. (On prévoit que la Ville recevra une commission municipale de 5,3 millions de dollars en 2013; il s'agit d'une augmentation d'environ 1 million de dollars par rapport aux années précédentes et on prévoit que la commission se maintiendra à ce niveau).
- Que la SLJO :
 - Mette en œuvre des politiques de santé publique concernant les sites de jeux de hasard actuels et futurs à Ottawa; afin de réduire les dommages liés au jeu en limitant l'offre de jeu ainsi que les modalités des jeux et les heures d'ouverture.
 - Affecte sur une base annuelle et récurrente la somme de 2 millions de dollars au Réseau local d'intégration des services de santé de Champlain, une hausse comparativement au financement actuel de 741 000 dollars, afin de combler l'écart sur le plan du financement accordé aux services communautaires de traitement des problèmes de jeu à Ottawa.
- Que le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario renforce la Stratégie ontarienne globale de santé mentale et de lutte contre les dépendances étalée sur dix ans et appelée Esprit ouvert, esprit sain, en intégrant une démarche complète visant à réduire les dommages liés aux jeux de hasard en Ontario;
- Que le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario réalise des études afin d'évaluer l'efficacité des politiques publiques visant à diminuer les

problèmes liés au jeu de hasard et de renforcer la surveillance provinciale des populations à risque;

En outre, SPO s'oppose à ce que l'accès au jeu de hasard et la disponibilité des jeux soient augmentés à Ottawa, y compris l'ajout de nouveaux casinos ou de machines à sous, puisqu'il a été prouvé que l'accès au jeu et sa disponibilité augmentent la prévalence des problèmes de dépendance au jeu. La région d'Ottawa offre déjà de nombreuses occasions de jouer sous différentes formes, en ligne et dans des casinos. Or, les appareils de jeux de hasard électroniques, comme les machines à sous et les jeux de table de casino, sont plus souvent associés à des problèmes de dépendance au jeu.

Les consultations effectuées par SPO auprès d'organismes locaux ainsi que l'examen de la documentation et des meilleures pratiques ont révélé qu'il existe d'importantes lacunes dans la sensibilisation aux problèmes de jeu, la prévention et le traitement des personnes souffrant de dépendance au jeu. Il faut combler ces lacunes pour aider à atténuer les dommages actuels et futurs découlant de la dépendance au jeu.

BACKGROUND

Current context for gambling in Ottawa

City Council is currently debating gaming expansion in Ottawa at the Rideau Carleton Raceway (RCR) and/or another location (Document 1). Following the initial Council discussions about expanded gaming in Ottawa, as well as the City Council recommendation that City staff "consult with Ottawa Public Health staff on the potential public health impacts of an expanded gaming facility in Ottawa", Ottawa Public Health (OPH) staff began collecting information from partners as well as population health and social data, to help inform this discussion.

This report outlines the health and social impacts related to problems with gambling, healthy public policies to mitigate these effects, and current gaps in preventing and treating problems with gambling in Ottawa. Based on this information, OPH developed recommendations to address current and future needs.

Currently, Ottawa residents have access to two gambling facilities: RCR; and Casino du Lac-Leamy in Gatineau, which is approximately seven kilometres from downtown Ottawa. RCR has more than 1,250 slot machines and has an average daily patron volume of 5,000 (1.8 million patrons per year). Casino du Lac-Leamy has over 1,800 slot machines, 65 tables and approximately 8,000 daily patrons (3 million patrons per year). Both of these facilities are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.^{1, 2} In 2007-2008, approximately 10 per cent of Ottawa residents had used a casino in the past 12 months.³

At present, the City of Ottawa receives revenue – a municipal commission – from the slot machines at the RCR. Prior to this year, the City received 3.08% of the RCR slot machine revenue, which totalled approximately \$4.25 million in 2012. This year the funding formula has changed; the City receives 5.25% on the first \$65 million of slot

machine revenue, after that the City receives 3% on the next \$135 million and further amounts on a sliding scale based on total slot machine revenue. It is anticipated that the City will receive a \$5.3 million municipal commission in 2013; this is an increase of approximately \$1 million from previous years that is anticipated to be sustained.

Problems with Gambling in Ottawa

Population data

Gambling is a common activity and most individuals who engage in this behaviour do so without causing harm to themselves or others. In Ottawa, a majority of the population engages in at least one gambling activity in any given year. However for some, gambling behaviours can vary within a lifetime, moving back and forth between non-problematic to severely problematic. Gambling can be looked at in terms of a continuum of use, similar to alcohol and substance misuse, ranging from not gambling, gambling responsibly, some problems with gambling that carry a moderate risk of consequences, gambling that causes some serious social harm (problem gambling) to the most problematic form – pathological gambling. At this stage, individuals engage in “persistent and recurrent maladaptive patterns of gambling behaviour that disrupt personal, family or vocational pursuits.” As gambling behaviour becomes more problematic, so does the severity of the mental and physical health impacts as well as social and financial consequences.⁴

About two per cent of the population over the age of 18 – approximately 13,000 people living in Ottawa – are estimated to be experiencing problems with gambling. This is not significantly different than the Ontario-wide estimate of 1.3% of people over the age of 18 experiencing problems with gambling.^a Additionally, if the Ontario percentage of people experiencing the most severe problems with gambling (0.3%) is applied to the Ottawa population over the age of 18, then approximately 2,035 people in Ottawa suffer from the most severe problems with gambling.^b These individuals have experienced negative consequences of gambling and may have lost control over their behaviour.

Despite approximately 2,035 of Ottawa residents with severe problems with gambling, only about 280 individuals seek treatment in Ottawa each year for problems with gambling. Treatment seeking is hindered by many barriers, including the stigma associated with the problem, the desire to solve the problem oneself, the inability of individuals to recognize that they have a gambling problem, and a lack of awareness about available treatment options.^{5, 6, 7}

^a“Problems with gambling” combines the categories of moderate risk gambling and problem gambling from the Canadian Community Health Survey. Moderate risk gamblers are those with a level of gambling problems that may mean they have experienced negative gambling consequences. Problem gambling means the group has experienced negative consequences of gambling and may have lost control over their behaviour. The variable is from the Canadian Community Health Survey (2007-2008) and is a composite score that is based on the Canadian Problem Gambling Index with some modifications. This score is only calculated for those who have gambled more than 5 times in the past year. The score is based on answers to a number of questions about problems associated with problem gambling (e.g. whether gamblers spent more than they wanted to, had they ever borrowed money or sold something to get money for gambling).

^b The population estimate for Ottawa in 2008 for those over the age of 18 is 678, 341.

According to provincial data for 2011-2012, nearly half of all individuals seeking treatment in Ontario (42%) are vulnerable economically. These individuals cite their primary source of income as: retirement funds (8.8%); no income (8.1%); family support (7.3%); Ontario Disability Support Program (4.8%); Ontario Works (4.1%); disability insurance (3.7%); unemployment insurance (3.1%).⁸

Provincial data also indicates that many individuals seeking treatment for gambling-related harm have concurrent mental health and substance misuse problems⁹:

- 40.5 % have been treated for a mental health, emotional, behavioural or psychiatric problem
- 21.5 % problems with alcohol
- 8.9% problems with cannabis
- 7.8% problems with tobacco
- 3.5 % problems with opioids
- 3.1% problems with cocaine

Gambling modalities and problematic behaviour

Games that involve some skill, or give the player the impression that they need skill as well as the experience of almost winning are more likely to be associated with gambling problems, as are games that allow the use of credit to play. These types of games include electronic gaming machines, such as slot machines, and casino table games.^{10, 11, 12, 13}

In Ottawa, the four most common modalities of gambling for those over 18 years of age and who have gambled more than five times in the past year were: lottery tickets (45.4%), instant win (18.0%), cards/board games with family/friends (7.2%) and video-lottery terminals, such as slot machines (4.7%).¹⁴

Problem gamblers in treatment as well as callers to the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline report that their primary troubles are with slot machines and card gambling at casinos. In addition, although difficult to study, there are examples in the literature suggesting that a significant amount of slot machine revenue is derived from people with gambling problems.¹⁵

Health and Social Impacts Related to Problems with Gambling

Gambling has emerged in the literature as a public health concern, which has the potential to cause mental health, social, physical and major financial impacts to individuals, families and communities (Document 2):

- A significantly higher proportion of problem gamblers report having thoughts of committing suicide in their lifetime compared to non-problem gamblers. The risk of suicide is also higher among older adults with gambling problems. Additionally, spouses of problem gamblers and their children are more likely to attempt suicide than the general population.

- Children who grow up in an environment where there are parental problems with gambling are exposed to the consequences of these problems, including family conflict, financial problems and inconsistent parenting behaviours. These children may witness domestic violence, and be subject to child abuse or neglect resulting in symptoms of anxiety and depression. They may also indulge more frequently and more heavily in potentially addictive substances and activities, and appear to be at greater risk for developing addictive patterns of behaviour.
- Gambling is the third most likely and fastest growing cause of bankruptcy in the western world, and one in five persons who experiences problems related to gambling will eventually file for bankruptcy. Bankruptcy affects not only the gambler, but the family as well. Lack of finances directly impacts the ability to provide safe, affordable housing as well as food.
- It is estimated that one in six Ontario adults (16.2%) experience a problem resulting from their own or another person's gambling.¹⁶

People who may have a predisposition to developing problems with gambling are individuals who have other mental health and addiction disorders, individuals who do not understand the random nature of gambling and those who perceive gambling as a way to address a personal need (solving a financial problem or being part of a social gathering).¹⁷

Health and Social Impacts Related to Increasing Access and Availability of Gambling

Overall, the literature indicates that increased opportunities to gamble within a community, such as the addition of a new casino, are associated with an increase in problems with gambling.^{18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23} Increased opportunities to gamble arise not only from an increase in gambling locations, but also improved proximity to a gambling venue and ease of access. There is international evidence to support that the number of people presenting for problem gambling treatment and the number of bankruptcies both rise following the opening of a casino.²⁴

One study found that residents who lived within 10 miles of a casino had more than twice the rate of problem gambling compared to participating residents who lived more than 10 miles away.²⁵ Similarly, another study revealed that those living less than 80 miles from a casino experienced a higher rate of problem gambling²⁶, and a similar proximity effect was noted in a number of other studies.^{27 28} Toronto Public Health also concluded that proximity to a gambling venue is a determinant of problem gambling.^{29, 30}

Several communities in Ontario have reported increases in persons seeking treatment for problems with gambling following the opening of casinos, including Niagara, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, Brantford and Thunder Bay.^{31, 32} Similar increases have also been documented in British Columbia.³³

Current Prevention, Outreach and Treatment Services in Ottawa (Document 3)

Prevention and Outreach

At present, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) Responsible Gaming Council operates the *Know your Limits* campaign and provides some on-site support at casinos. Programming is targeted to people who gamble and depends on self-awareness and self-regulation. The OLG also provides problem gambling training for employees.

Ottawa residents also have access to the following province-wide services:

- The Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline which provides confidential and free counselling through telephone, live chat, or email, and also hosts [an information website](#)
- A website for both the public and health professionals offered by the [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#)

OPH aims to prevent gambling-related harms through existing programs and services targeted to families for healthy child development and building resiliency in youth: Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, and Healthy Transitions programs. Currently, there are no specific programs devoted to addressing, mitigating or preventing problems with gambling within OPH.

Treatment Services

There are four Ottawa-area providers of treatment services for people experiencing problems with gambling that are funded by revenues flowing from the OLG. Another three local service providers also offer treatment for Ottawa-area residents. These programs are tailored to specific age-groups and genders, and mostly consist of group counselling with very limited individual counselling opportunities.

Current Funding for Prevention, Outreach and Treatment Services

In 2010-2011, the OLG revenue was \$6.69 billion. Of this amount, 0.8% (\$52.1 million) was distributed to initiatives across Ontario to address problems with gambling. This amount remained similar for 2011-2012; \$53.9 million was allotted. In contrast, OLG spends approximately \$300 million yearly on marketing and promotion of gambling.³⁴

OLG funds to address problems with gambling are derived from two distinct amounts:

- 1) Two per cent of gross revenues are allocated from slot revenue earned at casinos and slot facilities, excluding the resort casinos (\$40.8 million), for gambling problem awareness, treatment and research
- 2) A lump sum payment (\$13.1 million) is provided by OLG for social responsibility initiatives, such as on-site brochures, self-exclusion programs and training for Responsible Gambling Centre staff

For prevention and treatment services, funds flow from the OLG to the Ontario Ministry of Finance. This money is then allocated by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care

(MOHLTC) to the appropriate Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) for distribution to local treatment providers. In 2012-2013, \$741,000 was earmarked from Ministry funds to four Ottawa-area providers of prevention and treatment services through this mechanism.

Gaps in Current Prevention, Outreach and Treatment Services

During the last 18 months, OPH conducted key informant interviews and consulted with more than 40 agencies to gauge the impact of problems with gambling in Ottawa and to identify gaps in current services. A summary list of agencies consulted is included in the consultation section of this report. A review of best practices to prevent gambling-related harm was also undertaken.

Gaps in Prevention and Outreach in Ottawa

Although programs through the OLG are available, they lack local context. Further, the resources for responsible gambling typically require individuals to actively seek out the information. In the past year, there have been 2,500 visits to the interactive information kiosk at the RCR, but little is known whether visits to the kiosks resulted in patrons adopting responsible gambling behaviours. The OLG has also [reported](#) that its self-exclusion program could be improved by working more closely with local treatment providers.

Consultations with Ottawa-area agencies revealed there is a need to have tailored education to Ottawa residents to address common myths and raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of problematic behaviour.

OLG has also identified [prevention and outreach activities that could be improved and/or enhanced](#):

- Correct misconceptions about slot machines, lotteries and increase awareness about gambling myths
- Enhance relevant player and public awareness research including effectiveness of its responsible gaming tools and technology
- Improved targeted player communication to assist patrons to the awareness and knowledge they need to game responsibly

OPH consultations also revealed that although services are available, many people are not making that last step to connect with the services they need. Increased promotion of local services, personal connections with counsellors, coordination of services with a broader range of agencies, such as credit counselling or legal services, and improved access to these services would reduce this gap.

Gaps in Treatment Services in Ottawa

Local service providers have indicated that during the last decade, funding for problem gambling treatment services has not appreciably increased, while the cost of treatment has risen. Funds flowing from OLG revenues have remain unchanged since 2007; the Champlain LHIN did provide a 1.5% stabilization increase in 2012-2013, but none prior

to this and none since. Consequently, the quality and variety of treatment services has eroded over time. A number of strategies are being used by some to address this shortfall, including:

- Shortening the length of the treatment programs
- Providing more group treatment and less individual sessions to maximize the number of clients that a counsellor can service
- Combining groups that best practices suggest should be segregated, such as grouping by age or sex

Gaps in Current Prevention, Outreach and Treatment Services across Ontario

In recent years, plans to increase availability of and access to gambling across Ontario as a means to generate revenue have been proposed without concerted or coordinated efforts to mitigate gambling-related harm among Ontario residents. There is an identified need to provide early identification of people experiencing problems with gambling and to provide these individuals with timely and adequate treatment. Furthermore, there needs to be a plan that involves all relevant Provincial Ministries to protect vulnerable, at-risk populations through integrated planning and services. There is also a lack of research regarding the effectiveness of policies that are designed to mitigate gambling-related harm as well as surveillance of at-risk populations.

[The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) developed principles that support “the belief that gambling should be regulated and operated with public health as its prime imperative” in order to mitigate and prevent gambling-related harm:

- Ontarians are not exposed to high-risk gambling environments and modalities.
- Ontarians have the right to abstain from gambling, and to establish limits on the extent of their participation.
- Those who choose to gamble are informed of the odds of winning, and of the potential consequences and risks.
- Ontarians whose lives are most affected by problem gambling have access to high-quality, culturally appropriate care.
- Gambling legislation and regulation must establish a minimum duty of care.
- Government regulation and operation of gambling should have as its primary focus the protection of populations at greatest risk of developing gambling problems.
- Government decisions on gambling are based on best evidence, and research on gambling is supported.

Many of these principles are not evident in current provincial strategic direction and priorities. There is then, as heard in consultations, a need and an opportunity to strengthen prevention, outreach and treatment with the integration of these principles into current and future provincial mental health strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities: Prevention, Outreach and Treatment of Problems with Gambling

Ottawa Public Health

Ontario public health units administer health promotion and disease prevention programs to inform the public about healthy life-styles, including education in healthy growth and development including parenting education, health education for all age groups and selected screening services.

Specifically, the OPH role in regards to gambling includes:

- Monitor and report on health impacts
- Provide positive parenting and mental health promotion services to families and youth
- Reduce stigma and improve access to appropriate resources
- Raise awareness and educate residents on gambling misconceptions, warning signs and safe gambling guidelines
- With partners, target outreach to priority populations most affected by gambling, and support screening and early intervention for those experiencing problems
- Support healthy public policy across all sectors

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

The role of the MOHLTC is based on helping people stay healthy, delivering good care when people need it, and protecting the health system for future generations.

Specifically, the MOHLTC role in regards to gambling includes:

- Establish overall strategic direction and provincial priorities for the health system regarding gambling through the *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions strategy
- Develop legislation, regulations, standards, policies and directives to support those strategic directions
- Monitor and report on the health of Ontarians regarding gambling, especially the populations at risk of gambling-related harm
- Plan for and establish funding models and levels of funding for the health care system specifically for the treatment of problem gambling
- Ensure that Ministry and system strategic directions and expectations are fulfilled

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation

The role of the OLG is to:

- Continue to fund programs for the awareness, prevention, treatment and research of problem gambling
- Collaborate and learn from organizations (such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline, Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Responsible Gambling Council and others), benefiting from their research and experience in prevention and counselling
- Incorporate the knowledge gained from the collaborative organizations to prevent patrons from developing problems with gambling
- Incorporate technology industry best practices in the area of responsible gambling features and assess the potential use of this technology when placing and replacing equipment at gaming sites

- Enhance self-exclusion programs with a greater emphasis on supporting and encouraging patrons to identify they have a problem at an early stage and seek counseling from problem gambling professionals
- Implement actions to correct their identified gaps in their responsible gaming program elements

DISCUSSION

Proposal to address gaps in prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harm in Ottawa

Based on the information collected from consultations with local agencies, review of best practices and financial records, it is evident that there is a need to address current, local gaps in prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harm.

Recommendation 2.a.i: That the OLG fully implement healthy public policies at current and future gambling sites in Ottawa

Best practices in the prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harm, as described in the background section of this report, support a multi-level approach: policy development; education and awareness-raising; and environmental practices that support responsible gambling and protection of populations at greatest risk of developing gambling problems.

In order to align with best practices and similar to other local public health agencies in Ontario, OPH supports that casinos and other gambling sites demonstrate due diligence to protect their clientele by incorporating healthy public policies in their planning and day-to-day operations. A report prepared for the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre and the MOHLTC, entitled *Prevention of Problem Gambling: A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence, and Identified Best Practices* outlined some of the most effective strategies for the prevention of problem gambling. While OLG has been progressive with some policies, such as self-exclusion programs and mandatory staff training the following policies are recommended to be adopted and implemented:

1. Limiting hours of casino operation: no 24-hour access to venues, closed at least 6 hours per day;
2. Restricting the number of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) and slowing down machine speed of play and features that promote false beliefs of the odds of winning
3. Eliminating casino loyalty programs
4. Prohibiting ATMs on the gambling floor
5. Prohibiting casino credit and holding accounts
6. Reducing maximum bet size
7. Mandating a daily loss maximum
8. Implementing strong casino self-exclusion programs, including a mandatory player card system
9. Issuing monthly individual patron statements which include full membership medians and averages to compare against personal record of loss, frequency and duration of play.

10. Designating areas for alcohol purchase and not providing alcohol service on casino floors to reduce impaired judgement.³⁵

Recommendation 2.a.ii: That the OLG allocate \$2.0 million on an annual, on-going basis to the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, an increase from current funding of \$741,000, to address the funding gap for community-based gambling treatment services in Ottawa

Funding that flows from the OLG for treatment of problems with gambling has not appreciably increased during the last decade, as it has remained at approximately \$741,000, and needs to be augmented to meet the immediate needs of those already seeking treatment.

Local and national service providers have estimated that treatment costs for one individual with gambling problems are \$7,000, while current funding is at approximately \$2,500 per person. This leaves a funding shortfall of \$4,500 per person.

In order to address this shortfall in funding for treatment services, OPH is recommending that OLG allocate \$2.0 million on an annual, on-going basis to the Champlain LHIN to adequately address current treatment needs of Ottawa residents experiencing problems with gambling. This funding would enable treatment providers to:

- Screen, assess and enrol clients in a more coordinated manner
- Give support to family members of clients
- Develop plans of care for clients that are tailored to each individuals' unique needs, which may include mental health support, individual, couples and group counselling, and referrals to other social and health care services

Recommendation 4.b: That City Council approve as part of the 2014 City of Ottawa Draft Operating Budget an allocation of 6.5% of the City of Ottawa's municipal commission from the OLG on an annual, on-going basis (estimated to be approximately \$350,000) to Ottawa Public Health, an increase from current funding of zero per cent, to fund gambling prevention and outreach with community partners

There is a large gap between those who are experiencing problems with gambling (approximately 13,000 Ottawa residents) and those who seek treatment (approximately 280 individuals). The literature exposes a number of significant barriers that individuals face when dealing with gambling problems: a desire to deal with the problem alone, stigma, lack of awareness that their gambling is a problem and lack of knowledge of the help that is available to them. Many do not realize they have a problem until they reach a point of significant loss.

Feedback from consultations with local agencies supports the implementation of a locally-focused initiative. Additionally, information from the OLG supports strengthening prevention and outreach as well as improving self-exclusion programs through better working relationships with local treatment providers.

To bridge the gap in current prevention and outreach services, OPH is recommending that 6.5% of the City of Ottawa's municipal commission from the OLG (approximately \$350,000 in 2013) be provided to OPH and partners on an annual, on-going basis to:

- Build awareness in the youth and adult population to decrease problem gambling behaviours, provide early detection and increase treatment-seeking in this group
- Strengthen partnership efforts between primary care providers, prevention and treatment providers and OLG Responsible Gaming staff to implement effective policy initiatives and increase referrals of at-risk gamblers to treatment providers
 - Ensure multi-cultural, multi-lingual outreach and treatment services are made available
 - Support primary care clinicians to provide screening, brief intervention services through provision of clinical tools and appropriate referrals to local resources, including mental health and addiction counselling providers
 - Establish stronger screening and referral mechanisms between casino and addictions services for individuals exhibiting potential problem behavior
 - Carry out activities to monitor the extent of the health impacts of problem gambling
 - Collaborate with academics and treatment providers working in problem gambling for timely knowledge exchange
- Increase access to self exclusion in a non-casino setting and provide initial contact with a counsellor

This program would be carried out in partnership with community stakeholders, including:

- Local mental health and addictions service providers
- Agencies that work with people with gambling problems, such as credit counselors
- Other experts, such as local academics, the Responsible Gambling Council and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Proposal to address gaps in prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harm in Ontario

Recommendation 2.b: That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care augment the Open Minds, Healthy Minds, Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, by including a comprehensive approach to prevent gambling-related harm in Ontario, provide early identification and timely treatment, and protect vulnerable populations, through integrated planning and services across the Ministries assigned to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Ministry of Consumer Service, the OLG and local Boards of Health

In June 2011, the MOHLTC released [Open Minds, Healthy Minds, Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#). The delivery and implementation of this ten year strategy is assigned to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, which includes membership from the Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Citizenship and Immigration, Community and Social Services, Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Training, Colleges and Universities, as well as the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* aims to transform the mental health system through four goals with the first three years focusing on children and youth:

1. Improve mental health and wellbeing for all Ontarians
2. Create healthy, resilient inclusive communities
3. Identify mental health and addictions problems early and intervene
4. Provide timely, high quality, integrated, person-directed health and other human services

An explicit expected outcome of this strategy is that more Ontarians with mental health and addictions problems will be identified early and receive appropriate services and supports. Consequently, OPH recommends that this strategy prioritize dedicated resources to prevent gambling-related harm in Ontario, provide early identification and timely treatment for problem gambling, and protect vulnerable populations including youth, through integrated planning and services across the Ministries assigned to the Standing Committee on Social Policy the Ministry of Consumer and Services – the Ministry that ensures fair-play and oversees the regulation of the gaming machines – the OLG and local Boards of Health. With potential expansion of gaming facilities in Ontario, the risk of gambling-related harms is increased across the province.

Recommendation 2.c: That the Ministry of Health of Long-Term Care and Public Health Ontario commission studies to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies that mitigate problems with gambling and to strengthen provincial surveillance of populations at risk of gambling-related harm

Ontario has been a leader in research into problem gambling through funding by OLG to the Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The resulting Ontario Problem Gambling Resource Centre has identified a number of promising practices to prevent and mitigate harms related to problem gambling: a range of educational and policy interventions with special emphasis on the need to keep prevention initiatives in place for a sustained period.

These policies have been demonstrated to have moderate success in reducing problems with gambling. Unfortunately, there is no current evidence demonstrating policies that have a high success in reducing problem gambling behaviour. More research in this area is needed.

Furthermore, strengthened surveillance of populations at risk of gambling-related harm is needed to help inform local decision makers on how to best protect vulnerable populations.

Recommendation 3: That the Board of Health approve Ottawa Public Health's position against increasing access and availability of gambling in Ottawa

OPH recommends against increasing access and availability of gambling in Ottawa. Most Ottawa residents engage in some form of gambling, and do so without significantly affecting their health or the well being others. But for some individuals, gambling is a devastating problem that affects not only the gamblers themselves, but also their families and communities.

Increasing the availability and accessibility of gambling in Ottawa, including new casinos, slot machines and table games, will likely result in an increase in the prevalence of problems with gambling among Ottawa residents. Gambling opportunities already exist in many forms in Ottawa, both online and in casinos. But electronic gaming machines, such as slot machines, and casino table games are more likely to be associated with gambling problems.

In addition, OPH's consultations with local agencies as well as a review of the literature and best practices exposed several significant gaps in the prevention, outreach and treatment of gambling-related harms. These gaps should be addressed prior to increasing gambling availability and access in Ottawa.

Next Steps

Should City Council decide to expand gambling opportunities at one or more casinos in Ottawa, it is likely that the population of people experiencing problems with gambling will increase as a result of greater or more convenient accessibility. This potential increase in at-risk gamblers would create:

1. Higher costs for treatment programs due to increased need for services
2. Increased need for programs to address the social problems of gamblers (need for social service supports, greater access to food banks, greater need for family and individual counselling)
3. Increased need for prevention and outreach programs

Experience from other jurisdictions indicates that gambling expansion could result in a doubling of treatment-seeking clients among those who experience problems with gambling.^{36, 37, 38} Should expanded gambling opportunities be approved in Ottawa, OPH will endeavour to provide recommendations to mitigate gambling-related harms.

CONSULTATION

In preparation of this report, OPH consulted with more than 40 agencies to gauge the impact of problems with gambling in Ottawa and to identify gaps in current services. Feedback was provided by a wide-range of agencies and partners that deal with the impacts of gambling, work with clients in the treatment of problems with gambling and that are involved in local gambling: Ontario, Gatineau, and Ottawa Police Services, Ottawa and Gatineau Paramedic Services, the City Of Ottawa Community and Social Services, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, Toronto Public Health, credit counselors, the OLG, LotoQuebec, the Vanier Institute of the Family, and a number of culturally specific groups, such as the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre. OPH staff also consulted with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the State of Nevada regarding funding formulas for gambling treatment, prevention, or research, but there was no awareness of best practices in terms of the allocation of funds.

The recommendations for enhanced prevention, outreach and treatment services are supported in principle by local treatment providers, including those funded through the Champlain LHIN specifically to address problems with gambling: Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre, Centertown Community Health Centre, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services and Sandy Hill Community Health Centre.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information described in recommendation 1 of this report. There are no legal impediments to implementing recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

With the approval of the report recommendations an allocation of 6.5% of the City's OLG revenue would be included for Council's consideration within the 2014 Draft Operating Budget to fund gambling prevention and outreach activities. This allocation is estimated to be approximately \$350K in 2014 and would be adjusted annually.

Currently, the City's 2013 budget reflects the \$5.3 million in revenues that are projected to be received from OLG based on the most recent funding agreement for the period commencing April 1, 2013. It is anticipated that the most recent funding agreement formula will result in an additional \$300k in 2014 as a result of the full year impact of the new funding agreement.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications related to this report.

BOARD OF HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the Board of Health Strategic Priorities 2011-2014: Apply a health lens to all municipal policies (A1); Address emerging community health needs (B).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[Document 1:](#) Decisions regarding gambling expansion in Ottawa and across Ontario

[Document 2:](#) Health and Social Impacts Related to Problems with Gambling

[Document 3:](#) Prevention, Outreach and Treatment Services in Ottawa: Current Programming, Best Practices and Proposed Plan

DISPOSITION

Staff will prepare required letters and ensure City Council receives this Report and Recommendations.

¹ Lac Leamy Casino Website: <http://www.casinosduquebec.com/lacleamy/en/information-for-customers>

² Rideau Carleton Raceway website; <http://www.rcr.net/slots.html>

³ Canadian Community Health Survey 2007-2008

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