

Gambling Disorder Screening Day 2034

March 8, 2024



In the United States, the [Healthy People](#) initiative identifies data-driven priorities for public health. This important program sets measurable objectives for each coming decade to help enable people to reach their full potential for health and well-being. The [Healthy People 2030 Framework](#), for example, focuses on using empirical information to set objectives for health disparities, health equity, health literacy, well-being, and social determinants of health across a variety of health conditions. Although last year's [10th annual Gambling Disorder Screening Day](#) presented an opportunity for us to celebrate and look back on our collective accomplishments, the Healthy People initiative reminds us of the importance of critically reflecting on what we know to establish program outcome goals for the future. So, what's in store by 2034?

Connecting to today's gamblers. Last year, for the first time, we had the opportunity to collect research data related to Gambling Disorder Screening Day. We're pleased to announce that a [Pilot Study](#) of this work is available for early access while peer-review is completed. This study suggested to us that screening in the digital space is a promising medium for reaching people who gamble. People who screened positive for Gambling Disorder were more likely than others to report that they would use a variety of potentially helpful resources, such as problem gambling helplines, and to actually engage with such resources by clicking on external hyperlinks. Our online respondents also indicated a preference for using low-contact problem gambling resources, such as a self-help workbook, smartphone app, or podcasts. Findings such as these suggest to us the importance of devoting time during the next decade to developing contemporary digital screening protocols and new resources that will resonate with today's gamblers' help-seeking preferences.

Developing culturally competent intervention. The [Cambridge Health Alliance](#) serves a diverse patient population. More than half of our patients speak a language other than English, so we know the value of culturally competent care. Accordingly, we programmed our [digital screening and intervention experience](#) in 22 languages. However, some of our hard copy resources, like the pocket screener, are among our most popularly requested resources. Last year we had the opportunity to translate the [pocket screener](#) into Simplified Chinese and Spanish and distribute thousands free-of-charge to local community-based organizations, and this year we extended our hard copy translations to include Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole - languages which are among the top languages spoken by Cambridge Health Alliance patients. The popularity of these resources, coupled with Gambling Disorder Screening Day becoming an [increasingly global event](#), indicate a need during the next decade for continuing to expand our ability to reach diverse populations, and to ensure that we evaluate the cultural competence of this event for different audiences.

Expanding the evidence base. This year, [Dr. Heather Gray](#) and I are conducting the first [randomized trial](#) of Gambling Disorder Screening Day. Next week, on Gambling Disorder Screening Day, we'll be screening more than 2,000 people around the U.S. for this study. Although we are extremely excited to learn about what works and what doesn't work for this event, we recognize that this work should just be the start of empirical examination of its impacts on individuals, organizations, and populations. Ideally, more rigorous research, including work that involves those with lived experience, will help us make the Gambling Disorder Screening Day experience clear, informative, relevant, and helpful to these targets. Learning from "experts by experience" is just one way we will pursue additional rigorous research opportunities during the next decade to better understand what makes Gambling Disorder Screening Day work and to identify measurable objectives for the next decade. Some objectives to monitor over time might include:

- Increase reach as measured by
 - number of people screened,
 - number of participating screening organizations, and
 - number of participating regions (states, countries)
- Increase regular screening for problem gambling in key target organizations, such as healthcare organizations, schools, and gambling industry venues

- Increase adherence to lower-risk guidelines among people who gamble
- Increase safer gambling practices among people who gamble
- Increase [positive play](#) among people who gamble
- Increase the proportion of people who screen positive who access help seeking information and resources.
- Increase follow-through with help-seeking behaviors among people who screen positive

We remain committed to making Gambling Disorder Screening Day the best public health intervention of its type and to its continued development in the coming years. We'd love to hear more from our readers about what they like about this event, and what they think could use improvement - especially those with lived experience with gambling-related problems. We're grateful for the ongoing support people have provided and look forward to continuing our collaborative work to advance screening for gambling-related problems around the world.

— [Debi LaPlante, Ph.D.](#), Director, Division on Addiction at Cambridge Health Alliance and Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School

What do you think? Please use the comment link below to provide feedback about Gambling Disorder Screening Day.
