

# Fact Sheet

## Responsible Gambling in British Columbia

June 2017

BCLC's mission is to conduct and manage gambling on behalf of the Province in a socially responsible manner. We believe that the more people know, the better equipped they are to make healthy decisions about gambling.

### B.C. Gamblers (2016/17 BCLC Key Performance Indicator data\*)

- 75% of adult British Columbians participated in a gambling activity in the past year, whether they bought a lottery ticket, bet in a casino/Chances or bingo hall venue or played online on PlayNow.com.
- Average players in B.C. are 49.5 years old and an almost equal mix of men and women (49% Male vs. 51% Female).
- More than three quarters of B.C. players have post-secondary or higher education.
- The average annual household income of a player is \$68,434, slightly higher than the average B.C. adult.

### 2014 BC Problem Gambling Prevalence Study

- While most people gamble responsibly, a 2014 study into the [Prevalence of Problem Gambling in B.C.](#) found that 3.3 per cent of adult British Columbians have moderate to high problems with gambling, of which 0.7 per cent are considered high.
- This represents a 28 per cent decline since 2008, when an estimated 4.6 per cent were classified as having moderate to high problems with gambling.

### GameSense

- Launched in 2009, [GameSense](#) is BCLC's responsible gambling program, designed to assist players in making informed choices about gambling and connect them to resources if they or someone they know is displaying problem gambling behavior.
- GameSense Advisors in B.C. casinos have approximately 4,500 meaningful conversations each month about responsible and problem gambling with people across the province.
- GameSense Information Centres are staffed by GameSense Advisors in all casinos, as well as self-serve kiosks in community gaming centres.
- GameSense information on responsible play is available in several languages at gaming facilities as well as on the GameSense website: [www.gamesense.ca](http://www.gamesense.ca).
- BCLC has licensed GameSense to six other gaming jurisdictions in Canada and the U.S.: Alberta Gaming and Liquor, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, SaskGaming, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Massachusetts Gaming, and Connecticut Lottery.
- MGM Resorts International is also adopting GameSense in their properties around the world, and committed \$1 million in funding to advance responsible gambling research.
- GameSense has been recognized with awards from industry organizations including the World Lottery Association, National Council on Problem Gambling the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors and North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries.

\*Online survey independently conducted by Ipsos Limited Partnership with a random sample of B.C. adults aged 19 and up.

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## Programming for Special Populations, including Seniors

- BCLC and its Responsible Gambling department are focusing on better understanding special populations and developing targeted messaging and programming for them, including seniors.
- Recognizing that seniors have different motivations for gambling, and different levels of risk, than the general population, BCLC launched a [GameSense for Seniors](#) campaign in 2015 and 2016 to increase awareness of budgeting tools, help spot the signs of a problem and enable conversations about gambling between seniors and family members.
- GameSense for Seniors promotes the message 'Balance gambling with other hobbies' through print and digital signage, brochures and interactive educational activities facilitated by GameSense Advisors at B.C. gaming facilities.
- [GameSense.ca](#) also features a section titled '[Your GameSense](#)', highlighting special populations with unique gambling characteristics and needs. The [Seniors & Gambling section](#) provides access to tips and information, in addition to a new budget tool designed to help seniors reflect on how much they spend on their entertainment choices.

## Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) Program

- Self-exclusion from B.C. gambling facilities and PlayNow.com is a personal commitment and a tool available for anyone having difficulty controlling their gambling.
- In 2016/17, there were [over 9,500](#) individuals actively enrolled in BCLC's [VSE program](#).
- In 2016/17, VSE individuals were identified and removed 10,375 times through various means including staff detection, ineligible wins and recognition technology.
- About 80 per cent of all recorded VSE violations are made by 7 per cent of VSE patrons enrolled in the program.
- Results from an independent [2011 longitudinal study of the program](#) show satisfaction with the program is high amongst participants, with:
  - Over 90 per cent agreeing they would recommend the program to others.
  - 65 per cent never tried to return to a casino.
  - 35 per cent completely abstained from gambling of any kind.
  - 38 per cent successfully connected with counselling and treatment.

## B.C. Government Supports and Prevention Services

- B.C.'s Responsible and Problem Gambling Program (RPGP) minimizes harm and promotes responsible gambling practices. The program connects people with resources that can help them make informed choices to support healthy behaviours as well as access support services for those negatively impacted by gambling. This includes a 24-hour problem gambling help line free counselling and day treatment.
- The Province has 26 clinical counsellors who provide gambling counselling, treatment, and support services in communities across the province. For people who live in remote locations, outreach and telephone counselling are available - this means that mobility, financial resources, and transportation costs are not barriers to treatment.
- The information, support, and treatment services offered by the RPGP include public education delivered in schools and communities across B.C. and online through the BC Responsible Gambling website: [bcresponsiblegambling.ca](#)
- BC RPGP prevention providers educate the public about the facts, myths and risks of gambling and encourage players to play recreationally within a balanced lifestyle. They also raise public awareness of problem gambling signs, and the services and treatment that are available for those impacted negatively by gambling.

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- Public education is delivered in communities across B.C., including grade 5 to 12 curriculum, post-secondary presentations, allied professional training, older adult initiatives, community engagement and awareness, and cultural-specific education initiatives aimed at South Asian, and Chinese populations in Metro Vancouver and Indigenous communities in the province.
- In 2016/17, more than 25 contracted service providers gave approximately 2500 community-based presentations that encouraged people to make healthy choices.
- The presentations reached more than 100,000 people, including youth, high risk adults, general adult populations, and allied professionals working in sectors such as mental health, corrections, and justice.

## Other Initiatives

- The Province of B.C. and BCLC have invested \$2 million over five years to the UBC Centre for Gambling Research.
- The Ministries of Finance and Health, and BCLC continue to move forward on their implementation of the [2015 Plan for Public Health and Gambling](#).
- BCLC provides mandatory [Appropriate Response Training](#) for all front-line gaming staff to assist those that may be experiencing a problem with gambling.
- BCLC hosts the annual [New Horizons in Responsible Gambling](#) conference in Vancouver to learn about new developments and best practices in responsible gambling, as well as the prevention of problem gambling.

## Funding

- For the past several years BCLC and the Province of B.C. have budgeted over \$9.5 million for responsible gambling programming and supports. Budgets for 2017/18 are unchanged.