

Committee on Public Health
Bill Summary

Bill No. H2416
Title: *An Act relative to gambling addiction*
Sponsor: Representative Carole A. Fiola
Committee: Public Health
Hearing Date: June 11, 2025
Similar Matters: None
Prior History: New file
Reporting Deadline: August 10, 2025

Current Law:

- **M.G.L. Chapter 32A** pertains to contributory group general or blanket insurance for persons in the service of the Commonwealth.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 32A § 32** pertains to Group Insurance Commission coverage for an annual mental health wellness examination.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 118E** pertains to the division of medical assistance.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 118E § 10Q** pertains to MassHealth coverage for an annual mental health wellness examination.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 175** pertains to insurance.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 175 § 47TT** pertains to coverage for annual mental health wellness examinations under private insurance.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 176G** pertains to health maintenance organizations.
- **M.G.L. Chapter 176G § 4MM** pertains to coverage for an annual mental health wellness examination under an HMO plan.

Summary:

This bill expands coverage for an annual mental health wellness examination by including questions relating to gambling habits and frequency in qualifying behavioral health screenings. This bill also establishes a special commission to investigate and study problem gambling and to advise the Governor, the legislature, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on problem gambling.

SECTION 1 amends M.G.L. Chapter 32A, Section 32 by adding questions relating to gambling habits and frequency to the behavioral health screening that may qualify as a mental health wellness examination covered by the Group Insurance Commission.

SECTION 2 amends M.G.L. Chapter 118E, Section 10Q by adding questions relating to gambling habits and frequency to the behavioral health screening that may qualify as a mental health wellness examination covered by MassHealth.

SECTION 3 amends M.G.L. Chapter 175, Section 47TT by adding questions relating to gambling habits and frequency to the behavioral health screening that may qualify as a mental health wellness examination covered by private insurance plans.

SECTION 4 amends M.G.L. Chapter 176G, Section 4MM by adding questions relating to gambling habits and frequency to the behavioral health screening that may qualify as a mental health wellness examination covered by health maintenance organization (HMO) plans.

SECTION 5 establishes a special commission to investigate and study problem gambling and outlines commission membership. The commission will provide guidance and advice related to current research on problem gambling to the governor, the legislature, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The commission may conduct public hearings, forums, or meetings to gather information and raise awareness of problem gambling. The commission must hold its first meeting no later than 30 days after the effective date of this act and must meet monthly. The commission must file an annual report at the end of each state fiscal year with the governor and the legislature. The report must include:

- An assessment of current research on the subject and whether there exists evidence-based, best, or promising practices on the prevention, detection, and treatment of problem gambling;
- A review of current policies and practices concerning medical screenings for problem gambling, including the frequency and location of screenings and training of personnel administering the screenings, the availability of reimbursement, and issues relative to medical necessity and third-party coverage;
- Provision of assistance to the Department of Public Health, other state agencies, and organizations in the development of professional and public educational materials and programs on problem gambling, in the development of referral lists for problem gambling treatment, building on existing resources, and in the designation of authorized validated screening tools
- Provision of assistance to the Department of Public Health, other state agencies, and organizations relative to applications for federal funding to support efforts consistent with the mission and purpose of the commission; and
- Any other matters that the commission considers relevant to the fulfillment of its mission and purpose.