

Casino gambling has not increased social ills, study finds

Written by Administrator

Friday, 07 December 2018 14:22 -

So far, casino gambling in Massachusetts has not significantly affected the state's social and economic landscape, according to the latest findings from a research team led by the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"There is little evidence of marked socioeconomic changes to date in Massachusetts that can be attributed to gambling," the new report concludes. The report is part of a long-term study, called the Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts, being contracted by the state.

The report examined the effects of Plainridge Park Casino, a slots parlor in Plainville that opened in 2015. The latest findings do not include the MGM Springfield resort casino, which opened in August. It will be included in future updates.

Among the report's findings:

Get Metro Headlines in your inbox:

The 10 top local news stories from metro Boston and around New England delivered daily.

Since Plainridge Park opened, there has been no significant change in the prevalence of problem gambling statewide or around Plainville, as well as no significant changes in health, stress, substance use, or addictions that can be linked to the casino.

There has been no significant change in the overall amount of crime, though increases in credit card fraud and reports of lost property and suspicious activity in Plainville are probably related to Plainridge Park, the report found. "These increases . . . are largely attributable to an increased volume of visitors to the area," the report stated.

Casino gambling has not increased social ills, study finds

Written by Administrator

Friday, 07 December 2018 14:22 -

There has been no change in traffic or noise at a statewide level connected to the introduction of casinos, though traffic volume and complaints have increased in Plainville, and traffic volume has gone up in Everett, where about 1,500 construction workers are employed at the Encore casino site, the report says. The \$2.6 billion Encore Boston Harbor resort is under construction and is scheduled to open in June.

Future studies will seek to measure the effects of the state's resort casinos, which offer more slot machines as well as table games, hotels, and other amenities.

Gayle Cameron, interim chair of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, said the report "indicates that the economic benefits anticipated by the introduction of expanded gaming in Massachusetts have largely materialized in regards to Plainridge Park Casino.

"Of equal importance, the research suggests that concerns related to the potential for negative social impacts have not occurred," Cameron said in a statement. "This comprehensive report represents the first of many over the coming years as researchers continue an important deep-dive analysis of all the economic and social impacts of casinos on host communities, their surrounding communities, and across the Commonwealth."

Plainridge Park brought in \$13.5 million in slot revenue in October. That was similar to its revenue in October 2017 and a \$1 million increase from October 2016.

Plainridge Park, owned by Penn National Gaming, pays 49 percent of its gambling revenue to the state, a total of \$271 million since opening.

Mark Arsenault can be reached at mark.arsenault@globe.com . Follow him on Twitter [@bostonglobemark](https://twitter.com/bostonglobemark).

Read more <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/12/07/casino-gambling-has-not-increase-d-social-ills-study-finds/5NegTFFQN4FgCI9kOiMQQL/story.html>