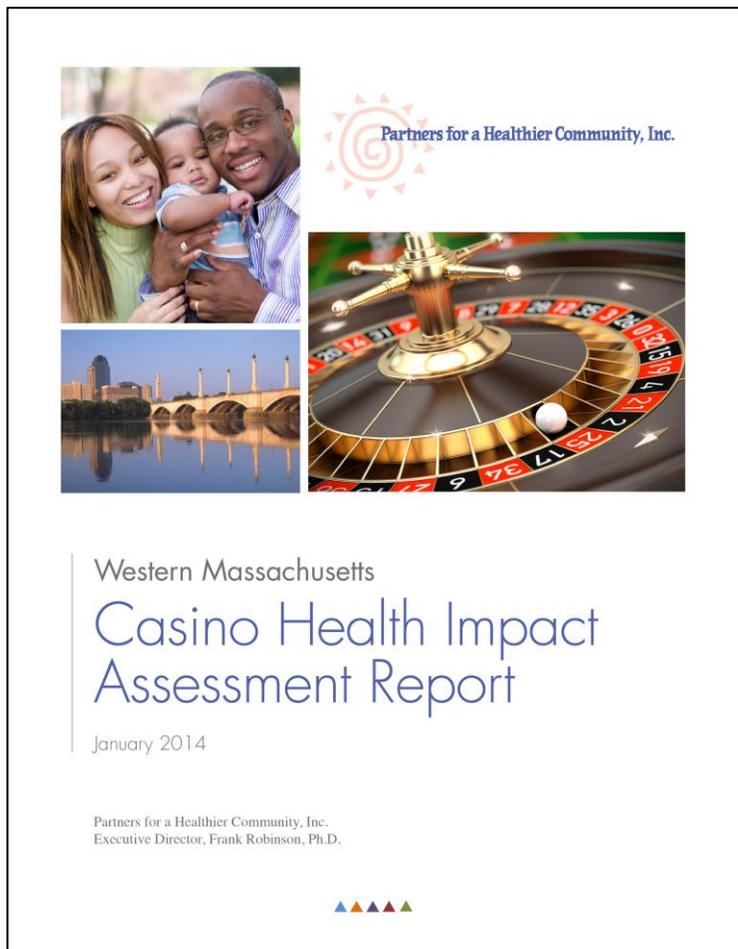


# Casino Health Impact Assessment

*What is the impact of a proposed casino on Western MA?*

## **A new casino in Western Massachusetts will lead to a number of changes...**

Using scientific research articles, reports, expert interviews, and local data, findings from this health impact assessment (HIA) helps decision makers understand the effect these changes will have on health. The HIA also identifies ways to reduce potential negative impacts and create the best opportunity for positive impacts.



A new casino will bring about changes that will likely impact the health of residents in both positive and negative ways. The Western Massachusetts Casino Health Impact Assessment (WMCHIA) focused on four areas and found that a casino would lead to changes in these areas that would likely have short and longer term effects on health.

### **Changes Brought by a Casino**



### **Bottom Line**

A casino will likely affect people's health in both positive and negative ways. The WMCHIA makes recommendations to help prevent possible negative health impacts, improve positive health impacts, and prevent unintended negative impacts on groups that already experience health inequities. If these recommendations are included in casino plans, Massachusetts State Gaming Commission regulations, host community activities and other identified areas before the project starts, everyone's health will benefit.

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*What is the impact of a proposed casino on Western MA?*

The WMCHIA found that a new casino would likely affect the health of people in the host community in a number of ways. Examples include:

- New needed **jobs** and benefits that would likely lead to better health. People with jobs and higher incomes tend to have less heart disease, cancer and mental health problems. However, existing issues that have made it challenging for people in Springfield and Hampden County to get and keep jobs need to be addressed to make sure that under- and unemployed people have the opportunity to obtain the new jobs.
- Potential for increases in **gambling addiction** in the region with the opening of a casino.
- Potential increases in health problems related to asthma and cardiovascular disease as a result of increases in **traffic-related air pollution** near likely local routes to the casino. Children, older adults and some people of color may be particularly affected.
- Potential increases in **drunk driving** and associated deaths due to the availability of free alcohol.

In Hampden County, higher rates of disease and poor health, or health inequities, are found in some populations, including low-income individuals and some communities of color. These populations are more vulnerable to the potential negative health effects of a casino. **Care must be taken to make sure that health inequities are not made worse due to changes brought about by a new casino.**

A **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** uses data, research, and stakeholder input to understand how a policy or project would impact people's health. HIAs take place before a project or policy is approved, so that recommendations can be built in before it starts. HIAs advocate for good health.

## What Can You Do?

- **Be Informed!** Understand the casino licensing process in Massachusetts and how a casino may affect your community by reading the WMCHIA Executive Summary, full report and other resources at [www.partnersforahealthiercommunity.org](http://www.partnersforahealthiercommunity.org)
- **Get Involved!** Support strategies that promote health and advocate for plans to reduce potential negative impacts. *Examples of ways to make your voice heard:*
  - Provide comments to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission ([mgccomments@state.ma.us](mailto:mgccomments@state.ma.us))
  - Attend public hearings
  - Ask the Gaming Commission and local health, public safety, and transportation authorities and others to use the WMCHIA to address health impacts from a casino

