

Governor's Commission on Addiction, Treatment, & Prevention

GAMBLING TASK FORCE

May 15, 2026 9:30 –11:00 am
 NH Hospital Association/GUW
 125 Airport Road, Concord, NH 03301

Time	Agenda Item
10:00-10:10	Welcome & Introductions
10:10-10:30	Background on the Governor's Commission and Task Forces
10:30-11:15	Task Force Goals
11:15-11:20	Public Comment
11:25-11:30	Closing and Next Steps

Attendance

Name	Attendance
Task Force Members	
Keith Nyhan	In person
David Suckling	Absent
Phoebe Axtman	In person
Brian Harlow	In person
Angela Bergen	In person
Randy Stevens	Zoom
Public	
Ed Talbot	Zoom
Liaison(s)/ Subject Matter Experts/Invited Guests	
Jill Burke	Zoom
Elizabeth Biron	Zoom
Center for Excellence on Addiction/JSI Staff	
Amy Daniels	In person
Olivia DiGeronimo	In person
Rekha Sreedhara	In person

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Welcome & Introductions

All participants in the meeting started by introducing themselves. In person were Keith Nyhan of the NH Insurance Department, Brian Harlow self-representing, Angela Bergen of the NH Council on Problem Gambling, Phoebe Axtman of Be One Counseling, and Rekha Sreedhara, Amy Daniels, Olivia DiGeronimo of JSI who provide technical assistance to the Governor's Commission. Online were Randy Stevens of Hope for NH, Jill Burke and Elizabeth Biron from NH DHHS BDAS, and Ed Talbot. As this is the first meeting, members took time to introduce themselves and their backgrounds. There is a quorum with four members in person and one online.

Background on the Governor's Commission and Task Forces

Amy Daniels gave an overview of the Commission structure, its place in statute and Action Plan, Task Force duties, and Task Force member expectations.

Phoebe asked how long terms are for task force members. JSI and Commission Chair, Annette Escalante, will be sending official appointment letters via email that will list the meeting schedule and terms following this meeting. Terms will be staggered. Keith volunteered to serve for only one year.

There was a discussion on the name of this Task Force. Other names considered were "Responsible Gaming/Gambling," but there was concern around the stigma that this disease could be considered a "choice." "Gambling Treatment and Prevention Task Force" was also considered as it uses language that already exists in the treatment space, but this name was ultimately decided against due to it being too similar to the Commission's name. The Task Force settled on the "Gambling Task Force" to allow for future flexibility.

Keith mentioned that he believes problem gambling is an ongoing issue and focus on this topic will continue to expand. Since this is the first Task Force on this topic, there likely will be opportunities to influence how funding, treatment, prevention, and more will be handled in the state of New Hampshire going forward.

Task Force Goals

The Task Force reviewed the Environmental Scan by the PTTC prior to this meeting. Members agreed that this report was very helpful in thinking about the goals of this Task Force.

Members began a discussion around the goals of this Task Force. Randy advocated for the voice of those with lived experience and its emphasis in prevention. Keith mentioned that having resources available in casinos for gambling addiction could be a useful tool, whether that be printed materials or a person who can refer individuals to treatment and peer resources.

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Phoebe advocated for the importance of support for families, as there is a large family aspect to gambling in her experience. Family members of people with gambling addiction, even if they do not have an addiction themselves, are often affected by this condition by the financial implications of this disease. There is also a culture within some families that enables and normalizes the practice of gambling. Gathering perspectives from families, bankruptcy lawyers, casinos, colleges, and more could be useful in informing the priorities of this work.

Funding is also important for this topic. This Commission receives some funding from the profits of video lottery terminals that will be dedicated to the treatment and prevention of problem gambling. There is currently \$136,184 in this fund, but it is unclear whether this will be a recurring payment and if so, how much could be expected each year. The Commission Chair, Annette, has asked this Task Force to make recommendations around priorities for investing those dollars going forward.

Brian mentioned that it could be extremely helpful to have a similar fund for problem gambling as there is for alcohol and other drugs. Amy agreed that this could be a great recommendation in the future.

Keith suggested focusing on addiction awareness, treatment of this condition, and prevention targets in future meetings. Phoebe mentioned that there are resources that exist in other areas but is not aware of them in New Hampshire; these examples could be used as a model.

Public Comment

Ed Talbot contributed information about practices in another state. "Massachusetts has Game Sense advisors in the Massachusetts casinos to assist those who need help regarding their gambling, assist in voluntary self exclusion, and direct those requesting help to treatment resources. These game sense advisors are employees of the Mass Council on Gaming & Health. They have a budget of \$3.6 million. Additionally MA has a state office of problem gambling services with a budget of \$8 million. The New Hampshire Council on Problem Gambling has rack cards in all NH casinos."

Jill Burke let everyone know that the PTTC will be presenting on the Environmental Scan at the next Governor's Commission meeting in June and will be taking questions.

Closing

Keith would like to present preliminary recommendations to the Commission in October. In order to do this, Task Force members discussed a meeting schedule for the summer months to gain some momentum for this group and plan to meet in July, August, and September.

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Decisions/Recommendations Made

1. The Task Force decided on an official name of "Gambling Task Force" and a schedule for future meetings.

Next Steps

- The next Gambling Task Force meeting will take place on July 21 at 1:30 pm.